The Politics of Authoritarian Regimes

POL SCI 312 LEC 001
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Spring 2015
TR 2:00PM-3:15PM
Room: LUB N110

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Office Hours: Wednesday 2-4pm
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 of 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 about 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 only be excused for documented illness, family crises, religious observances etc.
   Late Policy:  You are expected to arrive to class on time unless you have a valid excuse. It is disruptive and disrespectful to arrive to class late. If you are not present when I take roll at the beginning of class, you will be marked as absent for the day unless you have a documented excuse for your tardiness.

   Your class participation grade will be based upon three components: 1) reading journals (see below), 2) participation in class, 3) participation in our class debate (see below), and 4) attendance.

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.

   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 (Alternatively, you have the option of putting a typed journal entry in the dropbox folder labeled “JournalEntries”) This journal need not be typed. It may be handwritten on a piece of notebook paper. (I suggest that you use a three ring binder filled with loose-leaf pages, so that when I collect the journal you can turn in a single sheet of paper without turning in the entire journal) 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. The entry should contain a few sentence summary of the main point in the reading. 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 you will receive a participation grade of F for that day.

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 Spring Break.

   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—March 24

5) Prepare for and participate in our in-class debate--- April 14

The topic of this debate will be “The Future of Putin’s Russia” For this debate, the class will be divided into four teams. In order to prepare for this debate you will be required to prepare a 1-page ‘position paper’ that lays out why you think the position you are defending is the correct one and
why the opposition position is incorrect. This individual position paper is due in class on April 7. You will also be required to meet with your debate team once outside of class. More specific instructions will be distributed in the weeks prior to the debate.

6) 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 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 January-February we will discuss the methods for writing a research paper in more detail. In early February, I will distribute an extensive list of example topics, and you will meet with either me or Mr. Rao at least once to discuss your strategy. We should have these meetings
in February. Then, on March 3, I will ask each of your to submit a topic along with a preliminary outline. On April 16, I will ask each of you to submit a written five-page progress report on your research, along with a list of sources. This progress report will be graded and will constitute 10% of the final grade on your final paper. Details on this progress report will be provided in March.

The full final version of the paper will be due by email on May 12th.

Evaluation Scheme for Undergraduate Students:

Class Attendance and Participation: 20%
--including journal entries and debate performance
Geography Quiz: 5%
Reaction Papers: 20%
Mid Term Quiz 20%
Final Paper 35% (10% is based on progress report and 25% is based on final paper)

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 seven, not two, reaction papers and must write at least six 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 readings 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 our D2L site (except for the graduate article readings which can be accessed through UWM libraries). The suggested readings are not required, but are listed for your own further study. See the exception for graduate students.

**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
PART I—WHAT IS AUTHORITARIANISM?

January 27—Introduction and Overview

January 29—What is at stake? The state. Liberty and equality. Guardianship. Are citizens capable of governing themselves? Do citizens know their own preferences?

Required:

Dahl, Robert. 1989. Democracy and its Critics. Chapter 4-5 (ONLY). No need to read Chapter 6-7 in PDF.

Suggested:


Required:


Suggested:


February 5-- 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:

familiarize yourself with the methodology, maps, and charts provided here. No need to do a journal entry for this reading.)


Suggested:


In Class Quiz: Geography of Authoritarianism

Required:


Suggested:


February 12-- Authoritarianism’s Consequences Part 2—International Conflict

Required:
Bruce Russett 1994. *Grasping the Democratic Peace* Chapters 1 and 2. pp 3-42

Suggested:


**PART II: WHO GOVERNS IN AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES?**

**February 17-- 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:


**February 19-Dynasties and Succession**—Why do dictators hand power to family members?

Required:


[Presentation by Professor Reuter on your research papers]

Suggested:

February 24 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:


February 26 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


March 3 Institutionalized Dictatorships: Ruling Parties 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*. Selections


Suggested:


March 5: China: An Institutionalized Dictatorship China Part 2

Required:


Suggested:

Truex, Rory. 2014. “Consultative Authoritarianism and Its Limits” Comparative Political Studies

March 10—Totalitarianism and Ideology


Required:


Suggested:


March 12—The Soviet Union: A Case Study in Totalitarianism and One Party Rule

Required:


Suggested:
March 24—Mid-Term Quiz


Required:


Suggested:


March 31 — 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


**April 2—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

**April 7 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:**


April 9  **Authoritarian Elections**— Why do authoritarian leaders hold elections?  Elections as mechanisms of authoritarian rule?  Elections and Information.

**Required:**


**Suggested:**


April 14—In-Class Debate: Topic TBD

April 16-No Class

April 21—**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:**

April 23—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:


April 28 – 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:
April 30—Political Participation and the Opposition: Part 1—Who participates in authoritarian elections? How do authoritarian leaders manage civil society? The role of civil society in authoritarian regimes.


May 5 Political Participation and the Opposition: Part 2 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 opposition to organize? Opposition coalitions. Coordination problems.

Required:


Suggested:


May 7—Protest When does protest break out in authoritarian regimes? When can it bring regimes down? Collective action problems.

Required:

Suggested:


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