OVERVIEW OF LECTURES & LITERATURE

- Except for book chapters, you can access, download and print all of the articles on the reading list if you have access to the University’s network.
- Some recommended articles might be added before the course starts.
- For certain course assignments, you also need to find additional literature of your own choosing.

Introduction

1. Sovereignty: An overview

This lecture concerns sovereignty as a key concept in international/political thought and outlines contemporary debates over sovereignty. The lecture also overviews the substantive and procedural structure of the course.

Required:


2. Sovereignty in the modern age

While the course as such is not primarily concerned with the history of sovereignty, this lecture gives an overview over the political thought and the political reality of sovereignty in the modern era.

Required:


Recommended:

Globalisation, states and sovereignty

3. Critics of (the critics of) sovereignty

In this lecture, we discuss two recurring, influential critiques of sovereignty: Realists who argue that the idea of an international order based on the norm of sovereignty is but ‘organised hypocrisy’ and idealist critics who, to the contrary, see sovereignty as a concession to crude power politics. We shall also consider those who, from various positions, defend sovereignty against either or both strands of critique.

Required:


Recommended:


Saskia Sassen, “Neither global nor national: novel assemblages of territory, authority and rights,” *Ethics & Global Politics* 1, no. 0 (1, 2008).

4. Globalisation theory and its discontents

Much of the recent normative interest in state sovereignty in recent years falls back on the empirical premise that globalisation has rendered the sovereign nation-state obsolete, and with it, the principles of world order established in 1648 or 1948. In this lecture, we shall focus on the critics of globalisation theory, who argue that the rumours of the death of the modern, sovereign state are greatly exaggerated.

Required:


Recommended:

National: The democratic constitution

5. Justifying the demos: Constituting the democratic sovereign

Democracy means ‘rule by the people’, and traditionally, democratic theorists have focused on what this ‘rule’ thing should mean, while neglecting the other half of the term: the people supposed to rule itself. How can the people democratically constitute itself? Justifying the demos is not just a theoretical matter, but has implications for tricky political questions such as secession, border control, international authority, and the right to vote. In this lecture, we'll discuss recent attempts at justifying the popular sovereign.

Required:

Recommended:

6. Constraining the demos: Human rights and popular sovereignty

Since the Enlightenment, democratic theorists have debated how to find the proper balance between popular sovereignty and the individual autonomy. In current debate, this old puzzle recurs in new shape in the problem of justifying, for instance, international human rights courts, which exercise an increasingly independent jurisdiction over sovereign states, including democracies.

Required:

Recommended:
International legitimacy

Allegedly, an ever growing number of international institutions exercise an increasing authority over states and other actors in international politics. Some claim that such institutions, though they provide benefits states cannot otherwise obtain, increasingly face a legitimacy problem. Especially so, since on the one hand traditional sources of legitimacy, such as state consent, are deemed increasingly inappropriate, while on the other hand, few seem to think global justice or democracy to be a feasible antidote. Here, we shall address the nature of legitimacy problems in international institutions and critically discuss normative theories of international legitimacy in the light of positive IR theory.

Required:


Recommended:


The federal-republican alternative

Traditionally opposed to sovereignty, the republican-federal tradition has sought to constrain power by means of checks and balances on power, both horizontally and vertically, both domestically and internationally. In recent years, this republican tradition has achieved a second spring, both in normative political philosophy and in positive international theory. In this lecture, we’ll discuss the challenges that this tradition poses to established concepts of sovereignty.

Required:

Global: The cosmopolitan turn

9. No justice without a state: Cosmopolitanism and global justice

Does morality require a state? A key debate in political philosophy over the past decade has concerned whether we owe moral duties to all human beings everywhere, rather than just to our next of kin or our compatriots. A key issue of contention is whether moral obligations presuppose any institutional hardware—a state—and if so, whether that institutional hardware exists at a global level. In this lecture, we shall address the key positions in what some have seen as a general cosmopolitan turn in political philosophy.

Required (66)


Recommended:


10. Global democracy: The third transformation

Paralleling the cosmopolitan turn in moral philosophy, and drawing on theoretical strands we have covered earlier in the course, democratic theorists have debated whether democracy today ought to be organised at the global, transnational level. Some theorists seek to extend established models and elements of democracy from the nation-state level to the global level, while others remain critical.

Required:


Recommended:


