What this class is about

Over the course of human history, most political regimes have been authoritarian. Yet for the past several decades, political scientists have treated authoritarian regimes as theoretically uninteresting, preferring instead to focus on democracy. In this senior seminar, we will examine both classic and recent scholarship on authoritarianism and totalitarianism. Topics include the different types of authoritarian regimes, authoritarian institutions, and authoritarian ideologies. We will also analyze legitimation, political violence, economic performance, and regime change under authoritarian regimes. The course will also consider various methodological approaches to the study of authoritarianism.

What you will need

The following books are available for purchase at the bookstore (or, of course, through the usual internet sources—the numbers are ISBNs to help you order the right editions). They will also be placed on reserve at Tisch:

Valerie Bunce and Sharon Wolchik, Defeating Authoritarian Leaders in Postcommunist Countries (Cambridge University Press, 2011). 978-0521187251


Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War (Cambridge University Press, 2011) 9780521709156


Monica Nalepa, Skeletons in the Closet (Cambridge University Press, 2010) 978-0-521-73550-6

Pablo Policzer, *Rise and Fall of Repression in Chile* (University of Notre Dame, 2009) 978-0-268-03835-9


All of the other readings will be distributed as PDFs.

**What you will need to do**

Read. Read a lot. The readings average over 200 pages a week. Everyone will need to have done the reading—and thought about it-- before class. A major portion of your grade (see below) is participation, and you cannot participate if you don’t read. It goes without saying that unexcused absences will detract significantly from your participation grade. Illness and bereavement constitute valid excuses for missing class.

This course also requires a fair amount of writing. To help you think about the process of writing, I have assigned William Zinsser’s classic book *On Writing Well*. Every student will need to pass a quiz on this book (graded pass/fail) in order to pass the course.

Participation: 20%
Research Paper: 35%
Short Paper (8-10 pages): 25%
2 Precis: 20% (10 percent each)

In sum, **this is a challenging course with a heavy workload. Plan accordingly!!!**

Important Dates:

February 25: Last date to clear Research Paper Topic with me (you will need to have a two-page written proposal accepted by me by this date)
March 11: Short Paper Due
April 1: Outline of Research Paper Due
May 3: Research Papers Due

The two précis assignments are 3-4 page papers in which you simultaneously analyze the central points of the reading and raise your own critique or question. Summaries of the reading should be kept to a minimum!!! Each student must complete two of these during the course of the semester. These must be mailed to all students by a reasonable hour on Tuesday evening before our Wednesday meeting.
**Some Important, Miscellaneous Points**

Email is fine for setting up a time to meet outside of office hours, letting me know about an emergency, etc… But it is not a good medium for discussing ideas, asking questions, or turning in a paper. Please do make use of office hours.

I recognize that not all of us look forward to public speaking, and that some of you may dread speaking in front of your classmates. If you fall into this category, I hope that you can use this course as a means of overcoming your fear of public speaking in a friendly, supportive classroom environment. It is an important skill for many professions, and it can be learned. If you are very shy, please let me know and we can discuss strategies for participation.

To prepare for each class, I strongly suggest that you finish the reading two days before class and spend an hour or two the day before class (or the day of class) re-reading and reflecting. Writing out questions and critiques before class is an excellent idea as well.

Don’t even think about plagiarizing material. It is much easier than you may think for professors to identify possible cases of plagiarism, and the penalties are severe.

**Class Schedule**

January 23: The Orwellian Vision

George Orwell, *1984* (Please have the entire book read for the first day of class)

January 28: Regime Types


Selections from Robert Dahl, *Polyarchy*.

Selections from Juan Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*.


February 4: The New Authoritarianism


Levitsky and Way, *Competitive authoritarianism*, 1-82.


February 11: Repression (1)

Pablo Policzer, *The Rise and Fall of Repression in Chile*

February 21: Repression (2)

Lisa Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination*

February 25: Durable Authoritarianism

Dan Slater, *Ordering Power*

March 4: Patronage

Beatriz Magaloni, *Voting for Autocracy*, selections.


March 11: Authoritarian Elections

Andreas Schedler, ed. *Electoral Authoritarianism*, selections.


March 25: Authoritarian Breakdown (1)


April 1: Authoritarian Breakdown (2)

Valerie Bunce and Sharon Wolchik, *Defeating Authoritarian Leaders*

April 8: Dealing with the Past

Monika Nalepa, *Skeletons in the Closet*

April 22: Research Presentations (1)

April 29: Research Presentations (2)