

## PSCI 215: Authoritarian Survival

Spring 2019

**Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 02:00-02:55pm, Holland Hall 502**

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**Office Hours:** Mondays 10.15-11.45 & Wednesdays 3-4.30 or by appointment

**Office Location:** Holland Hall 506

### Course Description

40% of the world's governments are authoritarian; over half of the planet's population lives under non-democratic rule. Though dictatorships do not rely on popular consent to stay in power, they do face significant domestic and international challenges to their survival. This class covers the challenges authoritarian leaders face and explains how they try to stay in power. We will examine survival strategies related to ideology, coercion, cooptation, electoral manipulation, patronage distribution, economic growth, and civil-military relations. We will focus particularly on contemporary examples of political dynamics in authoritarian regimes.

You will engage with these topics through:

- reading peer-reviewed political science articles and case-studies;
- an individual research project on an authoritarian country of your choice;
- being engaged with in-class discussions and activities, and
- watching and analyzing documentaries.

### Learning Environment

All classes will be based on discussion in various forms. To participate fully in these discussions, you must keep up with all the readings and attend class regularly. We all have a great deal to learn from the texts, but also from each other. I ask all of you to help the class be one in which others feel free to contribute their ideas. I understand that not everyone is willing or feels comfortable sharing their thoughts and opinions with others in a classroom setting. However, I hope that in the first few weeks we can foster a community where everyone feels that their opinions are valid and valued. It is of utmost importance that every student feels comfortable speaking in class and that we are always respectful of one another. Students with concerns, challenges, or special circumstances of any sort are encouraged to let me know as soon as possible.

## Expectations

### Academic Honesty

I expect you to be diligent about avoiding plagiarism or cheating in any form. I am committed to treating Honor System violations seriously and urge all students to become familiar with its terms set out at <https://wp.stolaf.edu/thebook/academic/integrity/>.

### Communication

While I am always happy to communicate via e-mail for quick clarification questions, e-mails are not the best way to discuss substantive questions concerning course material. I encourage you to come to office hours or schedule meetings with me if you would like me to clarify concepts or discuss issues in depth.

### Technology

The use of laptops/tablets/phones are not allowed during lectures. Besides being distracting, existing [research](#) proves that taking notes by hand improves learning outcomes. I will let you know when a specific group discussion/class activity requires you to use your laptops. If you want to have the articles, reading notes, or any other materials in front of you during class, please print them beforehand.

### Disability and Access Accommodations

I am committed to supporting the learning of all students in my class. Students seeking accommodations, please contact Disability and Access staff at 507-786-3288 or by visiting [wp.stolaf.edu/asc/dac](http://wp.stolaf.edu/asc/dac).

### Preferred Gender Pronoun

This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is on the class roster, please let me know. Feel free to correct me on your preferred gender pronoun. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

## Course Requirements

### Research Project: (65%)

You will work on a 4-step writing assignment that is intended to help you link the theories covered in class to real world cases of authoritarian politics. The goal of the project is to analyze the current state of politics in an authoritarian country of your choice, identify the challenges the leadership of the country faces and the survival strategies they use, and to offer policy suggestions for individuals/groups/parties interested in democratization.

### *Library Resources for your Research Project*

On February 22, we'll meet with Ann Schaezner, the Political Science Department's librarian. She will walk us through the course website/resources package we've created

to help you with your research project. I also encourage you to be in contact with Ann Schaenzer if you have any research related questions throughout the semester.

- **Country Selection - [5%]:** First, you will pick the country you will work on for your research project. Your country must be classified as “Partly Free” or “Not Free” in the [Freedom House Database](#) for the year 2019. Keep in mind that this selection is a commitment for the rest of the semester. Therefore, I advise you to pick a country you are interested in.

Once you select your country, visit the [CIA World Factbook Database](#) and read the page on your country. In your 500-word short paper, you are expected to highlight 1) the characteristics of the country that can strengthen the leader’s hold onto power 2) the characteristics of the country that can make the leader vulnerable, along with your reasoning. The goal of this assignment is to make sure that you will pick a country early on in the semester and start getting to know your country. You do not need to conduct any additional research at this stage, but every extra information you will gather will be helpful to you in future stages of the project. Hard copy submissions are due the beginning of the class on **February 22**.

**If you wish the course to count for an area studies program**, you are expected to choose your country in accordance to your regional specialization. Please let me know if you are planning to count this course towards an area studies program or a concentration by **February 18**.

- **Paper 1 - [20%]:** Next, you will conduct research on the regime characteristics of your country (electoral process, judicial system, constitution, rights and liberties etc..) and write a paper on the reasons why your country is classified as an authoritarian regime. Hard copy submissions are due the beginning of the class on **March 15**.
- **Paper 2 - [20%]:** For the third step of your project, you will identify the challenges faced by the leadership of your country and write a paper to assess the effectiveness of the survival strategies being employed by the leadership. Hard copy submissions are due the beginning of the class on **April 15**.
- **Paper 3 - [20%]:** Lastly, you are expected to provide policy suggestions for the opposition groups/political parties/resistance groups that are interested in democratization/regime change/leadership change/political reforms. Hard copy submissions are due the beginning of the class on **May 15**.

Detailed information about the expectations for each step, as well as a step-by-step research guide can be found in the library course site created specifically for this project.

### A Note on Writing Support

Writing is one of the most important skills one can learn in college. If you are struggling with writing, please come to office hours to discuss strategies to improve your writing. For additional writing resources, do not hesitate to take advantage of [the Writing Desk](#). Peer tutors at the Writing Desk offer help with any paper, in any class, at any stage of the writing

process. You can sign up for an appointment online or drop in to RML 354 or the outer reference room, across from the reference desk/by the IT helpdesk.

### **Participation: (10%)**

Attendance will be taken regularly, as it is a prerequisite for participation. Students who miss class sessions, as well as those who attend regularly but do not participate actively, will have their grade lowered proportionally. Your attendance is important both to your ability to master course material and to the overall quality of class discussions. You are permitted two unexcused absences throughout the semester without penalty. I do not need to know the reason or see any documentation. However, you will be penalized for any unexcused absences beyond the two.

However, perfect attendance does not mean a perfect participation grade - you must be actively engaged in class to score well in this area. Participation points are assigned based upon the quantity and quality of a student's contributions to the class.

### **Documentary Responses: (15%)**

Between April 29 and May 13, you will watch 6 documentaries on various cases of authoritarianism. After watching each documentary, you have two tasks:

1. Write five bullet points on how selected themes highlighted in the documentary can be linked to the scholarly literature we've read and the discussions we've had throughout the semester.
2. Write three discussion questions to facilitate the discussion in class. Make sure that your questions are not intended to summarize the documentary, but to analyze and discuss them in relation to what we've learned in class previously.

Your documentary responses are due the day of each class at 10am. You are expected to submit your responses as a "forum contribution" on Moodle.

### **Research Presentations (10%)**

April 22, 24, and 26 are reserved for your research presentations based on the first two papers of your research project. The goal of this assignment is to share your case expertise with the students working on other countries. I might put you in groups of 3 or 4, based on country selections. We might also use May 22, the designated time slot for the final exam of the course, to continue the presentations. I reserve the right to modify the presentation assignment and its schedule based on the distribution of the country choices. I will update you on this assignment and post further instructions on Moodle in March.

## Evaluation Policies

### Grading

I follow the College's official grading benchmark. You can access them in the Academic catalog section on "grades."

93 and above: A	90-92: A-	87-89: B+	83-86: B
80-82: B-	77-79: C+	73-76: C	70-72: C-
67-69: D+	64-66: D	61-63: D-	60 and below: F

### Late Assignment Policy

To insure the fairness of evaluation and grading, it is essential that you complete your written work on the assigned due dates. In case of a genuine emergency, contact me as soon as you are reasonably able to do so. I may request documentation in such cases. Turning in assignments late will lead to a letter grade reduction for every 24 hours. Not being present on the days in which you are scheduled to be a discussant or present your research will automatically lead to a 0 in all non-emergency situations.

## Course Schedule and Readings

This course has no assigned textbooks. Some readings are shared via Moodle, and others are available below by clicking on the blue hyperlinks.

- February 8 (Friday): Course Introduction
  - Review Syllabus
- February 11 (Monday): Conceptualizing Authoritarian Regimes
  - Schmitter and Karl - "What Democracy Is ... and Is Not"
- February 13 (Wednesday): Measuring Authoritarianism
  - Read [Freedom in the World 2018: Methodology](#).
- February 15 (Friday): Classifying Authoritarian Regimes
  - Gandhi - "Political Institutions under Dictatorship, Chapter 1: the World of Dictatorial Institutions"
- February 18 (Monday): Hybrid Regimes
  - Diamond - "Thinking about Hybrid Regimes"
  - Levitsky and Way - "Elections Without Democracy: The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism"
- February 20 (Wednesday): Selectorate Theory

- Bueno de Mesquita and Smith - “The Dictator’s Handbook, Chapter 1: The Rules of Politics”

- February 22 (Friday): Library Day: Resources for the Research Paper

\*\*\* **Country Selection Paper - Due Date**

## Unit 2: Threats from Below

- February 25 (Monday): Protests

- Josua and Edel - “To Repress or Not to Repress: Regime Survival Strategies in the Arab Spring”
- Yuen and Cheng - “Neither Repression Nor Concession? A Regime’s Attrition against Mass Protests”

- February 27 (Wednesday): Case Studies: Burma, Indonesia, the Philippines

- Boudreau - “State Repression and Democracy Protest in Three Southeast Asian Countries” Chapter 2 in Meyer et al (eds.) “*Social Movements: Identity, Culture, and the State*” -Available through Catalyst

- March 1 (Friday): No Class: Prof. Menevis is giving a talk at the University of Iowa

- March 4 (Monday): Benefiting from Protests

- Edel and Josua - “How Authoritarian Rulers Seek to Legitimize Repression: Framing Mass Killing in Egypt and Uzbekistan”
- Crabtree, Fariss and Schuler - “In Belarus, Europe’s “Last Dictator” is actually Allowing Protest. Here’s Why.”
- Pinckney - “Why Do Peaceful Protests “Turn Violent”?”

- March 6 (Wednesday): Elections under Authoritarianism

- Gandhi and Lust-Okar - “Elections under Authoritarianism”

- March 8 (Friday): Stealing Elections

- Cheeseman and Klaas - How to Steal an Election in Broad Daylight

- March 11 (Monday): Election Monitoring

- Hyde - *The Pseudo-Democrat’s Dilemma: Why Election Observation Became an International Norm* Chapter 1

- March 13 (Wednesday): Elite Incentives for Authoritarian Elections
  - Blaydes - *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarek's Egypt* Introduction
- March 15 (Friday): Public Incentives for Authoritarian Elections
  - Hsieh et. al - “The Price of Political Opposition: Evidence from Venezuela’s *Maisanta*”
- **\*\*\* Paper 1 - Due Date**
- March 18 (Monday): State-run Media
  - Walker and Orttung - “Breaking the News: The Role of State-Run Media”
- March 20 (Wednesday): Social Media
  - Dewey et.al - “The Impact of Social Media on Social Unrest in the Arab Spring”
  - Gladwell - “Small Change: Why the Revolution will not be Tweeted”
- March 22 (Friday): The Internet
  - Kalathil and Boas - “The Internet and State Control in Authoritarian Regimes: China, Cuba, and the Counterrevolution
- March 25 (Monday): Spring Break
- March 27 (Wednesday): Spring Break
- March 29 (Friday): Spring Break
- April 1 (Monday): Coup-Proofing
  - Quinlivan - “Coup-Proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East”
- April 3 (Wednesday): Legislatures in Authoritarian Countries
  - Arriola - “Patronage and Political Stability in Africa” *skip pp.1349-1358*
  - Levitsky and Way - “Beyond Patronage: Violent Struggle, Ruling Party Cohesion, and Authoritarian Durability”
- April 5 (Friday): Economic Hardship
  - Klein, Martinez Machain and Tokdemir - “It’s the Economy, Stupid (But Blame Minority Groups)”
  - Kanat - “Diversionary Foreign Policy in Authoritarian States: The Use of Multiple Diversionary Strategies by Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War”

- April 8 (Monday): Economic Hardship II
  - Grauvogel and von Soest - “Sanctions can be Counter-productive in Instigating Democratic Reform in Authoritarian Regimes”
  - Wood - “A Hand upon the Throat of the Nation: Economic Sanctions and State Repression” *Skip pp.498-509*
- April 10 (Wednesday): The Natural Resource Curse
  - Friedman - “The First Law of Petropolitics”
  - Treisman - “Is Russia Cursed by Oil?”
- April 12 (Friday): Businesses and the Authoritarian State
  - Esen and Gumuscu - “Building a Competitive Authoritarian Regime: State-Business Relations in the AKP’s Turkey
- April 15 (Monday): Foreign Aid: Friend or Foe?
  - Wright - “To Invest or Insure?: How Authoritarian Time Horizons Impact Foreign Aid Effectiveness” *pp:971-977*
  - Easterly - “Foreign Aid for Scoundrels”
- **\*\*\* Paper 2 - Due Date**
- April 17 (Wednesday): Personalism
  - Kendall-Taylor, Frantz and Wright - “The Global Rise of Personalized Politics: It’s No Just Dictators”
- April 19 (Friday): Rise in Authoritarianism?
  - Bermeo - “On Democratic Backsliding”
  - Freedom House - [Democracy in Retreat](#)
- April 22 (Monday): Research Presentations Day 1
- April 24 (Wednesday): Research Presentations Day 2
- April 26 (Friday): Research Presentations Day 3
- April 29 (Monday): Documentary #1
- May 1 (Wednesday): Documentary #2
- May 3 (Friday): Documentary #3

- May 6 (Monday): **Documentary #4**
- May 8 (Wednesday): **Documentary #5**
- May 10 (Friday): **No Class**
- May 13 (Monday): **Documentary #6**
- May 15 (Wednesday): **Wrap Up**  
**\*\*\* Paper 3 - Due Date**