The Politics of Authoritarian Regimes

POL SCI 312  LEC 001
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Fall 2013
TR 2:00PM-3:15PM
Room: LUB S171

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Office Hours: Thursday 10-12am or by appointment
Mode of Delivery: In-person

Prerequisites: Junior standing, Comparative Politics course

Course Description:
It has been said that politics is the study of who gets what, when, where, and how. This course is an advanced introduction to the politics of authoritarian regimes. Historically, most of the world’s political regimes have been authoritarian. Since the end of the Cold War, democratic countries have come to outnumber those with authoritarian forms of government; but 40% of the world’s governments remain authoritarian, and over half of the planet’s population lives under non-democratic rule. Any effort to understand the foundations comparative politics would be incomplete without a consideration of non-democratic regimes.

We will begin the course by investigating conceptual and operational differences between authoritarian and democratic regimes. We will then ask if those differences matter. The course then proceeds to examine the question of ‘who governs’ in authoritarian regimes. We will look at conceptual distinctions between and empirical examples of personalist, monarchical, military, and single party regimes. The course then moves to consider the means by which authoritarian governments maintain and exercise their power. We will examine issues related to ideology, coercion, cooptation, electoral manipulation, patronage distribution, and political socialization. We will also look at how authoritarian governments manage relations with opposition forces and elites. Most of our focus will be on the political dynamics of contemporary authoritarian regimes, although we will also review the workings of authoritarian regimes from decades past in order to contextualize our discussions.

Although the primary focus of our course is not on democratic transitions, we will be vigilant in identifying the ways that the study of authoritarian rule can inform the study of democratization processes. In addition, your paper assignment will address this issue. Our approach to the material will be thematic. So we will not spend a great deal of time exploring the histories and details of particular cases, but our readings include empirical material from countries in all regions of the world.

Course Objectives:

In this course you will:

1. gain a firm understanding of the difference between democratic and authoritarian regimes
2. become familiar with the different types of authoritarian rule
3. learn how authoritarian governments exercise and perpetuate their power
4. gain exposure to several modern and historical cases of authoritarian government
5. gain useful ‘real-world’ knowledge about contemporary authoritarian regimes
6. use the analytic toolkit of social science to examine why we observe certain political outcomes in authoritarian regimes

Requirements:

1) Attend class sessions and participate
   The format of this class will be discussion. Your participation includes both attendance and engagement in class discussion.
   I will lecture at times, but most of our class time will be spent discussing the themes and arguments presented in our readings. Everyone should be ready to contribute something in every class. Your comments need not dazzle every time. Often times, the most productive contributions to class discussions are questions. If you don’t understanding something in the readings, say so. The authors we read are not perfect; their prose may not always be clear and their arguments will never be bulletproof. Speak up and air your grievances if you are confused. We will all be better for it and you will be rewarded come evaluation time.
   Attendance is mandatory. Our class is small, and therefore, you cannot free ride on your fellow classmates. Your absences will be noticed by all and have a palpable impact on our sessions. Each unexcused absence will result in the reduction of your participation grade by 1/3 of a letter grade. Absences will be excused for documented illness, family crises, religious observances etc.

2) Complete assigned readings before the date indicated on the syllabus
   In order to participate effectively in discussion, you will need to have done the required readings for that day. Much is expected in terms of reading, but you are up to the task. The suggested readings are not required, but are listed to help you if you want to go deeper into a topic for your paper or for your own edification. [See the exception for graduate students below]
   After completing the readings and before each class, you should write a half-page journal entry on the reading or readings. This journal entry should be on paper and ready to hand in at the beginning of each class. This journal need not be typed. It may be handwritten on a piece of notebook paper. The purpose of the journal entry is to demonstrate that you have completed the assigned reading. It is also a chance for you to formulate some ideas about the reading and some questions about it. The entry should contain a few sentence summary of the main point in the reading(s). It may conclude with some questions about the reading.
   At various points, I will randomly collect these journals at the beginning of class. These journal entries are graded on a pass/fail basis. If you have not completed the journal entry or it is obvious from the journal entry that you did not complete the readings, then your participation grade for the semester will be reduced by 2/3 of a letter grade.
   I reserve the right to collect these journal entries at any time, but if it becomes apparent that everyone is doing the readings, then I will not need to collect them.

3) One quiz: The Geography and History of Authoritarianism
No, this is not high school. But in order for you to engage knowledgably with our material, it is important that you have a firm ‘real-world’ grasp of our subject matter. This early semester quiz will push you to acquire that grasp.

4) Two 2-4 page reaction papers/presentation

Over the course of the semester, you will write two reaction papers on a reading (or readings) of your choice from a class session. The first paper must be completed before October 22.

These papers should have three components:

1) The paper should briefly (one paragraph) sum up the main argument made by the author and the evidence provided.

2) It should contain an evaluation and critique of the author’s argument and evidence. Does the author’s argument make sense? Why or why not? Does his evidence (if any) comport with his/her argument? Why or why not? Do you know of other evidence that undermines (or supports) the author’s argument? Does one of the other readings for that day offer a perspective that is discordant with the perspective offered by the author? This section should constitute the lion’s share of the paper.

3) The paper should conclude with some questions for the class that flow from your evaluation/critique.

You will give a short 5-minute presentation on your paper to kick off our discussion of that reading. Your questions should help us in our discussion.

Each week we will determine who will write reaction papers for the following week. I will ask for volunteers.

All papers are due on the day that we cover the reading in class. Late assignments are NOT accepted.

4) One Midterm Quiz—Taken on D2L. Date TBD

5) One Final Paper

Your most important assignment in this class will be a 15-30 page research paper. In this paper, you will undertake original research on a topic within one of the following three themes:

1) How some aspect of authoritarian rule affects democratization or regime change. Aspects of authoritarian rule that we will examine in this class include the existence of ruling parties, the maintenance of legislatures, the role of the military, the use of elections, control of the media, repression, coercion, electoral fraud, political socialization, and patronage. Authoritarian regimes vary along all of these dimensions. Under this theme, your paper would examine how one of these aspects affects regime change or democratization.

2) How some aspect of authoritarian rule affects policy or political outcomes (aside from democratization). Under this theme you might examine how one of these aspects affects the prevalence of protest or violence in authoritarian regimes. Or you might examine how it affects economic growth, development, social spending, or human rights.
3) The causes of some aspect of authoritarian rule. So, for example, you might ask: why do some authoritarian regimes have legislatures? Why do some regimes engage in electoral fraud? Why are elections held in some regimes, but not in others? The comparison set should be other authoritarian regimes.

The research paper should contain an argument and evidence for that argument. Either the argument or the evidence should be original. In other words, you can develop your own theoretical argument and bring original evidence to bear on it. Or you can take a theoretical argument that we examine in the course and test its validity against new empirical evidence. Or you can use existing data or case material to examine a novel theoretical argument. Any of these strategies are acceptable.

I am open to many strategies of empirical testing in your paper. The evidence you choose to support your argument can be statistical, or you can compare several cases that vary on a key variable. Alternatively, you can use temporal variation in a single case. Here you might compare Nigeria before and after a military coup or China’s human rights record over time. You can also examine a single case (possibly with no variation). BUT if you choose this option, then the case must be ‘surprising’ in light of some existing theoretical argument AND you must provide a provisionary argument for why it does not conform to the predictions of existing theory. For example, it is said that military regimes are the least durable type of authoritarian regime. If you know about a long-lived military regime, you could examine this regime and elaborate on the reasons why you think it defies conventional wisdom. This is how many social scientists develop new theories.

In September we will discuss the methods of writing a research paper in more detail. On September 10, I will distribute an extensive list of example topics, and I will solicit individual appointments with each of you to discuss your strategy. We should have these meetings in September or early October. Then, on October 17, I will ask each of your to submit a topic along with an outline. On November 21, I will ask each of you to submit a written mid-term progress report on your research. Details on this progress report will be provided in October.

The full draft of the paper will be due on December 6th.

A final revision of your paper will be due on December 21st. This revision should take into account my feedback on the full draft. NOTE: This is not a revision to change the final grade on your paper. Only your revisions will be graded for this component.

**Evaluation Scheme for Undergraduate Students:**

Class Attendance and Participation: 25%
--including any assigned reading quizzes or journal entries
Geography Quiz: 5%
Reaction Papers: 20%
Mid Term Quiz 15%
Final Paper 35%
Extra Requirements and Exceptions for Graduate Students:

1) Graduate Students are also required to read the readings marked [G] in the suggested readings sections.

2) Graduate students should write six, not two, reaction papers and must write four of these papers on the supplemental graduate readings marked [G] on the syllabus. For their presentations on these articles, graduate students will be asked to tell the class how the given reading related to the other articles read that day. Did it resolve any debates in those readings? Did it use an innovative methodology to answer a question posed in those readings? Did it offer a new theory to explain empirical phenomena in the main readings? These are the types of questions that should be addressed in these presentations.

3) The expectations for the graduate student research papers are higher.

4) Graduate students will not take the mid-term exam or geography quiz.

Evaluation Scheme for Graduate Students:

Class Attendance and Participation: 25%
Reaction Papers: 35%
Final Paper 40%

Late Assignment Policy

All assignments are due on the assigned date. Response papers are due on the day that a reading is covered in class. I do not accept late assignments. Exceptions are made only in the most severe and extraordinary circumstances.

Required Texts for Purchase:


Other Readings:

Other required readings can be accessed either through the UWM library or through our D2L site. The suggested readings are not required, but are listed for your own further study. See the graduate student exception.

Expected Time Commitment:
This is a three-credit course, so the expected time commitment from students is approximately 144 hours. Students will spend 36 hours in class over the course of the semester. Approximately 50% of the remaining time will be spent preparing for class by doing assigned readings and reviewing previous lecture notes. A further 10% will be spent preparing for quizzes and exams. Students should expect to allocate the final 40% to writing response papers and their final paper.

**Academic Honesty:**

All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee’s academic misconduct policy. Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course and any plagiarism on any assignment will result in a failing grade for the course. *When in doubt, cite.* If you have questions about attribution, please see me. I am here to help! More information is available at [http://www.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm](http://www.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm)
PART I—WHAT IS AUTHORITARIANISM?

September 3—Introduction and Overview

September 5—What is at stake? The state. Liberty and equality. Guardianship. Are citizens capable of governing themselves? Do citizens know their own preferences?

**Required:**


**Suggested:**


**Required:**


**Suggested:**


September 12-- Geography, Facts, Trends, Data! How do we know an authoritarian regime when we see one? Does it matter how we define democracy? Waves of democratization? Introduction to classifying authoritarian regime types. Geographic distribution of authoritarian regimes.

**Required:**

“Freedom in the World 2013” Release Booklet
http://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FIW%202013%20Booklet.pdf
(Skim this reading. In other words, familiarize yourself with methodology, maps, and charts in this booklet)
Roessler, Philip and Marc Howard. “Post-Cold War Political Regimes” in Lindberg, Staffan ed., *Democratization by Elections: A New Mode of Transition*. Chapter 4, pp 101-127. [D2L]

Suggested:


**In Class Quiz: Geography of Authoritarianism**

**Required:**


**Suggested:**


**September 19-- Authoritarianism’s Consequences Part 2**—International Conflict

**Required:**

Bruce Russett 1994. *Grasping the Democratic Peace* Chapters 1 and 2. pp 3-42 [D2L]

**Suggested:**

PART II: WHO GOVERNS IN AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES?

September 24-- Personalist Regimes—What is traditional authority? Charismatic authority? The foundations of personal rule.

Required:

Kapuschinski, Ryszard. 1983 The Emperor: Downfall of an Autocrat. 1-100


Suggested:


September 26-Dynasties and Succession—Why do dictators hand power to family members?

Required:


Suggested:


October 1 Military Regimes Part 1—How does a military regime differ from other types of authoritarian regimes? Do military leaders have preferences that are unique from normal politicians? Are military regimes different from personalist regimes? Why are there so few military regimes in the world today?

Required:

Suggested:


October 2: Movie Night! *The Last King of Scotland.* 7pm in Curtin 175

October 3 Military Regimes Part 2—Coups. Civil-military relations. Why are there so few military regimes in the world today?

Required:


Suggested:


Cook, Steven. 2007. *Ruling But Not Governing: The Military and Political Development in Egypt, Algeria, and Turkey*


October 8 Institutionalized Dictatorships: Ruling Parties Part 1 Is “institutionalized dictatorship” an oxymoron? Ruling parties. How does a ruling party in an authoritarian regime differ from a political party in a democracy? Parties as constraints on dictators. Elite cohesion. Are party regimes more long-lived than others?

Required:

Brownlee, Jason. 2007. *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization.* PP 1-15 [D2L]


Suggested:


**October 10 Institutionalized Dictatorships: Ruling Parties Part 2** Why do parties exist in some regimes and not others? Variation in ruling party institutions. Rule by concession? Cooptation

**Required:**


Smith, Benjamin. 2005. “The Life of the Party: The Origins of Regime Breakdown and Persistence Under Single party Rule” *World Politics* 57(3) [This reading is subject to change]

**Suggested:**


**October 14: Movie Night! A State of Mind. 7pm in Curtin 175**

**October 15—Totalitarianism and Ideology** Communism. Totalitarianism. State planning of the economy. Does ideology matter? Revolutionary regimes. Life under communism

**Required:**

Linz, Juan. 2000. *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes.* Chapter 2 [D2L]


**Suggested:**


**October 17—The Soviet Union: A Case Study in Totalitarianism and One Party Rule**

**Required:**


**Suggested:**


**October 22--Repression--** Why do authoritarian regimes coerce? Do some coerce more than others? Why? Stalin’s Great Terror.

**Required:**


**October 24 Natural Resources** How do authoritarian leaders use state resources to appease citizens and social groups? Are they different from democracies in this sense? The special role of oil and minerals.

**Required:**


**Suggested:**


Fish, M Steven. *Democracy Derailed in Russia,* Chapter 5 [D2L]

**October 29—Mexico: A case study in patronage distribution and clientelism**

**Required:**


**Suggested:**

Magaloni, Beatriz. 2006. *Voting for Autocracy*. Chapters 1. [D2L] [G]

**October 31—Clientelism and Patronage**

**Required:**


**Suggested:**


Van de Walle, Nicolas. 2007. “Meet the New Boss, Same as the Old Boss”? The Evolution of Political Clientelism in Africa” In Kitschelt, Herbert and Steven Wilkinson Eds., *Patrons, clients, and policies: Patterns of democratic accountability and political competition*. pp50-67 [D2L]

**November 5 Hybrid Regimes—What is a hybrid regime? The gray area between democracy and authoritarianism. Are these the only ‘modern’ form of non-democratic regime?**

**Required:**


**Suggested:**


**November 7 Authoritarian Elections Part 1**— Why do authoritarian leaders hold elections? Elections as mechanisms of authoritarian rule?

**Required:**


**Suggested:**


**November 12 Authoritarian Elections Part 2**— Elections as precursors to democratization? Elections and Information.

**Required:**

Teorell, Jan and Axel Hadenius. 2009. “Elections as Levers of Democratization” in Democratization by Elections: A New Mode of Transition. [D2L]


**Suggested:**

November 14—Winning Elections: The Media Does the popularity of some authoritarian rulers legitimate their rule? How do authoritarian leaders generate and maintain popular support? How do authoritarians use the media to maintain social control?

Required:


Suggested:


November 19—Vote Buying and Voter Coercion Vote buying. Is vote-buying undemocratic? Why does vote-buying and voter coercion happen in some settings, but not others?

Required:


Suggested:


November 21—NO CLASS!!

November 26—Electoral Fraud Why use electoral fraud? Why not? How do we detect fraud?

Required:

Enikolopov, Ruben, Vasily Korovkin, Maria Petrova, Konstantin Sonin, and Alexei Zakharov. 2013 “Field Experiment Estimate of Electoral Fraud in Russian Parliamentary Elections” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 110(2)

**Suggested:**


**November 28—THANKSGIVING!!**

**December 3 Opposing Modern Authoritarian Regimes** What is the role of opposition in authoritarian regimes? How is it different from the role of the opposition in democracies? Can the opposition win? How? When do regimes permit the oppositions to organize? Opposition coalitions. Coordination problems.

**Required:**


**Suggested:**


**December 5—Protest** When does protest break out in authoritarian regimes? When can it bring regimes down?

**Required:**


**Suggested:**


Magaloni, Beatriz. 2006. *Voting for Autocracy*. Chapters 7 (and skim Chapter 5 for main idea)


December 10 and December 12-NO CLASS!!