As our authors Ghani and Lockhart note, forty to sixty states in which over one billion people reside are either failed states or are on the brink of collapsing.\textsuperscript{1} The consequences of failed states for their own populations can be catastrophic. Additionally, as we are learning in an increasingly global world, failed states also have serious implications for their neighbor states, for their regions, and for countries thousands of miles away. Increasingly, failed states have become sites of conflict for non state actors, state actors, and foreign armies. And as Charles Call reminds us, 95\% of today's armed conflicts are civil wars.\textsuperscript{2} These wars are fought in states that are trying to achieve authority, capacity, and legitimacy.

**This course asks:** Why do states fail? In what ways do states fail and with what consequences? Can we do anything to address the identified causes of state failure? Should we worry about states collapsing or should we bypass states to assist (world) citizens outside of a state framework? Are failed states a legitimate arena for study or should we be focused on other questions if we hope to promote state and population stability and prosperity?

**Objectives for this seminar:** Students will become familiar with both academic as well as practitioners' work in the field of failed states and state building. Each student will complete a research project on some aspect(s) of state failure or state-

\textsuperscript{1} Ashraf Ghani and Clare Lockhart, *Fixing Failed States A Framework for Rebuilding a Fractured World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)

building that will demonstrate his or her ability to create a research design, conduct research, situate his or her research relative to important authors in the field, and sustain an argument. Additionally, by taking responsibility for shared and singularly assigned weekly readings, students will develop expertise in this subfield of international politics through collective consideration of important publications in the field of failed states.

********************************************************************************

"The people thus rendered powerless are victims of what we call the sovereignty gap – the disjunction between the de jure assumption that all states are "sovereign" regardless of their performance in practice - and the de facto reality that many are malfunctioning or collapsed states." Ashraf Ghani and Clare Lockhart, Fixing Failed States p. 21.

"Peacebuilding is not a neutral activity. It privileges certain groups over others." Charles T. Call, Building States to Build Peace p. 6.

"Over the past 25 years, the share of poor people living in developing countries has been cut by half. But a group of 45 countries is falling behind, representing 1.2 billion people.”
http://www.oecd.org/document/53/0,3746,en_2649_33693550_49375477_1_1_1_1,00.html

"The relationship between peacebuilding and statebuilding is complicated, contingent, and context-dependent." Charles T. Call, Building States to Build Peace p. 3

Course Requirements:
Students are required to attend and participate in class, to complete assignments, and to attend any scheduled talks or documentaries/movies. If you travel with a dance troupe or sports club and expect occasionally to miss a class or a speaker, please advise the professor in writing in advance of your absence.

Each Politics Department seminar serves as a capstone course in which students complete individual research and write a significant research paper after mastering (theoretical) scholarly and other relevant practitioner literature in a field of study. Students also experience and profit from collective learning through their interaction with other advanced students and their professor. A capstone course requires personal reflection and responses by each student to the collective material studied.
Grades will be based on the following:
General participation -- including presentations of assigned readings, engagement with assignments, group participation, posting questions on blackboard, and class discussion. You cannot participate fully if you don't attend each class. -25%

A two-page evaluation of your (sometimes individually) assigned reading to be posted for all members of the seminar - 15%. Your evaluation must be posted by noon prior to class so everyone has a chance to read and reflect on the posting.

A three to four page reflection essay on your answers to the questions posed above in the “this course asks” section. - 15%. Due: Friday April 26, 2013 at 5 P.M.

A final Research Paper - 45%. Your research papers are due no later than at the end time of your scheduled final exam: Sunday, May 19, 2013 at 11 A.M.

If you do not complete successfully all of your assignments, regardless of your grades on other assignments, you will not have completed the requirements for passing this course. You will be eligible to receive a grade of “F.”

Course readings:

The readings for this course are derived from excerpts from books, articles in academic journals, chapters from edited books, papers and briefings from think tanks, government agencies, international organizations, and articles from the popular press.

You are responsible for the information in the readings on the day the readings are listed on the syllabus.
Please familiarize yourself with the Oberlin Honor Code which guides your work in this, and in all, your classes. http://new.oberlin.edu/students/policies/2011-2012/11-Policies-Honor.pdf
Or, within blackboard: https://blackboard.oberlin.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp
You may NEVER use someone else’s words and pretend they are your own. You must always quote someone else’s words by placing the words in quotation marks and by citing the author in your footnotes or endnotes.

In this course, we are not focusing on a case study of one country or one organization. Instead, we are taking up issues related to failed states and statebuilding generally. However, within your assigned readings you will find several good articles/chapters/reports in which authors focused on a single country case study or on a single interstate or international organization in order to investigate some issue or issues related to failed states
and/or state-building. You should therefore consult the assigned materials from our syllabus as models for writing about cases or organizations and you should also consult the handout on writing a research paper when you are crafting your research design for your own research paper:

**Wednesday February 6, 2013  Introduction to Issues of Failed States**


III. The Fund for Peace: List of Failed States [http://www.fundforpeace.org/global/?q=fs]

The Fund for Peace, Twelve Indicators of CAST: the Conflict Assessment System Tool

[http://www.fundforpeace.org/cast/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=14&Itemid=90]

**Readings-based questions for this class:**

Why should we care about failed states?

What is a failed state?

According to these practitioner/authors, what are the issue areas that must be addressed in failed states? (Later we will look at the criteria and concerns of others).

Are some indicators more important than others?

Most importantly, what do you find of most interest in the topics to be investigated and why? (We will go around the room for each of you to offer your “take” on what interests you and why)

**Wednesday February 13, 2013  What are States?**


**You must post your questions on blackboard by noon on Wednesday.**

The Tilly reading above, which is a classic in the field, is on blackboard but the pages are difficult to read in the center. You can grasp all the words but there is also a url where you can find the chapter: [http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/pageviewer-]
Individual Reading Assignments – please provide a brief outline of the thesis and main points for the members of the class and also post on blackboard. We may not be able to cover all the readings this week and so will carry them over into coming weeks:


2. F.A. Hayak, “The Great Utopia” in the Road to Serfdom 1944


Readings-based questions for class:
Explain the different units of analysis utilized by different explanations of states.
What are the characteristics of states?
How can we study states?
What are the outcomes of the different states portrayed in terms of the criteria by which failed states are measured?
What role does violence play in making states? Maintaining states?
How do we know if a state is legitimate?
Wednesday February 20, 2013 Other Indices of Measurement and Some Proposed Solutions

During the first hour of class we will discuss:
USAID Fragile State Indicators pp. 1-38
   Chapter 5: “Rising to the Policy Challenges” pp. 81-98.
Freedom House, “Countries at the Crossroads” “Countries at the Crossroads is an annual analysis of government performance in 70 strategically important countries worldwide that are at a critical crossroads in determining their political future.”
   http://www.freedomhouse.org/report-types/countries-crossroads
You must post your questions on blackboard by noon on Wednesday.

During the first half of the last hour students will report on their individual readings and during the last thirty minutes of class we will discuss:
WRITING A RESEARCH PAPER – handouts and discussion of topics and how to complete a research design.

Readings-based questions for class:
What issues and arenas must we address to prevent failed states?
Do you agree that the indicators used by our authors adequately capture the characteristics of competent and/or failed states?
What is good governance?
What are democratic states?

Wednesday February 27, 2013 Security and Failed States
Kofi Annan, “Learning the lessons of Peacebuilding” October 18, 2004 speech at Ulster Londonerry. 7 pages.
You must post your questions on blackboard by noon on Wednesday.
Individual Reading Assignment:


Readings-based questions for class:

What successes and failures does Sherman identify in the statebuilding efforts in Afghanistan?

What are the challenges in addressing the obstacles to state building in Afghanistan?

In any state, people observe that relationships matter. How can we distinguish between individuals cooperating based on legitimate relations and corruption?

If, as some authors argue, security is a precondition for all other development, how can states assure both security and legitimacy when minorities or rivals want to assume power for themselves?

**Wednesday March 6, 2013 Security and Reconstruction in Failed States**

Margaret J. Antsee “Strengthening the Role of the Department of Political Affairs as a Focal Point for Post-Conflict Peacebuilding” Report for the United Nations Department of Political Affairs December 1998.


Cecilia Ntombizodwa Mzuondiwa, “The Role of Women in the Reconstruction and
Building of Peace in Rwanda: Peace Prospects for the Great Lakes Region”
Elliot Woods, “Iraq Under Worse Management” Bloomberg Businessweek January 23-

You must post your questions on these readings by a time we determine
according to when we reschedule.

Readings-based questions for class:
By what means do some illegitimate leaders manage to cling to power?
How do these successes and failures match the characteristics identified in the failed
states index or in the UNHDR?
What opportunities and constraints does the UN bring to post-conflict peacebuilding?
Should minority interests be “thrown under the bus” in the interest of the greater good,
for example, how do you feel about the case of the Kurds in Iraq?

Wednesday March 13, 2013 R2P, State Institutions, and Elections
Sarah Cliffe and Nick Manning, “Practical Approaches to Building State
Institutions” in Charles T. Call with Vanessa Wyeth, eds. Building States to Build
Deepa Iyer, Creating A 'Citizen Friendly' Department: Speeding Document
Successful Societies Institute.
International Crisis Group, “The Responsibility to Protect (R2P): A Primer”
http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/key-issues/responsibility-to-protect.aspx#primer
During the last half hour of this class each seminar student will offer a working
research question so that students are aware of their classmates’ topics should
they come across useful material to forward to one another.

You must post your questions on blackboard by noon on Wednesday.

Readings-based questions for class:
What is “the rule of law?”
Is the “rule of law” simply a Western imposed goal for late industrializing states?
What are the “costs” to adhering to a rule of law?
Should illegal immigrants, who have broken the law, benefit from the rule of law?
If a state has no effective “rule of law” and is failing on other indicators as well, should
the international community recognize its officials as state officials who represent a
population?
Under what conditions, if any, should R2P be enforced?
What are the challenges in enforcing R2P?
Some say R2P is already discredited, should it be?
Why are any new election laws so important for a post-conflict state?
Who should oversee elections in a democratic state?

Wednesday March 20, 2013 Public Finance and Elections Policies

You must post your questions on these readings by noon on Wednesday.

Readings-based questions for class:
By what means, if any, do corruption and greed influence state failure?
Does economic deprivation or issues of economic grievance influence state failure?
Does lack of economic development influence state failure?
What, if anything, do the authors argue can be done to address the links among economic policy making, economic policy implementation, and state failure?


Tuesday April 2, 2013. Your research design must be posted on blackboard by noon on Tuesday and a hardcopy for each member of the class and the faculty member brought to class on Wednesday April 3, 2013.

Wednesday April 3, 2013 – Research Design Workshop
We will divide into small groups and you will “workshop” each other’s research design.

Wednesday April 10, 2013 – Foreign Aid:
Dr. Rajiv Shah, Speech by USAID Administrator “Approach to High-Impact Development Published May 5, 2010 Essential Documents: USAID Stephen Baranyi and Kristiani, “Powell, Fragile States, Gender Equality and

You must post your questions on these readings by noon on Wednesday.

Readings-based questions for class:
Do the authors believe that foreign assistance should be ended or modified? Why?
What role do political parties play in preventing or creating failed states?
How might international donors assist political parties?
Is focusing on “failed states” just a new flavor in international aid?
What are some of the influences on donors’ aid policies over the last few decades?

Wednesday April 17, 2013 What do Democracies Possess/Lack That Keep Them from Failing and How Might Civil Society Play a Greater Role?

You must post your questions on these readings by noon on Wednesday.

Readings-based questions for class:
What do Democracies Possess/Lack That Keep Them from Failing?
What cultural arguments can be made for the creation of failed states?
How might these cultural arguments be countered by economic or political arguments?
Do you think democracies will continue to survive?
What role can civil society organizations play in supporting states or undermining them?
Should civil society organizations be guided to support states? If so, how might this be
accomplished?

Friday April 19, 2013. Your Reflective Essays are due at 5 P.M. Electronic copies are due on blackboard and you must submit a hardcopy in the black plastic box on the wall outside Rice 207.

Wednesday April 24, 2013. Students workshop papers

Wednesday May 2, 2013 – Students workshop papers

Wednesday May 8, 2013 – Students workshop papers and Course Wrap Up

Your research paper is due on the date of your final exam: Sunday, May 19, 2013, no later than 11 A.M.

You must submit 1) an electronic copy on blackboard and 2) a hard copy in the black plastic box on the wall outside Rice 207.