This course conducts a critical audit of the political science subfield of ‘American Political Development’ (APD). It attends to issues of method, especially the engagement of history and social science, and provides a forum for the development of research.

Students fashion a proposal joined to a tight literature review (limited to 18-20 double-spaced pages; due on April 25). They also introduce and help direct discussions on a rotating basis. To orient the group’s conversations, a given week’s class leaders distribute a document (no more than two single-spaced pages) that raises questions for discussion. These short documents should identify the readings’ background assumptions, and consider their puzzles, arguments, concepts, and types of evidence. Copies must be posted to the course email distribution list no later than the prior evening. The other students also circulate a thought piece (no longer than a single-spaced page) that poses one issue raised by that session’s readings and explains why it offers a chance to reflect on a significant theoretical, historical, or empirical matter. These documents are not graded individually, but they form an integral part of each student’s course portfolio.

The class is integrated with the 20th century workshop that Alan Brinkley and Ira Katznelson co-direct. Readings are on reserve in Lehman Library. Books are available for purchase at Labyrinth Books (536 West 112th Street).

Syllabus

January 17:


**January 24:**


**January 31:**

J.P. Nettl, "The State as a Conceptual Variable," *World Politics*, 20 (July 1968)

Peter Baldwin, “Beyond Weak and Strong: Rethinking the State in Comparative Policy History,” *Journal of Policy History*, 17 (No. 1, 2005):


**February 7:**
Workshop

**February 14:**


**February 21:**


**February 28:**


**March 7:**
Workshop

**March 14:**

March 28:
Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982 (within the book, select as cases chapters 3 and 6, or chapters 4 and 7, or chapters 5 and 8)


April 4:


April 11:

David R. Mayhew, “Wars and American Politics,” *Perspectives on Politics* 3 (2005), 473-93


**April 18:**
Workshop

**April 25:**
Presentation of research plans (students circulate in advance a two page précis of the research proposal that is due by this class).