

POL 673: What Comes After the End?: The Futures of Global Violence and Order

Autonomous weapons, torture, ecological catastrophe, ubiquitous surveillance, and a paradigm of risk and danger that enables all of these possibilities as always virtually present and unpredictably actual. The horizon of security politics will not be defined by great power politics. Instead states will be confounded by the impossibility of scaling danger. However, the state's inefficacy at diffusing the dizzying futures of violence has no necessary connection to undermine the capabilities of states to wield force. In this class we will take up the character of contemporary state violence in a post-Weberian world. That is, a world in which the state has neither a monopoly on legitimacy nor on violence and persists anyway. The major themes of the class will be the futures of sovereignty, order making, automation, threat assessment and its relationship to constituting the political order, the body in pain, and the non-human character of the human future.

The class will focus on just five books that I think represent the most compelling recent challenges to global politics. We will spend almost a month closely reading and diagraming each book. The goal is to think through the ways changes in the material condition of human life and the state's often destructive response to those changes opens up space for new forms of governance or political possibility that have, to date, been foreclosed by what is considered possible or realistic. The luxurious reading schedule is meant to also create more time for writing over the course of the semester. Unlike the traditional seminar paper that you write hurriedly at the end of the semester every student will write a present something on the final two class day. The final weeks will be an opportunity to workshop your writing as well as get substantial feedback on your presentation style. The goal is that the class prepares you for conference participation as well as peer review of your writing and thinking to develop publishable material. To serve this end papers will be capped, like most journal articles, at 7500 words. The rough draft of the paper will be due week 11 of the class.

Readings:

Weeks 1 through 3:

Brian Massumi, *Ontopower: War, Powers, and the State of Perception* (2015)

Weeks 4 & 5:

Gregoire Chamayou, *Theory of The Drone* (2015)

Weeks 6-9:

Banu Bargu, *Starve and Immolate: The Politics of Human Weapons* (2014)

Weeks 10-12:

Benjamin Bratton, *The Stack: On Software and Sovereignty* (2016)

Weeks 13-15:

Anna Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World* (2015)

Week 16 Paper presentations:

Week 17 Paper presentations:

Final papers due 4 days before grades are due.