

# Formation of European Political Order

Lecturer: Alexander Astrov

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3 credits (6 ECTS)

Fall Term, 2024/25

Elective for 3rd year CPS students

## Course objectives:

The course aims to provide students with an understanding of the formation of European political order from antiquity up to the dissolution of the *ancien régime*. Still, this is not a 'history' course. Rather, the objective is to familiarise students with the ways of theorising international political order, which, instead of focusing on some ahistorical, unchanging patterns, pay attention to the historically-acquired, contextually specific differences. This emphasis on differences and change also applies to the choice of approaches to the subject. Thus various conceptions of historiography - from materialist to the history of ideas - are presented. In the Winter Term, this course will be followed up with another one - *Formation of Global Political Order* - tracing the transformation of European political order into a global arrangement after the First World War. Students considering taking that course are not required, yet strongly encouraged, to take the current one.

## Course-structure:

The course is organised into hour-long lectures followed later in the week by a two-hour seminar discussion. Lectures are not meant to discuss the texts assigned for the seminars. Their purpose is to provide context(s) for the texts. Although these texts are presented loosely chronologically, the main focus is not on chronology ('linear history'). In fact, it is not about history at all. Rather, it is about various questions (and various orders) arising from the intersection of different forms/structures - geographical, economic, ecological, biological, religious, linguistic, social or political - throughout history.

## Learning outcomes:

Students are not expected to be equally interested in every kind of structures mentioned above or in every particular moment in history. Rather, they should acquire:

- an understanding of the mutually constitutive (and paradoxical) character of the relationship between 'politics', 'public sphere' and 'freedom': there is no human freedom outside of the public sphere; there is no public sphere without (or prior to) politics; there is no politics without (or prior to) public sphere; one possible meaning of politics is freedom (but it is not necessarily the kind of 'freedom' we understand and practice here and now)
- an understanding of the relationship between 'politics' and 'power': power acquired or maintained by means which are not 'political' is no longer 'power' but 'force' and force alone is never enough for the creation, protection or enlargement of the public sphere
- an understanding of the relation between political power and political order, especially on the European scale where a variety of differently construed public and private spheres coexist and interact with each other, often drawing on force in this coexistence and interaction
- an appreciation of the historical dynamics of the evolution of this coexistence and interaction leading to the formation(s) and dissolution(s) of a 'European political order.'

(It should be explicitly noted that this course covers a period in history when most of the public thinking about these and similar questions was done by European white men and for European white men. The limitations of this thinking and publicity will be discussed in detail in the follow-up course, *Formation of Global Political Order*, in the Winter Term.)

## Requirements:

The exact requirements for each assignment will be discussed in detail in the first week of the course. This will allow not only for greater detail but also for an opportunity for students to raise questions. Such questions can also be raised individually at any time and in any form (online, in-person, etc.) during the course.

Active participation in the seminars - 15%

Presentation - 20%

Three position papers on the readings (circa 500 words) - 10% each

Final essay (circa 3.000 words) - 35%

Given the course's general emphasis on questions and questioning, ideally, students are encouraged to come up with questions of their own for the final essay. This is challenging. So, it is important to start thinking about possible questions well in advance and to discuss your ideas with the instructor. During these consultations, some solutions will surely be found. But it is crucially important to talk as early as possible. Feel free to propose and discuss ideas that may seem wild or half-baked. All questions have to be finalised by the end of Week 9.

## **Week 1**

### *Lecture 1*

Introduction of the course

### *Seminar 1*

Discussion and distribution of assignments

## **Week 2**

### *Lecture 2*

What is 'formation'?

### *Seminar 2*

Manuel de Landa, *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History* (New York: Zone Books, 2000). Introduction.

Caroline Levine, *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Networks* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015). Preface and Introduction.

## **Week 3**

### *Lecture 3*

What is 'political'?

### *Seminar 3*

Hannah Arendt, 'Introduction into Politics' in Jerome Kohn ed. *The Promise of Politics* (New York: Schocken Books, 2005): 93-200.

## **Week 4**

### *Lecture 4*

What is 'European/international'?

### *Seminar 4*

Martin Wight, "Why Is There No International Theory?" in Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight eds, *Diplomatic Investigations: Essays in the Theory of International Relations* (London: George Allen & Unwin) pp. 17-34.

Martti Koskenniemi, *To the Uttermost Parts of the Earth: Legal Imagination and International Power, 1300–1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021): Introduction and Conclusion.

## Week 5

### Lecture 5

The 'other' as a 'crack' in order. Political orders are difficult to assemble, so they are often valued and protected. But then, as Leonard Cohen once put it: 'There is a crack, a crack in everything/ That's how the light gets in,' elaborating further: 'There is a crack in everything that you can put together: physical objects, mental objects, constructions of any kind. But that's where the light gets in, and that's where the resurrection is, and that's where the return, that's where the repentance is. It is with the confrontation, with the brokenness of things.'

### Seminar 5

Richard Ned Lebow, 'Thucydides the Constructivist' in *The American Political Science Review*, 3, 2001: 547-560.

Andrew Stewart, 'Imag(in)ing the Other: Amazons and Ethnicity in Fifth-Century Athens' in *Poetics Today*, 4, 1995: 571-597.

Ruth Stepper, 'Roman-Carthaginian Relations: From Cooperation to Annihilation' in Anja. V. Hartmann & Beatrice Heuser eds *War, Peace and World Orders in European History* (London: Routledge, 2001): 72-83.

## Week 6

### Lecture 6

But then there is a particular 'crack' in political orders, especially when it comes to orders we today refer to as 'international': war... Or is it? Is war a breakdown of order or a peculiar instrument of 'international' ordering?..

### Seminar 6

Manuel de Landa, 'Geological History 1000-1700 A.D.' in *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History*: 25-56.

Jan Willem Honig, 'Warfare in the Middle Ages' in *War, Peace and World Orders*: 113-126.

Fernand Braudel, 'The Forms of War' in *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (London: Harper Collins, 1972): 597-656.

## Week 7

### Lecture 7

... and what about conquest? Is this another form of war or another mode of political ordering?

### *Seminar 7*

Eric Ringmar, *Interest and Action: A Cultural Explanation of Sweden's Intervention in the Thirty Years' War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 145-186.

Tsvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1992): 51-123.

## **Week 8**

### *Lecture 8*

'The *pacts* and *covenants* by which the parts of this body politic were first made, set together, and united, resemble that *fiat*, or the *let us make man*, pronounced by God in the creation.' Isn't it puzzling how seamlessly Hobbes moves between 'body' and language in this one passage from *Leviathan*? What remains concealed in this seamless transition may be important for understanding modern European sovereignty.

### *Seminar 8*

Pat Moloney, 'Leaving the Garden of Eden: Linguistic and Political Authority in Thomas Hobbes' in *History of Political Thought*, 2, 1997: 242-66.

Charlotte Epstein, *Birth of the State: The Place of the Body in Crafting Modern Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021): 73-102

## **Week 9**

### *Lecture 9*

'Coin is the sinews of war' (Rabelais) - another 'bodily' metaphor soon to be extended to the understanding of not just war but also government.

### *Seminar 9*

H.F. Kearney, 'The Political Background to English Mercantilism' in *Economic History Review*, 3, 1959: 485-96.

Istvan Hont, 'Free Trade and the Economic Limits to National Politics: Neo-Machiavellian Political Economy Reconsidered' in John Dunn ed. *The Economic Limits to Modern Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990): 41-120.

John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State 1688-1783* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989): 137-61

## Week 10

### Lecture 10

There are many different ways of evaluating the impact of the French Revolution. In the context of this course, one particular remark is important. The staunch opponent of the revolution, Joseph de Maistre, pleaded while on diplomatic duty in St. Petersburg: 'Before, this was an *instinct*, but today it is a *science*. You must love the sovereign as you love order, with all the forces of intelligence.'

### Seminar 10

Marc Belissa and Patrice Leclercq, 'The Revolutionary Period, 1789-1802' in *War, Peace and World Orders*: 203-13.

Michael Williams, 'Rousseau, Realism and Realpolitik' in *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 2, 1998: 185-203.

Jennifer Welsh, 'Edmund Burke and the Commonwealth of Europe: The Cultural Bases of International Order' in Ian Clark and Iver Neumann eds, *Classical Theories of International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1996): 173-92.

## Week 11

### Lecture 11

The Congress of Vienna and its aftermath

### Seminar 11

Jennifer Mitzen, 'From representation to governing: diplomacy and the constitution of international public power,' in Ole Jacob Sending, Vincent Pouliot, and Iver Neumann eds. *Diplomacy and the Making of World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015): 111-139.

Henry Kissinger, 'The White Revolutionary: Reflections of Bismarck' in *Dædalus: Journal of American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 97, 3, 1968: 888-924.

## Week 12

### Lecture and Seminar 12

Concluding discussion and remarks on further readings and areas of research