

## **IS 306 - State Failure and Reconstruction**

### **Course Times and Location:**

Tu & Th 11:30AM - 2:20PM at HCC2510

### **Instructor:**

Dr. Sally Sharif  
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### **Office Hours**

Tu & Th 10:30AM-11:30AM in HC 7393 or via appointment on Zoom

### **Calendar Description:**

This course examines the causes of state fragility and collapse and assesses the challenges of reconstruction. Focusing on cases from different regions, we will explore the security dimensions of state fragility, the role of humanitarian intervention, the challenge of building democratic institutions in divided societies, and the relationship between state building and peacebuilding.

### **Course Details:**

This course focuses on the topics of state fragility and reconstruction. We will analyze international interventions in fragile or “failing” states, as well as domestic initiatives for state reconstruction or development. Over the course of the semester, we will explore the following questions:

- 1) What are the defining characteristics of the state and its key functions?
- 2) What is state “failure” and how is it different from state “fragility?”
- 3) Why do states “fail?” What are the consequences of such failure domestically and internationally?
- 4) Can external actors be effective in promoting reconstruction?
- 5) What can be done to promote social reconciliation after civil conflict and to create enduring peace?

### **Course-Level Educational Goals:**

This course has three main pedagogical objectives:

- 1) To become acquainted with the key concepts, problems, and debates in the literature on state fragility and development.
- 2) To practice and improve the ability to think critically and rigorously, and express that thinking in oral and written form.
- 3) To practice and improve the ability to apply theoretical knowledge to concrete, real-world problems and issues, whether you will be doing so as a political science student or in any other capacity.

### **Grading:**

Active participation (10%)  
Class tests (30%)  
Midterm closed-book exam (30%)  
Final Paper of 10-12 double-spaced pages (30%)

## Requirements:

This is an intensive course. Active participation is important for this class. Absence in 3 classes automatically qualifies the student for a failing grade. There is a test at the beginning of every class, evaluating students' knowledge of the readings. Students are expected to progressively improve in these tests.

Students will be required to submit their written assignments to Turnitin.com in order to receive credit for the assignments and for the course. The School for International Studies strictly enforces the University's policies regarding plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Information about these policies can be found at: <http://www.sfu.ca/policies/gazette/teaching.html>.

## Materials:

This course does not follow a textbook. All course readings will be available electronically via SFU Library and hyperlinked through the course Canvas page. Students are only allowed to use artificial intelligence tools for the purpose of proofreading.

### PART I – STATE FAILURE/FRAGILITY

#### Week 1 What is a Fragile State?

9 May

- Review of the syllabus
- 🌐 Mazarr, Michael J. 2014. "The Rise and Fall of the Failed State Paradigm." *Foreign Affairs* (January/February): 113-121.

#### Week 1 What is a State?

11 May

- 📖 O'Neil, Patrick. 2018. *Essentials of Comparative Politics*. Norton and Company, 31-55.
- 📖 Carter, Jeff, and Douglas Lemke. 2022. "Birth Legacies and State Failure." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 62 (4): 819-847.
- What is a review essay?

#### Week 2 What is a Good/Fragile State?

16 May

- 📖 DeRouen, Karl, and Shaun Goldfinch. 2012. "What Makes a State Stable and Peaceful? Good Governance, Legitimacy and Legal-Rationality Matter Even More for Low-Income Countries." *Civil Wars* 14(4): 499-520.
- 📖 Ines A. Ferreira. 2017. "Measuring State Fragility: A Review of the Theoretical Groundings of Existing Approaches." *Third World Quarterly* 38(6): 1291-1309.
- Formulating a research question




#### Week 2 State Fragility and Conflict I

18 May

- 📖 Schwartz, Rachel A. 2023. "Theorizing Wartime Institutional Change and Survival." In *Undermining the State from Within: The Institutional Legacies of Civil War in Central America*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- 📖 Ibáñez, Ana. M., Ana Arjona, Julián Arteaga, Juan C. Cárdenas, and Patricia Justino. 2023. "The Long-Term Economic Legacies of Rebel Rule in Civil War: Micro Evidence from Colombia." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (April).
- Selecting cases in qualitative research

### **Week 3 State Fragility and Conflict II**

23 May

-  Ying, Luwei. 2021. "How State Presence Leads to Civil Conflict." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 65(2-3): 506-533.
-  Aponte González, Andrés F., Daniel Hirschel-Burns, and Andres D. Uribe. 2023. "Contestation, Governance, and the Production of Violence Against Civilians: Coercive Political Order in Rural Colombia." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (March).
-  Hartog, Jessica. 2021. "Turning Up the Heat: Climate Change, Fragility, and Conflict." The Fund for Peace (20 May). <https://fragilestatesindex.org/2021/05/20/turning-up-the-heat-climate-change-fragility-and-conflict/>.
- Designing a comparative study

### **Week 3 No Class: Instructor Attending Conference**

25 May

### **Week 4 Midterm Exam**




30 May

- Midterm exam
- How to write an effective introduction
- Research question (in one paragraph) and annotated bibliography (2 lines for each work) due at 12 pm the night before class

## **PART II – STATEBUILDING AND PEACEBUILDING**




### **Week 4 Helping States by Ending Conflict?**

1 June

-  Greig, J. Michael, and Paul F. Diehl. 2005. "The Peacekeeping-Peacemaking Dilemma." *International Studies Quarterly* 49(4): 621-646.
-  Stearns, Jason K. 2013. "Helping Congo Help Itself: What it Will Take to End Africa's Worst War." *Foreign Affairs* 92(5): 99–112.
-  Mashal, Mujib. 2019. "The U.S. and the Taliban Are Near a Deal. Here's What It Could Look Like." *The New York Times* (13 August). <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/13/world/asia/us-taliban-peace-deal-details.html>.

### **Week 5 How Do Wars End - Forever?**

6 June

-  Philips, Sarah. 2016. "Questioning Failure, Stability, and Risk in Yemen." In *Fragile Politics: Weak States in the Greater Middle East*. Ed. Mehran Kamrava. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
-  Barma, Naazneen H. 2016. "Rethinking the Peacebuilding Puzzle." In *The Peacebuilding Puzzle: Political Order in Post-Conflict States*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
-  Mitchell, Nancy. 2017. "How the U.S. Aided Robert Mugabe's Rise." *The Washington Post* (26 November). <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/made-by-history/wp/2017/11/26/how-the-u-s-aided-robert-mugabes-rise/>.

## **Week 5 Statebuilding through Foreign Intervention**

8 June



Lake, David A. 2016. *The Statebuilder's Dilemma: On the Limits of Foreign Intervention* (Cornell University Press, 2016), chapters 1 and 2.



Englebert, H Pierre, and Denis M. Tull. 2008. "Postconflict Reconstruction in Africa – Flawed Ideas about Failed States." *International Security* 32(4): 106-139.

- How to write an effective introduction

## **Week 6 The Statebuilding-Peacebuilding Nexus**

13 June



Sweet, Rachel. 2021. "Peacebuilding as State Building? Lessons from the Democratic Republic of the Congo." In *The State of Peacebuilding in Africa*. Eds. McNamee, T., Muyangwa, M. Palgrave Macmillan.



Doyle, Michael W., and Nicholas Sambanis. 2000. "International Peacebuilding: A Theoretical and Quantitative Analysis." *American Political Science Review* 94(4): 779-801.

- First draft of the paper (5-6 pages) due at midnight

## **Week 6 Centralization vs. Decentralization**

15 June



Murtazashvili, Jennifer. 2019. "Pathologies of Centralized State-Building," *PRISM* 8(2): 55-67.



Tockman, Jason. 2016. "Decentralisation, Socio-Territoriality and the Exercise of Indigenous Self-Governance in Bolivia." *Third World Quarterly* 37(1): 153-171.

## **Week 7 Final Exam Week**

20 June-26 June

- Submit your paper by 26 June, 11:59 pm on Canvas (no hardcopies required).