

University of Alabama

PSC 632: Authoritarianism

Spring 2021, Tuesdays 13-15:30

Room: 103 ten Hoor Hall

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Office hours: TR 16-17

& by appointment

The next generation will likely grow up in an “age of authoritarianism”. The majority of countries are now governed by authoritarian regimes, and democratic freedoms are declining for one-third of the world’s population. This includes a gradual erosion of democratic practices in large, long-standing democracies like the United States and India, as well as recent democratic breakdowns in Hungary, Turkey, and the Philippines. Crises, like the Covid-19 pandemic, may only serve to exacerbate these trends as leaders attempt to seize additional unchecked powers in the name of human life.

As a result, knowledge about authoritarianism is increasingly vital. While a large subject of inquiry in comparative politics focuses on democracy and democratization, only recently have scholars began to investigate authoritarianism in great detail. This course will cover some of the highlights in this recent literature.

The course will center around core texts - including books and academic articles - published in the last two decades. We will discuss the characteristics of authoritarianism from various approaches, including institutional and behavioral. We will analyze macro-processes and the “everyday politics” of authoritarianism. Finally, we will learn about the challenges of conducting research in authoritarian settings and how scholars overcome them with innovative methodologies and data sources.

Pre-requisites

None required. PSC 631 (Comparative Politics) and PSC 521 (Research Design) recommended.

Student learning outcomes:

- Define authoritarianism and its various subtypes;
- Explain why some authoritarian regimes are more or less durable than others, with specific reference to empirical cases;
- Draw inferences about how politics under authoritarianism influences specific outcomes;
- Formulate an informed position on the scholarly debates
- Design and implement research strategies for addressing important questions about authoritarianism

Course Requirements

To achieve our goals, this course requires *active participation and engagement*. In order to do well in this class, you must critically engage all of the assigned readings. You should come to class prepared to ask questions about the readings and engage in critical discussion of the materials.

All written assignments should be submitted electronically via email **by 5pm on the due date**, unless otherwise noted. All written work, including take-home assignments are to be completed individually and are subject to the UA [Code of Student Conduct](#).

- 1. Class discussion (20%):** Effectively leading discussion is a core skill for both teaching and academic engagement with peers in the discipline. Students will lead class discussion for one of the classes during the semester. Depending on the class size, students may lead discussion in pairs or groups. This assignment involves preparing a review of the readings (1,250 words or less) and leading the discussion during class. **Reviews are due Monday prior to the class discussion.**
- 2. Discussion questions (10%):** Engaging actively with reading contributes to retention and understanding. **Each week**, students will email discussion questions to the instructor and the discussion leader(s) no later than 5pm **Monday** evening. Discussion leaders for the week do not need to submit discussion questions.
- 3. Final paper (50%):** Research and writing are at the core of academic knowledge production and sharing. Students will prepare a research paper – no more than 10,000 words – on a topic related to authoritarianism. This paper should be formulated as an academic research article – including a clear structure, research question, appropriate methodology, results, and conclusions. Students will submit **proposals** for their research projects to the instructor for feedback by **26 February** (10%). A meeting with me during Week 7 is a **mandatory** part of the proposal grade. A draft manuscript version should be submitted by **06 April** (10%) for feedback from the instructor and one other student who acts as peer reviewer. A second meeting with me during Week 14 is a **mandatory** part of the manuscript grade. A revised version of the manuscript is due by **27 April** (30%). The revised version should be accompanied by a memo detailing revisions and responses to the reviews.
- 4. Peer review (10%):** Peer-review is a crucial part of the academic discipline. It forwards the social science enterprise, contributes to an accumulation of knowledge, and brings us together as a community. Students will review and provide *constructive* feedback on one of their peer's papers. This feedback is to be submitted to the instructor by **12 April**.
- 5. Paper presentation (10%):** Students will present the “manuscript” version of their papers during a mini-conference during class on **13 April**. Depending on class enrollment, presentations will range from 5-12 minutes. During this mini-conference, you will receive oral feedback from your peer reviewer, the instructor, and the rest of the class.

PAPER DEADLINES

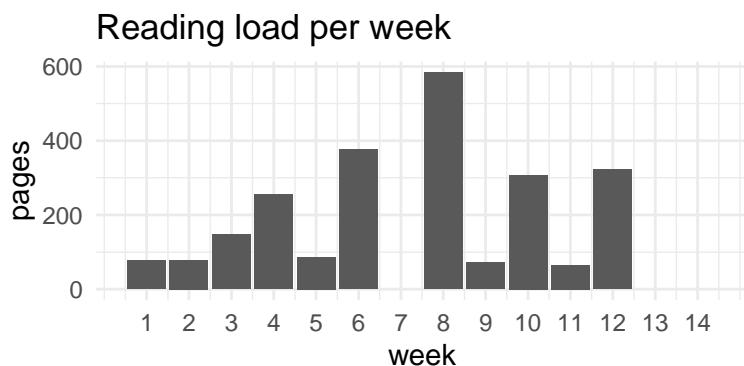
	Due (5pm)	Percentage
Proposal	26 February	10%
Manuscript	06 April	10%
Peer review	13 April	10%
Presentations	13 April	10%
Final paper	27 April	30%

Required Texts

As a graduate-level seminar, the course readings are designed to provide you with a broad overview of the main research findings and debates in the literature on authoritarianism. We will primarily focus on newer works. About half of the assigned readings are books that we will cover in their entirety. Students should obtain copies of these texts through their preferred book distributor or library:

- Glasius, Marlies, et al. 2018. *Research, Ethics, and Risk in the Authoritarian Field*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan. (Open Access eBook: <https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9783319689654>)
- Svolik, Milan. 2012. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Blaydes, Lisa. 2018. *State of Repression: Iraq under Saddam Hussein*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Mickey, Robert. 2015. *Paths out of Dixie: The democratization of authoritarian enclaves in America's Deep South, 1944-1972*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Bush, Sarah Sunn. 2015. *The Taming of Democracy Assistance: Why Democracy Promotion Does Not Confront Dictators*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Levitsky, Steven and Daniel Ziblatt. 2018. *How Democracies Die*. New York: Crown.

All other required readings come from academic journals. Students can access these articles through the UA library or a Google scholar search. These will not be provided to the students through Blackboard, as locating academic articles is one of the basic skills of any political scientist.



Pronouns of assigned authors



Attendance

You are expected to attend class, arrive on time, and treat one another with respect. While there is no “attendance” grade, the course is designed to require regular attendance if you hope to succeed.

Late work

No late work will be accepted in this course, unless prior authorization is given. Students who cannot make a deadline should contact me immediately, preferably at least 48 hours in advance, so that we can discuss your options.

Grading disputes

Mistakes happen. If you think I have made an error, contact me during office hours or schedule an appointment within one week of receiving the grade. Out of respect for your right to privacy under the University's Confidentiality of Student Records policy and the Family Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, I will not discuss grades via email.

Grading scale

A	B	C	D*	F*
90%– 100%	80– 89%	70– 79%	60%– 69%	≤59%
4.00	3.00	2.00	1.00	0.00

All graduate students must earn and maintain an overall graduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or better for all graduate courses undertaken at the University of Alabama. Grades below "C" count in computing the GPA but do not carry credit toward a degree.

Mode of instruction

This course is scheduled to meet face-to-face. Students must adhere to all university Covid-19 regulations, including physical distancing, wearing face coverings, and daily health check through GuideSafe. Students will not be permitted to join the class unless they wear a face covering and show they are cleared through the healthcheck.

Course website

The primary mode of communication for this course is the UA Blackboard system. Students can access this site using their myBama credentials at:

<https://ualearn.blackboard.com/>

Office hours

Regular office hours will take place remotely using Zoom to ensure physical distancing. My office is very small with poor ventilation! Students may, however, schedule individual in person meetings. We will make appropriate arrangements for a location where physical distancing can be observed

Audio-video recordings

The instructor of this course may choose to record class sessions for students enrolled in the class to refer back to, and for the use of enrolled students unable to attend class meetings. If the instructor chooses to record class sessions, students will be notified. If a student does not consent to have their profile or video image or voice recorded, it is their responsibility to keep their camera and/or microphone off and to not use a profile image.

Sharing course materials

All lectures, presentations, and class discussions are for viewing by members of this class section only and may not be posted in any public forum or shared with anyone not enrolled in this class. Any student violating these rules may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for disciplinary action.

Notification of changes

The instructor reserves the right to amend this document as the need arises. In such instances, students will receive notification in class and/or via email with reasonable time to adjust to any changes.

Covid-19 Policies

All University faculty, staff, and students are expected to maintain a commitment to the health and safety of our campus community. Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, specific health and safety standards are in place to minimize exposure and community spread on campus. In the interest of your health and safety and that of all UA students, faculty and staff, the University reserves the right to change the mode of instruction or schedule of instruction at any time, based upon prevailing public health and other guidance. While the method of delivery may change, educational instruction and opportunities will continue. As such, the University will not provide a refund of tuition, in whole or in-part, based on any such changes. Detailed information on changes in format or schedule can be found at

<https://studentaccounts.ua.edu/>

<https://financialaid.ua.edu/>

All students must be familiar with and abide by the requirements outlined in the UA Return Plan | UA System Comprehensive Health and Safety Plan. Students must

- (1) wear a mask or face covering at all times while participating in face-to-face class;
- (2) adhere to social distancing standards; and
- (3) comply with all other health and safety restrictions.

If a student refuses to comply with the requirements, the student will be asked to leave the class and reported for a conduct violation. Unless a student has an exemption from the requirement to wear a face covering, (more information can be found at <http://ods.ua.edu/covid-19-disability/>), the student will be reported to Student Life for further disciplinary action. More information on these requirements and UA Healthcheck system and screening can be found at

<https://healthinfo.ua.edu/return-plan-faq/>

You are expected to visit the site and comply with all noted requirements related to in-person class attendance.

Academic misconduct

Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the official Academic Misconduct Policy provided in the Online Catalog.

www.catalog.ua.edu/undergraduate/about/academic-regulations/student-expectations/academic-misconduct-policy/

Turnitin® policy

Students agree that their enrollment in this course allows the instructor the right to use electronic devices to help prevent plagiarism. All course materials are subject to submission to Turnitin.com for the purpose of

detecting textual similarities. Assignments submitted to Turnitin.com will be included as source documents in Turnitin.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Turnitin.com will be used as a source document to help students avoid plagiarism in written documents.

UAct: Ethical community

The University of Alabama is committed to an ethical, inclusive community defined by respect and civility. The UAct website:

<http://www.ua.edu/uact>

provides extensive information on how to report or obtain assistance with a variety of issues, including issues related to dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, sexual assault, sexual violence or other Title IX violations, illegal discrimination, harassment, child abuse or neglect, hazing, threat assessment, retaliation, and ethical violations or fraud.

Students with disabilities

If you have a documented disability (or think you may have a disability) and need reasonable accommodation(s) to participate in this class, please contact ODS and schedule an appointment with me during office hours. For more information, visit:

www.catalog.ua.edu/undergraduate/about/support-programs/disability-services/

Parents and caregivers

If you have caregiver duties (e.g. for a child, an older relative, or family member with disabilities) that limit your ability to pursue your education at UA in the same capacity as your peers, please contact me as soon as possible so that we can make reasonable accommodations.

Pregnancy accommodations

According to Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, the University of Alabama must make reasonable accommodations for students who are pregnant or who have had a false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, gone through childbirth, or are recovering from these conditions. Additional resources can be found at:

www.ua.edu/campuslife/uact/information/pregnancy

Religious observances

Under the Guidelines for Religious Holiday Observances, students should notify the instructor in writing or via email during the first two weeks of the semester of their intention to be absent from class for religious observance. The instructor will work to provide reasonable opportunity to complete academic responsibilities as long as that does not interfere with the academic integrity of the course.

www.provost.ua.edu/oaa-guidelines-for-religious-holidays-observance/

Severe weather protocol

The guiding principle at The University of Alabama is to promote the personal safety of our students, faculty and staff during severe weather events. Please see the latest severe weather guidelines in the Online Catalog:

www.ready.ua.edu/severe-weather-guidelines/

General outline of topics

Week 1 (19 January) – Defining authoritarianism

- Linz, Juan J. 2000. *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, pp. 49–63.
- Roiser, Martin, & Willig, Carla. 2002. “The strange death of the authoritarian personality: 50 years of psychological and political debate.” *History of the Human Sciences*, 15(4), 71–96
- Glasius, Marlies. 2018. “What authoritarianism is... and is not: A practice perspective.” *International Affairs*, 94(3), 515–533

Week 2 (26 January) – Varieties of Autocracy

- Geddes, Barbara, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz. 2014. “Autocratic breakdown and regime transitions: A new data set.” *Perspectives on Politics*, 12(2): 313–331.
- Schedler, Andreas. 2002. “Elections without democracy: the menu of manipulation.” *Journal of Democracy* 13(2): 36–50.
- Levitsky, Steven and Lucan Way. 2002. “Elections without democracy: The rise of competitive authoritarianism.” *Journal of Democracy* 13(2): 51–65.
- Wahman, Michael, Jan Teorrell, and Axel Hadenius. 2013. “Authoritarian regime types revisited: Updated data in comparative perspective.” *Contemporary Politics* 19(1): 19–34.
- Lührmann, Anna, Tannenberg, Marcus, & Lindberg, Staffan I. 2018. “Regimes of the world (RoW): Opening new avenues for the comparative study of political regimes.” *Politics & Governance*, 6(1): 60–77

Week 3 (02 February) – Researching Authoritarianism

- Glasius, Marlies, et al. 2018. *Research, Ethics, and Risk in the Authoritarian Field*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan. (Open Access eBook: <https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9783319689654>)
- Ahram, Ariel I. and J. Paul Goode. 2016. “Researching authoritarianism in the discipline of democracy.” *Social Science Quarterly*, 97(4): 834–849.
- Carlitz, Ruth and McLellan, Rachael. 2020. “Open data from authoritarian regimes: New opportunities and new challenges.” *Perspectives on Politics*, first view.

Week 4 (09 February) – The Politics of Authoritarian Rule

- Svolik, Milan. 2012. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Week 5 (16 February) – “Authoritarian” Institutions

- Gandhi, Jennifer and Adam Przeworski. 2007. “Authoritarian institutions and the survival of autocrats.” *Comparative Political Studies*, 40(11): 1279–1301.
- Malesky, Edmund and Paul Schuler. 2010. “Nodding or needling; Analyzing delegate responsiveness in an authoritarian parliament.” *American Political Science Review*, 104(3): 482–502.
- Helmke, Gretchen. 2002. “The logic of strategic defection: court-executive relations in Argentina under dictatorship and democracy.” *American Political Science Review*, 96(2): 291–303.
- Donno, Daniela and Kretf, Anne-Kathrin. 2018. “Authoritarian institutions and women’s rights.” *Comparative Political Studies*, 52(5): 720–753.

Week 6 (23 February) – State of Repression

- Blaydes, Lisa. 2018. *State of Repression: Iraq under Saddam Hussein*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

PROPOSALS DUE 26 FEBRUARY 5PM

Week 7 (02 March) – Paper consultations

- Mandatory individual consultations about papers

Week 8 (09 March) – Authoritarian Enclaves

- Mickey, Robert. 2015. *Paths out of Dixie: The democratization of authoritarian enclaves in America's Deep South, 1944-1972*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Week 9 (16 March) – Making it Personal

- Kendall-Taylor, Andrea, Erica Frantz, and Joesph Wright. 2017. “The global rise of personalized politics: It’s not just dictators anymore.” *The Washington Quarterly*, 40(1): 7–19.
- Grundholm, Alexander Taaning. 2020. “Taking it personal? Investigating regime personalization as an autocratic survival strategy.” *Democratization*, 27(5): 797–815.
- Smyth, Regina. 2014. “The Putin factor: Personalism, protest, and regime stability in Russia.” *Politics & Policy*, 42(4): 567–592.
- Dulani, Boniface and John Tengatenga. 2020. “Big man rule in Africa: Are Africans getting the leadership they want?” *The African Review*, 46(2): 275–292.

Week 10 (23 March) – Taming Democracy Assistance

- Levitsky, Steven and Lucan A. Way. 2006. “Linkage versus leverage: rethinking the international dimension of regime change.” *Comparative Politics*, 38(4): 379–400.
- Bush, Sarah Sunn. 2015. *The Taming of democracy Assistance: Why Democracy Promotion Does Not Confront Dictators*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Week 11 (30 March) – Promoting Autocracy?

- Yakouchyk, Katsiaryna. 2018. “Beyond autocracy promotion: a review.” *Political Studies Review*, 17(2): 147–160.
- Tansey, Oisín. 2015. “The problem with autocracy promotion.” *Democratization*, 23(1): 141–163.
- Way, Lucan A. 2015. “The limits of autocracy promotion: The case of Russia in the ‘near abroad’.” *European Journal of Political Research*, 54(4): 691–706.
- van Soest, Christian. 2015. “Democracy prevention: the international collaboration of authoritarian regimes.” *European Journal of Political Research*, 54(4): 623–638.

Week 12 (06 April) – How Democracies Die

- Levitsky, Steven and Daniel Ziblatt. 2018. *How Democracies Die*. New York: Crown.

MANUSCRIPTS DUE 06 APRIL 5PM

Week 13 (13 April) – Mini-conference!

PEER-REVIEW DUE 12 APRIL 5PM

Week 14 (20 April) – Paper consultations

- Mandatory individual consultations about papers

FINAL PAPERS & RESPONSE MEMOS DUE 27 APRIL 5PM