

Poli Sci 401: Authoritarianism  
Spring 2020  
T-Th 8:00 - 9:15 AM  
Ingraham 223

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*This syllabus may change. Any changes will be distributed via email and posted on Canvas (<https://canvas.wisc.edu/>). This document and the materials of this course, including the lecture slides and testing materials, are for the private use of this class only. Distribution without the written consent of the instructor of record is prohibited.*

**Course Description, Learning Outcomes, and Requisites:**

Today nearly 3 billion of the world's 7.5 billion citizens live in non-democratic countries. Political scientists have described and theorized a variety of regime types for these less-than-democratic countries, ranging from totalitarian states where no dissent is tolerated, such as contemporary North Korea, to "milder" authoritarian regimes that couple limited space for the opposition with a variety of coercive strategies, such as many of the regimes in the Arab World. Scholars have examined how these regimes emerge, how they maintain support, why they collapse, and the ways in which their legacies influence the types of polities that emerge in the aftermath.

There are no prerequisites for this course, however you will likely benefit from spending a few minutes everyday following major world news, starting at *The New York Times'* portal: <https://www.nytimes.com/section/world/>.

**Course Credit:**

This is a three credit course. This credit standard is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course learning activities. These include regularly scheduled course meetings (two 75-minute class periods per week). It also presumes other responsibilities as described in this document.

As an upper-division seminar, each week you will be responsible for reading approximately 75 pages of material. *In order for such courses to work, you must read the assigned materials and come to class ready to discuss them. This is reflected in the large proportion of your grade that will come from attendance and participation. "Participation"*

means being able to articulate the readings' main ideas and arguments, describe their evidence, and draw connections between them. I expect that everyone will struggle with at least some of the readings for this class at one point or another, and that's OK! But it is not OK to struggle silently; you are still expected to contribute to the discussion about the reading by asking questions, describing your difficulties, and developing your interpretation. If you continually find yourself struggling to keep up with or understand the readings, then *please see me as soon as possible*. As mentioned, participation and discussion is critical to the success of this class, and if I am dissatisfied with the level of discussion and participation I will adapt the syllabus and grading schema accordingly.

### **How To Contact Me:**

I encourage you to come to my office hours. If you cannot come during office hours, please email me and we can attempt to find an alternative time to meet. I will respond to emails within 48 hours during the semester, and within 24 hours during the weeks in which we have exams. If I do not respond after this time, please feel free to re-send your email as a reminder.

### **Grading Criteria:**

There are 100 total points available in this class, distributed as follows:

Seminar Attendance & Participation:	40% (40 points)
Four Reaction Papers:	40% (40 Points)
Book Report and Presentation:	20% (20 Points)

The grading scale is as follows, including the overall points as well as the University of Wisconsin's range for letter grades:

Point Range	Letter Grade	GPA
90- 100 points	A (Excellent)	4.0
85- 89.99 points	AB (Intermediate grade)	3.5
80- 84.99 points	B (Good)	3
75- 79.99 points	BC (Intermediate grade)	2.5
70- 74.99 points	C (Fair)	2.0
60- 69.99 points	D (Poor)	1.0
59.99- 0 points	F (Failure)	0.0

*Disputes:* I occasionally make mistakes or otherwise misinterpret answers. If you believe that your grade is incorrect as a result of an error, please submit a request for a grade change *in writing* to me within 48 hours of receiving the grade. This document should be a stand-alone document such as a .pdf (i.e. not an email). In the appeal, please clearly and concisely explain why the grade is incorrect, based on the merit of the work rather than comparisons to other students or various adverse consequences (i.e. "I need a better grade to get into law school"). Please note that re-grading may result in an increase *or* a decrease in the initial grade.

*Attendance, Absence, Participation, and Late Policy:* Attendance and active participation in this class is an important component of overall learning outcomes. For that reason, I will circulate a sign in sheet during every class. For each class you are present, i.e. signed in, you'll receive one point. Because all of us are busy, only twenty of these sign-ins will count (i.e. you have two free absences). Those who are present for more than twenty of these classes will accumulate the points as extra credit. Absences for religious or university-sponsored activity will be accommodated, but must be cleared in advance.

This is a seminar class, not a lecture, and it will succeed or fail based on your participation. For this reason, you will receive a separate grade based on your active participation class discussions, up to 20 points total. For your purposes, you should consider your participation grade at the beginning of the semester as zero (0/20), and that you have the entire semester to accumulate 20 points by posing questions, offering answers, and making other relevant interventions into our discussions. Put differently, a student who attends class but sits silently will end the semester with zero participation points.

Late (unexcused) assignments will be penalized (for this course, this only applies to the final project, see below). For every day the assignment is late— meaning up to the hypothetical class start time on the following day— 10% of the total points available will be deducted off the top of the assignment. Please note that all late assignments must be emailed to me (the timestamp on the email will be used to assess the late penalty).

### **Technology Policy:**

A variety of research suggests deleterious average effects on student learning due to laptop usage in classroom settings. This alone does not seem to me to justify a laptop ban; not only is everyone different, college students are adults and can make their own choices. However, research also shows evidence of a contagion effect: it is not only the laptop user whose performance suffers, but those sitting in proximity to the user *even if they themselves do not use a laptop*. For this reason, I do not allow laptops in my classes. If you have a documented disability, please see me to discuss accommodations.

### **Course Materials:**

- Readings will be posted on Canvas.
- See below (“Assignments”) for book report options.

### **Course Schedule:**

#### Week 1 (Jan. 21- 23): What is an Authoritarian Regime?

- January 21: Read the syllabus.
- January 23: Arendt, Chapter 12 of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.

Week 2 (Jan. 28- 30): What is an Authoritarian Regime, Ctd.

- January 28: Linz and Stepan, "Modern Nondemocratic Regimes."
- January 30: Levitsky and Way, "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism."

Week 3 (Feb. 4- 6): Sources of Authoritarian Regimes

- February 4: Slater, "Violent Origins of Authoritarian Variation."
- February 6: Levitsky and Ziblatt, Chapter 1 of *How Democracies Die*.

Week 4 (Feb. 11- 13): Psychological Predispositions

- February 11: Milgram, "The Perils of Obedience."
- February 13: Stenner and Haidt, "Authoritarianism Is Not a Momentary Madness..."

Week 5 (Feb. 18- 20): Protection Rackets

- February 18: Ketchley and El-Rayyes, "Unpopular Protest."
- February 20: Davis and Silver, "Civil Liberties vs. Security."

Week 6 (Feb. 25- 27): Power and Fear

- February 25: No class; I will be traveling.
- February 27: al-Khalil, Chapter 2 of *Republic of Fear*.

Week 7 (Mar. 3- 5): Power and Fear

- March 3: Wedeen, "Acting "As if"."
- March 5: Kuran, "Now Out Of Never."

Week 8 (Mar. 10- 12): Popular Buy-In

- March 10: Truex and Tavana, "Implicit Attitudes Towards an Authoritarian Regime."
- March 12: Gengler, "The Political Economy of Sectarianism in the Gulf."

Week 9 (Mar. 17- 19): Spring Break

- March 17: No Class.

- March 19: No Class.

Week 10 (Mar. 24- 26): Threats and Opponents

- March 24: Svobik, Chapter 6 of *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*.
- March 26: No class; I will be traveling.

Week 11 (Mar. 31- Apr. 2): Institutional Engineering

- March 24: Brownlee, Chapter 1 of *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*.
- March 26: Langston and Morgenstern, "Campaigning in an Electoral Authoritarian Regime."

Week 12 (Apr. 7- 9): Coup Proofing

- April 7: Bou Nassif, "Generals and Autocrats."
- April 9: No class; I will be traveling.

Week 13 (Apr. 14- 16): What Comes After

- Apr. 14: Brownlee, "Portents of Pluralism."
- Apr. 16: No class; I will be traveling.

Week 14 (Apr. 21- 23): What Comes After, Ctd.

- Apr. 21: Hagopian, "Democracy by Undemocratic Means?"
- Apr. 23: Pop-Eleches and Tucker, "Associated With The Past?"

Week 15 (Apr. 28- 30):

- Apr. 28: Presentations.
- Apr. 30: Presentations.

## Assignments

### Reaction Papers (40 Points Total)

Four times during the semester— your choice— you will write a full two page "reaction paper" to the course readings. In each, I want to know what you think about the

readings, the arguments, the evidence, and how they challenge or confirm what you think about authoritarianism. The best reaction papers will make connections with prior readings and, when appropriate, other historical and contemporary cases. The worst reaction papers will be summaries of the readings.

Please note that I have particular formatting requirements for these papers: they must be printed out, double spaced, 12 point font, with one inch margins. The first line of the paper should be a centered title consisting *solely* of "Reaction Paper: (Date)." For example, if you write your reaction paper for the first class reading, your first line should read "Reaction Paper: January 23." No other administrative data should be on the first two pages (i.e. Name, Date, Class, Professor, etc...). *Your name should only go on the back of the second page (its fine to hand write it) so that I can blindly grade the paper.* Failure to follow these guidelines will incur a penalty.

Each of these papers must be turned in, in class, on the day the reading you are reacting to is discussed. Because you have the opportunity to choose the due dates, I will not accept late papers for this particular assignment (i.e. you cannot write a reaction paper after we have discussed the reading in class).

### **Group Book Report and Presentation (20 Points Total)**

The academic study of authoritarianism is often (rightly) criticized for being too clinical and divorced from the everyday experiences of people living in authoritarian regimes. In an attempt to rectify this, our final project in this course will be a group (four person) book report and presentation on recent and classic works of literature dealing in some way with authoritarianism:

- Vargas Llosa, *The Feast of the Goat*
- Danticat, *Krik? Krak!*
- Apostol, *The Gun Dealer's Daughter*
- Sinclair Lewis, *It Can't Happen Here*
- Kadare, *Traitor's Niche*
- Bandi, *The Accusation*

Each group will be responsible for a ten page paper, due in class on April 28, comparing and contrasting the work of literature assigned to your group with the readings from the course. In the paper you should try to answer: what aspect of authoritarianism does the author illuminate? What does he/she miss? What does the work of literature tell us about authoritarianism that the political science readings miss? In addition to the paper, the last two class periods are set aside for an approximately 20 minute presentation from each group on their book and their findings.

Group projects can be tricky to assess. In addition to the final paper and presentation, I will also ask each student to provide me privately a brief paragraph or so summary of the work of their group, how the responsibilities were divided, and if there are any concerns about free riding or shirking behavior. I'd encourage each group to meet early and outline clear responsibilities and expectations to avoid problems down the road (hint: it would be smart to schedule group meetings on the days when we do not meet as a class).

## **Classroom Policies**

### **• General**

- I believe that respect and solidarity are core components of academic inquiry. I will make every effort to ensure that our classroom fosters those ideals, and I expect you to do the same.
- Once class begins, please turn off or set to airplane mode all phones, tablets, and laptops, cage carrier pigeons, and douse signal fires.
- Videotaping or recording of class lectures and discussions is absolutely not permitted. If you have a documented accommodation that requires such recording, please let me know and we can identify possible solutions.

### **• Attendance, Participation, and Absences**

- Attendance is an important component of this class. Historically, I note a strong correlation between how often a student attends class and how well that student performs. You might be an outlier to this general pattern, but you probably won't.
- Students are responsible for all missed work, regardless of the reason for absence. It is also the absentee's responsibility to get all missing notes or materials from classmates. Please do not ask me "did I miss anything important?" Everything we discuss in class is important; otherwise I'd just be wasting your (and my own) time.

### **• Plagiarism and Academic Honesty**

- Students are bound by the University of Wisconsin's Student Code of Conduct, which I encourage you to review here:  
<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/misconduct/academic-integrity/>. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary action include, but is not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion. I am happy to discuss issues

of proper citation or other matters of academic integrity with any students who have questions. Academic honor is a cornerstone of a respected scholarly community like the University of Wisconsin, and I expect us all to do our parts to uphold it in this class.

- To understand more about plagiarism and proper attribution of sources, please consult the Writing Center, at: <https://writing.wisc.edu/>.

- **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

- The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students with disabilities should contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center (<https://mcburney.wisc.edu/>) to arrange assistance for the semester. I am more than happy to accommodate needs, but it is your responsibility to complete this process officially and in a timely manner, within three weeks of course inception (or upon the recognition of a disability).

- **Diversity and Inclusion**

- Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world. For more information, please visit: <https://diversity.wisc.edu/>.

### **Title IX/Clery Act Notification**

- Sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking) and sex discrimination violate university policies. Students experiencing such behavior may obtain on-campus confidential support from UHS Survivor Services <https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/survivor/>, or 608-265-5600, option 3, or the Rape Crisis Center <https://thercc.org/> 608-251-7273. To report sexual misconduct or sex discrimination, contact the Title IX Coordinator at 608-890-3788 or UWPD 608-264-2677.

Disclosure of sexual misconduct or sex discrimination to university faculty may not be confidential depending on that specific instructor's reporting responsibilities. Faculty deemed as "Responsible Employees" must forward such reports, including names and circumstances, to the university's Title IX Coordinator. For more information on how the university works to protect confidentiality, please visit the Title IX Protecting Confidentiality page: <https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/student-information/#protecting-confidentiality>.

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