

APPROACHES TO AUTHORITARIAN POLITICS

PLSC 23220 / 44976
Spring 2025
Tue Thu: 09:30 AM - 10:50 AM
Classics 111

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Office Hours: Fridays 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM (on Zoom & in person)

Course Description

What are authoritarian regimes, and how are they distinguished from democracies? How did scholars approach this distinction at different points in history? How do we try to study and understand authoritarian regimes today? Is authoritarianism a regime type or a form of politics we may observe anywhere? Throughout the quarter, we will seek answers to these questions by situating authoritarianism in its broader historical context, engaging with scholarship in political theory and comparative politics on a diverse set of nondemocratic regimes ranging from 20th-century totalitarian regimes to contemporary competitive authoritarianisms.

The course has six parts:

- Part One introduces the concept of authoritarianism. What are the criteria we use in distinguishing authoritarian regimes and policies from democratic ones? When do we call these authoritarian, totalitarian, fascist, or populist? Does the distinction matter?
- Part Two looks at totalitarian regimes, their ideological underpinnings, and principles of organization. Should we consider totalitarianism as a unique political regime, as an experiment on the limits of political control, or as a Cold War discourse primarily aimed at invalidating the Soviet political system?
- Part Three looks at authoritarian politics and issues of political control, power-sharing, and regime longevity. Why do some authoritarian regimes last while others are overthrown? When do we observe physical violence? How should we understand the presence of democratic institutions (elections, separation of powers, independent judiciary, etc.) in authoritarian countries?
- Part Four turns to the matter of authoritarian rhetoric, considering different approaches to support for and belief in authoritarian regimes and leaders. What does authoritarian rhetoric do? Do citizens of authoritarian regimes really believe in the official rhetoric?
- Part Five considers contemporary threats to democracy. Should citizens in democratic nations worry about regime change or the issue of political control within democracies? Which criteria we use in relation to authoritarian regimes could be useful for political scientists to identify warning signs? Which forms of political control might “count” as authoritarian?
- Part Six looks at the demise of authoritarian regimes, as well as forms of resistance and protest. When do we see authoritarian regimes transition? Is democratization a collective action problem? What are the strategies available to ordinary people in these regimes?

The course materials draw from a wide range of historical and contemporary cases and methods of analysis. By the end of the seminar, you will be able to engage with the existing debates on authoritarianism, gain familiarity with qualitative and quantitative research strategies, and have the tools to critically engage with contemporary academic and journalistic accounts of authoritarian politics.

Required texts and materials

All required course materials (and when possible, the suggested readings) will be on Canvas.

Course Policies (Adapted from CCTL Syllabus Guide)

Academic Integrity: Acting with academic integrity means, in brief, not submitting the statements, work, or ideas of others as one's own. You must produce your own work and cite your sources. You may use any citation style of your choice (MLA, APA, Chicago...). The Library's website gives a summary of common formats: <https://guides.lib.uchicago.edu/cite>

I aim for the work in this class to be productively challenging and I am here to provide the support you need to meet that challenge. If you're feeling stressed about an assignment, please email me or come talk to me during office hours.

You are expected to comply with University regulations regarding honest work. If you are in doubt about what constitutes academic dishonesty, speak with me before the assignment is due. Failure to maintain academic integrity on an assignment will result in a penalty befitting the violation, up to and including failing the course and the relevant University sanctions.

Technology in Class: You are welcome to use a laptop or tablet in this class as long as it contributes to your learning. This class is discussion-based. This means that all students are expected to actively listen to one another and participate in classroom activities. Please make sure that your engagement with the class and your peers is not affected by your use of technology.

AI Tools: Generative AI tools present a transformative shift in our lives, but their utility in this course will be limited. While these tools may aid brainstorming, they often produce inaccurate or superficial responses that do not align with the high standards of analysis expected from you. Using generative AI to write would also mean you are not thinking how the best way to express a thought. Part of our task in this class is to develop our capacity to make arguments that would convey what we think and convince our audience. If you are not doing the writing, my feedback will be significantly less useful. Lastly, remember that transparency should be at the heart of your practice, and misuse of AI will be treated like any form of academic dishonesty.

Late Work Policy: Timely submission of assignments is essential for me to be able to provide feedback on your work. I understand that you have multiple competing obligations and you may need some flexibility. Accordingly, you will have two "grace days" that you can use to submit late work over the course of the term (except the reading response, i.e. RP 1). One day past a due date equals one grace day. After you have used all your grace days for the term, a late penalty of one-third a letter grade will be assessed on assignments for each day past a due date (i.e. from a B+ to a B).

Accessibility and Accommodations: The University of Chicago is committed to ensuring equitable access to our academic programs and services. Students with disabilities who have been approved for the use of academic accommodations by Student Disability Services (SDS) and need a reasonable accommodation(s) to participate fully in this course should follow the procedures established by SDS for using accommodations. Timely notifications are required to ensure that your accommodations can be implemented. Please meet with me to discuss your access needs in this class after you have completed the SDS procedures for requesting accommodations.

Assessment

Active Participation: This course is organized as a seminar, and student participation is essential. Participation entails, first, being present in the classroom in body and mind. Students are expected to come to the class, having done the readings and any response papers uploaded on Canvas by their peers. As in many other political science classes, the topics we will discuss relate to our collective life and sometimes personal experience. Students are expected to support their peers and foster a collaborative, respectful learning environment for every individual, adhering to academic and professional standards.

Response Paper 1 on a Reading: You will write a reading response on one of the pieces in the syllabus. Your paper should summarize the main points of our reading and try to relate them to the general themes of our seminar. The paper should be submitted to Canvas by 6 PM the day before our class so that we can all take a look at your response. An online sign-up sheet will be distributed after the first class, as a Canvas announcement. (2-3 Pages, 12pt, double-spaced)

Due Date: 6 PM the day before that particular reading is assigned in class.

Response Paper 2 on a Movie: You will watch a movie depicting daily life in a non-democratic context, and write a response paper about it, using our discussions in weeks 1, 2, and 3. A list of movies and details about the assignment will be provided. (2-3 Pages, 12pt, double-spaced)

Due Date: Sunday of Week 4, midnight.

Response Paper 3 on a Journalistic Account: You will write a response paper engaging with a journalistic account of authoritarianism, using the theoretical and empirical tools gained in the class so far, especially in weeks 4, 5, and 6. You can pick any opinion piece, but a collection of such accounts can be found here, under the drop-down menu “Authoritarianism”:

<https://newfascismsyllabus.com/syllabus/interrogating-the-present> (2-3 Pages, 12pt, ds.)

Due Date: Sunday of Week 7, midnight.

Final Paper: Students will write a final paper (7-8 pages, 12pt, double-spaced) on one of the questions provided by the instructor. Advanced students who would like to pursue an independent paper can do so, provided they discuss it with the instructor by the end of Week 8.

Due Date: Thursday of Week 10, midnight (1 week after our last class)

Important: Graduating students cannot submit this assignment late, as the last date to submit their grades to the registrar is June 1st.

Grading: Participation: 25%, Response Papers: 15% each, Final Paper: 30%

Course Schedule and List of Readings

Please do the readings in the order listed in the syllabus. You are expected to do these readings before you come to class.

The suggested readings are for those who are interested in that particular issue. They are provided to give you a head start on any question, period, or case that sparks your curiosity. I would be very happy to discuss these in class, as well as during office hours, but you are not obligated to do them.

PART I: Concepts and Research

Tuesday, March 25th: W1 C1

- 1. Introduction: Thinking about Authority. (Daily Life, Obedience, Control)**
 - a. Pepinsky, Thomas. 2017. "Life in Authoritarian States Is Mostly Boring and Tolerable." *Vox*. January 9, 2017.
 - b. Berlant, Lauren. 2008. "Thinking about Feeling Historical." *Emotion, Space and Society* 1 (1): 4–9. (Only read the underlined sections)
 - c. Aristotle. 1998. *Politics*. Translated by C. D. C. Reeve. Indianapolis, Ind: Hackett Pub: Book 1 Chapter 1 (1-2), Book IV Chapter 4 (106-111).
 - d. Hobbes, Thomas. 1994. *Leviathan*. Edited by Edwin Curley. Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company. Chapter XVI (101-104).
 - e. Arendt, Hannah. 1956. "Authority in the Twentieth Century." *The Review of Politics* 18 (4): 403–17.

Thursday, March 27th: W1 C2

- 2. Concepts and Research on Democracy and Dictatorship**
 - a. Dahl, Robert A. 1971. *Polyarchy; Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press. (1-10)
 - b. Munck, Gerardo L., and Jay Verkuilen. 2002. "Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: Evaluating Alternative Indices." *Comparative Political Studies* 35(1): 5-34
 - c. Gandhi, Jennifer. 2008. *Political Institutions under Dictatorship*. 1st ed. Cambridge University Press: Chapter 1.
 - d. Wedeen, Lisa. 2004. "Concepts and Commitments in the Study of Democracy." In *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*, edited by Ian Shapiro, Rogers M. Smith, and Tarek E. Masoud, 1st ed., 274–306. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511492174.013>.
 - e. Glasius, Marlies. 2018. "What Authoritarianism Is ... and Is Not: a Practice Perspective." *International Affairs* 94 (3): 515–33. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiy060>.

Suggested readings:

- i. Collier, David, and Steven Levitsky. 1997. "Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research." *World Politics* 49 (3): 430–51.
- ii. Geddes, Barbara. 1999. "What Do We Know about Democratization after Twenty Years?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 2 (1): 115-144.
- iii. Bush, Sarah. 2017. "Analysis | Should We Trust Democracy Ratings? New Research Finds Hidden Biases." *The Washington Post*, November 7, 2017. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/11/07/why-do-we-trust-certain-democracy-ratings-new-research-explains-hidden-biases/>.
- iv. Bush, Sarah Sunn. 2017. "The Politics of Rating Freedom: Ideological Affinity, Private Authority, and the Freedom in the World Ratings." *Perspectives on Politics* 15 (3): 711–31. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592717000925>.
- v. Parker, Christopher Sebastian, and Christopher C. Towler. 2019. "Race and Authoritarianism in American Politics." *Annual Review of Political Science* 22 (Volume 22, 2019): 503–19. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-050317-064519>.

PART II: Totalitarian Regimes

Tuesday, April 1st: W2 C1

3. Totalitarianism: State, Ideology, and Terror

- a. Arendt, Hannah. 1973. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New ed. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. (selections)
 - i. Preface to Part III (xxiii-xxviii)
 - ii. Chapter 9: Part II Perplexities of the rights of men (290-96, 301-2)
 - iii. Chapter 10: Part I The masses, plus the beginning of Part II The elite-mob alliance (305-29)
 - iv. Chapter 11: Part I Totalitarian propaganda (341-52, 356, 361-62), Part II Totalitarian organization (364-75, 381-88)
 - v. Chapter 12: Intro and Part I The so-called totalitarian state (389-92, 399-402, 404-9), Part II The secret police (419-21, 423-25, 433), Part III Total domination (437-38, 444, 456-59)
 - vi. Chapter 13: Ideology and Terror (460-79)

Thursday, April 3rd: W2 C2

4. Totalitarianism: Bureaucratic Organization and Modern Outlook

- a. Friedrich, Carl J., and Zbigniew K. Brzezinski. 1965. *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Harvard University Press
 - i. 2. The General Characteristics of Totalitarian Dictatorship 15-30
 - ii. 3. The Dictator 31-44
 - iii. 11. Propaganda 129-147
 - iv. 21. The general problem of resistance 279-81, 286

- b. Kershaw, Ian. 2015. *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*. Bloomsbury Revelations edition. London, New York: Bloomsbury. (39-45)
- c. Silberstein, Benjamin Katzeff. 2010. “North Korea: Fading Totalitarianism in the ‘Hermit Kingdom’*.” *North Korean Review* 6 (2): 40–54. <https://doi.org/10.3172/NKR.6.2.40>.
- d. Revkin, Mara. 2016. “The Legal Foundations of the Islamic State.” Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution. (5-7, 12-13, 17-9)

Suggested readings:

- i. Dukalskis, Alexander, and Benjamin Katzeff Silberstein. 2024. “Evaluating Everyday Politics in North Korea.” *Asian Studies Review* 48 (2): 217–30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357823.2024.2312140>.

PART III: Authoritarian Regimes, Repression, and Institutions

Tuesday, April 8th: W3 C1

5. Authoritarianism: Oppression and Pluralism

- a. Linz, Juan J. 1964. “An Authoritarian Regime: Spain.” In *Cleavages, Ideologies, and Party Systems. Contributions to Comparative Political Sociology*, eds. Erik Allardt and Yrjö Littunen, 291–341. Helsinki: Academic Bookstore (291-326, 336-41)
- b. Svolik, Milan W. 2012. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Chapters 1-2) (1-50)

Suggested readings:

- i. Thompson, Mark R. 2001. “To Shoot or Not to Shoot: Posttotalitarianism in China and Eastern Europe.” *Comparative Politics* 34 (1): 63–83. <https://doi.org/10.2307/422415>.

Thursday, April 10th: W3 C2

6. Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes?

- a. Zakaria, Fareed. 1997. “The Rise of Illiberal Democracy.” *Foreign Affairs* 76 (6 Nov/Dec): 22–43.
- b. Diamond, Larry. 2002. “Elections Without Democracy: Thinking About Hybrid Regimes.” *Journal of Democracy* 13 (2): 21–35.
- c. Levitsky, Steven, and Lucan Way. 2010. *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War*. Problems of International Politics. New York: Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 1)

Suggested readings:

- i. Schedler, Andreas. 2002. “The Menu of Manipulation.” *Journal of Democracy* 13 (2): 36–50.

Tuesday, April 15th: W4 C1

7. Repression: Calculations, Instruments, Forms, and Consequences

- a. Wintrobe, Ronald. 1998. *The Political Economy of Dictatorship*. Cambridge, UK ; New York, NY: Cambridge UP (1-7, 20-40) (skim part 2 of Ch 2)
- b. Przeworski, Adam. 2023. "Formal Models of Authoritarian Regimes: A Critique." *Perspectives on Politics* 21 (3): 979–88.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592722002067>.
- c. Greitens, Sheena Chestnut. 2016. Dictators and their Secret Police: Coercive Institutions and State Violence. New York: Cambridge University Press. (1-36, 53-61, 65-71)

Suggested readings:

- i. Davenport, Christian. 2007. "State Repression and Political Order." *Annual Review of Political Science* 10 (Volume 10, 2007): 1–23.
<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.10.101405.143216>.
- ii. Acemoglu, Daron, and James A Robinson. 2006. *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- iii. Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce, and Alastair Smith. 2017. "Political Succession: A Model of Coups, Revolution, Purges, and Everyday Politics." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61 (4): 707–43.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002715603100>.
- iv. Dragu, Tiberiu, and Adam Przeworski. 2019. "Preventive Repression: Two Types of Moral Hazard." *American Political Science Review* 113 (1): 77–87. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055418000552>.
- v. Policzer, Pablo. 2009. *Rise and Fall of Repression in Chile*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/jj.21995781>.
- vi. Bellin, Eva. 2012. "Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring." *Comparative Politics* 44 (2): 127–49. <https://doi.org/10.5129/001041512798838021>.
- vii. Brownlee, Jason, Tarek E. Masoud, and Andrew Reynolds. 2015. *The Arab Spring: Pathways of Repression and Reform*. Oxford: Oxford university press. (12-15; 40-63)
- viii. Rozenas, Arturas, and Yuri M. Zhukov. 2019. "Mass Repression and Political Loyalty: Evidence from Stalin's 'Terror by Hunger.'" *American Political Science Review* 113 (2): 569–83.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055419000066>.
- ix. Soss, Joe, and Vesla Weaver. 2017. "Police Are Our Government: Politics, Political Science, and the Policing of Race-Class Subjugated Communities." *Annual Review of Political Science* 20 (Volume 20, 2017): 565–91. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-060415-093825>.

Thursday, April 17th: W4 C2

8. **Break.** We will not have an in-person seminar this Thursday. You can use this time to watch one of the movies for your response paper.

Tuesday, April 22nd: W5 C1

9. Institutions: Elections, Legislatures, Elite-Cooperation

- a. Gandhi, Jennifer, and Adam Przeworski. 2007. “Authoritarian Institutions and the Survival of Autocrats.” *Comparative Political Studies* 40 (11): 1279–1301. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414007305817>.
- b. Blaydes, Lisa. 2010. *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak’s Egypt*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: Introduction (1-25), Chapter 3 (48-64)
- c. Reuter, Ora John, and Graeme B. Robertson. 2015. “Legislatures, Cooptation, and Social Protest in Contemporary Authoritarian Regimes.” *The Journal of Politics* 77 (1): 235–48. <https://doi.org/10.1086/678390>.

Suggested readings:

- i. Gandhi, Jennifer. 2008. *Political Institutions under Dictatorship*. 1st ed. Cambridge University Press: Chapter 3.
- ii. Magaloni, Beatriz. 2006. Voting for Autocracy: Hegemonic Party Survival and its Demise in Mexico.
- iii. Magaloni, Beatriz. 2008. “Credible Power-Sharing and the Longevity of Authoritarian Rule.”
- iv. Svolik, Milan W. 2012. The Politics of Authoritarian Rule. Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: Chapter 4 (85-122).
- v. Levitsky, Steven R., and Lucan A. Way. 2012. “Beyond Patronage: Violent Struggle, Ruling Party Cohesion, and Authoritarian Durability.” *Perspectives on Politics* 10 (4): 869–89. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592712002861>.
- vi. Pepinsky, Thomas. 2014. “The Institutional Turn in Comparative Authoritarianism.” *British Journal of Political Science* 44 (3): 631–53. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123413000021>.
- vii. Gehlbach, Scott, Konstantin Sonin, and Milan W. Svolik. 2016. “Formal Models of Non-democratic Politics.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 19 (1): 565–84.
- viii. Ginsburg, Tom, and Tamir Moustafa, eds. 2008. *Rule by Law: The Politics of Courts in Authoritarian Regimes*. Cambridge [UK]; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- ix. Hyde, Susan D. 2011. “Catch Us If You Can: Election Monitoring and International Norm Diffusion.” *American Journal of Political Science* 55 (2): 356–69. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2011.00508.x>.
- x. Lai, Brian, and Dan Slater. 2006. “Institutions of the Offensive: Domestic Sources of Dispute Initiation in Authoritarian Regimes, 1950–1992.” *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (1): 113–26. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2006.00173.x>.

Thursday, April 24th: W5 C2

10. Institutions: Distribution of Goods and Services with an Agenda

- a. Blaydes, Lisa. 2011. Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak's Egypt. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press: Chapter 4 (64-77).
- b. Albertus, Michael, Sofia Fenner, and Dan Slater. 2018. *Coercive Distribution*. Cambridge Elements. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Suggested readings:

- i. Stokes, Susan C., Thad Dunning, Marcelo Nazareno, and Valeria Brusco. 2013. *Brokers, Voters, and Clientelism: The Puzzle of Distributive Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- ii. Albertus, Michael. 2015. Autocracy and Redistribution: The Politics of Land Reform. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- iii. Pan, Jennifer. 2020. *Welfare for Autocrats: How Social Assistance in China Cares for Its Rulers*. New York: Oxford University Press.

PART IV: Authoritarian Legitimation and Rhetoric

Tuesday, April 29th: W6 C1

11. Legitimation: Popular Support for Authoritarians

- a. Gerschewski, Johannes. 2013. "The Three Pillars of Stability: Legitimation, Repression, and Co-Optation in Autocratic Regimes." *Democratization* 20 (1): 13–38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2013.738860>.
- b. Dukalskis, Alexander, and Johannes and Gerschewski. 2017. "What Autocracies Say (and What Citizens Hear): Proposing Four Mechanisms of Autocratic Legitimation." *Contemporary Politics* 23 (3): 251–68. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569775.2017.1304320>.
- c. Guriev, Sergei, and Daniel Treisman. 2020. "A Theory of Informational Autocracy." *Journal of Public Economics* 186 (June):1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2020.104158>.

Suggested readings:

- i. Adorno, Theodore W., ed. 1969. *The Authoritarian Personality*. New York, NY: Norton: Preface and Introduction.
- ii. Gerschewski, Johannes. 2023. *The Two Logics of Autocratic Rule*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- iii. Weyland, Kurt. 2024. "Review: The Two Logics of Autocratic Rule." *Perspectives on Politics*, September, 1–2. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592724000938>.

Thursday, May 1st: W6 C2

12. Legitimation: Types and Purposes of Propaganda

- a. Carter, Erin Baggott, and Brett L. Carter. 2023. *Propaganda in Autocracies: Institutions, Information, and the Politics of Belief*. Political Economy of Institutions and Decisions. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: Chapter 1 (3-38)

We will have a class activity on propaganda, which will draw from the Carter & Carter chapter alongside the following articles. I will give a brief lecture on their main arguments in class, but please take a look at the following pieces (or their abstracts) if you get a chance:

- b. King, Gary, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts. 2013. “How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression.” *American Political Science Review* 107 (2): 326–43. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055413000014>
- c. Huang, Haifeng. 2015. “Propaganda as Signaling.” *Comparative Politics* 47 (4): 419–37.
- d. King, Gary, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts. 2017. “How the Chinese Government Fabricates Social Media Posts for Strategic Distraction, Not Engaged Argument.” *American Political Science Review* 111 (3): 484–501. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055417000144>.
- e. Rozenas, Arturas, and Denis Stukal. 2019. “How Autocrats Manipulate Economic News: Evidence from Russia’s State-Controlled Television.” *The Journal of Politics* 81 (3): 982–96. <https://doi.org/10.1086/703208>.

Suggested readings:

- i. Geddes, Barbara, and John Zaller. 1989. “Sources of Popular Support for Authoritarian Regimes.” *American Journal of Political Science* 33 (2): 319–47. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2111150>.
- ii. Lorentzen, Peter. 2014. “China’s Strategic Censorship.” *American Journal of Political Science* 58 (2): 402–14. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12065>.
- iii. Gehlbach, Scott, and Konstantin Sonin. 2014. “Government Control of the Media.” *Journal of Public Economics* 118 (October): 163–71. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2014.06.004>.
- iv. Adena, Maja, Ruben Enikolopov, Maria Petrova, Veronica Santarosa, and Ekaterina Zhuravskaya. 2015. “Radio and the Rise of the Nazis in Prewar Germany.” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 130 (4): 1885–1940.
- v. Stanley, Jason. How Propaganda Works. Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015: Preface and Introduction, Chapter 2, Chapter 4.

Tuesday, May 6th: W7 C1

13. Complicating Legitimacy: Ideology, Belief, and Practice

- a. Wedeen, Lisa. 1998. "Acting 'As If': Symbolic Politics and Social Control in Syria." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40 (3): 503–23.
- b. Wedeen, Lisa. 2019. *Authoritarian Apprehensions: Ideology, Judgment, and Mourning in Syria*. Chicago Studies in Practices of Meaning. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press: Introduction (1-18), Chapter 4 (107-140)

Suggested readings:

- i. Wedeen, Lisa. 1999. *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press: Chapter 1 Believing in Spectacles (1-31) and Chapter 3 Acting "As If": The Story of M (67-86).

Thursday, May 8th: W7 C2

14. Complicating Legitimacy: Truth, Publicity, and Judgment

- a. Stanley, Jason. 2016. "Opinion | Beyond Lying: Donald Trump's Authoritarian Reality." *The New York Times*, November 5, 2016, sec. Opinion.
- b. Arendt, Hannah. 2006. *Between Past and Future*. New York: Penguin Books: Chapter 7, Truth and Politics.
- c. Wedeen, Lisa. 2019. *Authoritarian Apprehensions: Ideology, Judgment, and Mourning in Syria*. Chicago Studies in Practices of Meaning. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press: Chapter 3 (77-106)
- d. Chambers, Simone, and Jeffrey Kopstein. 2023. "Wrecking the Public Sphere: The New Authoritarians' Digital Attack on Pluralism and Truth." *Constellations* 30 (3): 225–40. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8675.12620>.

Suggested readings:

- i. Muirhead, Russell, Nancy L. Rosenblum, Matthew Landauer, Stephen Macedo, Jeffrey K. Tulis, and Nadia Urbinati. 2020. "Conspiracism and Delegitimation." *Contemporary Political Theory* 19 (1): 142–74. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41296-019-00372-6>.
- ii. Bowles, Jeremy, Kevin Croke, Horacio Larreguy, Shelley Liu, and John Marshall. 2025. "Sustaining Exposure to Fact-Checks: Misinformation Discernment, Media Consumption, and Its Political Implications." *American Political Science Review*, February, 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055424001394>.
- iii. Ternullo, Stephanie. 2022. "'I'm Not Sure What to Believe': Media Distrust and Opinion Formation during the COVID-19 Pandemic." *American Political Science Review*, February, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S000305542200003X>.
- iv. Zerilli, Linda M. G. 2020. "Fact-Checking and Truth-Telling in an Age of Alternative Facts." *Le Foucaldien* 6 (1): 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.16995/lefou.68>.

PART V: Contemporary Threats to Democracy

Tuesday, May 13th: W8 C1

15. Threats to Democracy: Democratic Backsliding, Populist Backlash?

- a. Müller, Jan-Werner. 2016. "Trump, Erdoğan, Farage: The AtTRACTIONS of Populism for Politicians, the Dangers for Democracy." *The Guardian*. September 2, 2016.
- b. Levitsky, Steven, and Daniel Ziblatt. 2018. *How Democracies Die*. New York: Broadway Books: Introduction and Chapter 1 (5-28), Chapter 8 (141-163).
- c. Norris, Pippa, and Ronald Inglehart. 2019. *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press: Chapter 1 (3-31), Chapter 2 (32-64), Chapter 4 (read 122-25 only)

Suggested readings:

- i. Weiss, Meredith L., and Michael J. Bosia, eds. 2013. *Global Homophobia: States, Movements, and the Politics of Oppression*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- ii. Graff, Agnieszka. 2014. "Report from the Gender Trenches: War against 'Genderism' in Poland." *European Journal of Women's Studies* 21 (4): 431–35. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506814546091>.
- iii. Geva, Dorit. 2020. "Daughter, Mother, Captain: Marine Le Pen, Gender, and Populism in the French National Front." *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 27 (1): 1–26.
- iv. Abou-Chadi, Tarik, Magdalena Breyer, and Theresa Gessler. 2021. "The (Re)Politicisation of Gender in Western Europe." *European Journal of Politics and Gender* 4 (2): 311–14.
- v. Graff, Agnieszka, and Elżbieta Korolczuk. 2022. *Anti-Gender Politics in the Populist Moment*. London: Routledge.
- vi. Kandiyoti, Deniz, Nadje Al-Ali, and Kathryn Spellman Poots. 2019. *Gender, Governance and Islam*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- vii. Butler, Judith. 2024. *Who's Afraid of Gender?* New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- viii. Cohen, Jean L. 2023. "Rethinking Hybrid Regimes: The American Case." *Constellations* 30 (3): 241–60. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8675.12700>.

Thursday, May 15th: W8 C2

16. Threats to Democracy: Neoliberalism, Oligarchy, Technocracy?

- a. Jessop, Bob. 2019. "Authoritarian Neoliberalism: Periodization and Critique." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 118 (2): 343–61. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-7381182>.
- b. Brown, Wendy. 2018. "Neoliberalism's Frankenstein: Authoritarian Freedom in Twenty-First Century 'Democracies.'" *Critical Times* 1 (1): 60–79.
- c. Wedeen, Lisa. 2019. *Authoritarian Apprehensions: Ideology, Judgment, and Mourning in Syria*. Chicago Studies in Practices of Meaning. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press: Chapter1 (19-48).

Suggested readings:

- i. Müller, Jan-Werner. 2021. *Democracy Rules*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux: Preface (vii-xvi), Chapter 2 (42-89)
- ii. Domingues, José Maurício. 2019. “Political Regimes and Advanced Liberal Oligarchies.” *Constellations* 26 (1): 78–93.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8675.12379>
- iii. Kalyvas, Andreas. 2019. “Democracy and the Poor: Prolegomena to a Radical Theory of Democracy.” *Constellations* 26 (4): 538–53.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8675.12451>
- iv. Vergara, Camila. 2020. *Systemic Corruption Constitutional Ideas for an Anti-Oligarchic Republic*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.
- v. Cohen, Jean L. 2024. “Cycles of Oligarchy, Democracy, and Authoritarianism: Lessons from the United States.” *Constellations*, 1–20.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8675.12769>
- vi. Kochi, Tarik. 2023. “Authoritarian Populism, Democracy and the Long Counter-Revolution of the Radical Right.” *Contemporary Political Theory* 22 (4): 439–59.
- vii. Apostolidis, Paul. 2022. “Desperate Responsibility: Precarity and Right-Wing Populism.” *Political Theory* 50 (1): 114–41.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0090591720985770>

PART V: Rebellion and Resistance

Tuesday, May 20th: W9 C1

17. Against Authoritarianism: Reform, Revolution, Collective Action

- a. O’Brien, Kevin J. 1996. “Rightful Resistance.” *World Politics* 49 (1): 31–55.
- b. Kuran, Timur. 1991. “Now Out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989.” *World Politics* 44 (1): 7–48.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/2010422>
- c. Ulfelder, Jay. 2005. “Contentious Collective Action and the Breakdown of Authoritarian Regimes.” *International Political Science Review* 26 (3): 311–34.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512105053786>

Suggested readings:

- i. Kalyvas, Stathis N. 1999. “The Decay and Breakdown of Communist One-Party Regimes.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 2 (1): 323–43.
<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.2.1.323>
- ii. Gandhi, Jennifer, and Adam Przeworski. 2006. “Cooperation, Cooptation, and Rebellion Under Dictatorships.” *Economics & Politics* 18 (1): 1–26.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0343.2006.00160.x>
- iii. Pepinsky, Thomas B. 2009. *Economic Crises and the Breakdown of Authoritarian Regimes: Indonesia and Malaysia in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- iv. Slater, Dan. 2010. *Ordering Power: Contentious Politics and Authoritarian Leviathans in Southeast Asia*. Cambridge Studies in

Comparative Politics. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press: Chapter 7 (197-228).

- v. Masoud, Tarek. 2011. “The Upheavals in Egypt and Tunisia: The Road to (and from) Liberation Square.” *Journal of Democracy* 22 (3): 20–34. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2011.0038>.
- vi. Little, Andrew T. 2016. “Communication Technology and Protest.” *The Journal of Politics* 78 (1): 152–66. <https://doi.org/10.1086/683187>.
- vii. Fu, Diana. 2017. *Mobilizing without the Masses Control and Contention in China*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- viii. Aytaç, S. Erdem, and Susan C. Stokes. 2018. *Why Bother?: Rethinking Participation in Elections and Protests*. 1st ed. Cambridge University Press.

Thursday, May 22nd: W9 C2

18. Against Authoritarianism: Local Democratization and Everyday Resistance

- a. Kolesnikov, Andrei, and Denis Volkov. 2017. “Defending One’s Backyard: Local Civic Activism in Moscow.” Carnegie Moscow Center.
- b. Scott, James C. 1990. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press: Preface (ix-xiii), Chapter 1 (1-16), Chapter 6 (136-156).
- c. Johansson, Anna, and Stellan Vinthagen. 2019. *Conceptualizing ‘Everyday Resistance’: A Transdisciplinary Approach*. New York: Routledge: Introduction (1-14).

Suggested readings:

- i. Scott, James C. 1985. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- ii. Johansson, Anna, and Stellan Vinthagen. 2019. *Conceptualizing ‘Everyday Resistance’: A Transdisciplinary Approach*. New York: Routledge.
- iii. Mickey, Robert Waite. 2015. *Paths out of Dixie: The Democratization of Authoritarian Enclaves in America’s Deep South, 1944-1972*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press: Chapter 1 (3-32).