IR 200 Politics of Authoritarian Regimes

Instructor: Shu Yu
Office Hours: Monday, 14:00-15:00 and by appointment
Class Location: HYLAN 105
Class Lectures: MW 10:25-11:40 AM
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Course Description:
In The End of History and the Last Man (1992), Francis Fukuyama argued that liberal democracies may become the final form of human government. However, two decades later, 1/3 of the regimes on earth are still authoritarian. Some countries went through democratization, such as Spain after the death of Francisco Franco. But others remained authoritarian, such as North Korea. This course provides an introduction to authoritarian regimes and covers: 1) the different types of authoritarian regimes, which range from personalistic dictatorships to new forms where a variety of actors are institutionally represented (e.g., militants, monarchists, regime-party, etc.); 2) the conditions for authoritarian regimes to survive, function, and be accountable; and 3) a comparison between democratic regimes and authoritarian regimes. Students are expected to complete oral and written assignments which are designed to help them develop their problem solving, writing and presentation skills.

Required Text:
Weekly reading material is assigned in the Syllabus.

Course requirements:
For this course, it is essential to complete the required reading. Discussion will be a big portion of each session, and students will be expected to discuss the readings for the day listed on the syllabus. Each student is required to write a research paper on a authoritarian regime by their choice. Grading will be as follows: 20% in-class presentation, 20% final presentation, 50% paper, and 10% class participation. The in-class presentation is assigned in the syllabus.

Course Outline and Reading Assignments:

**Course Outline**

Introduction (Jan-14)

Dictatorship: Concepts and Measures (Jan 19-21)

Case studies (Jan 26-28)
+++In-class presentation (Jan 28)+++.

The Economic Origin of Dictatorship and Democracy (Feb 2-11)

1Recommended readings are denoted with *. When listed reading materials are technically difficult, students only need to scan through them to get the general idea. Other reading materials may be added or dropped later.
Theories of Authoritarian Politics (Feb 16-18)


Repression and Protest (Feb 23-25)


Case study: The Arab Spring (Mar 2)

+++In-class presentation (Mar 2)+++.

Email the research topic/subject of your final paper to the instructor.

The Emergence of Personal Authoritarian Rule (Mar 4)


Family Dynasties (Mar 16-18)

- *Yu, Shu and Geomans, Hein. 2014. "Passing Leadership through the Family Tie", mimeo

Case study: Family Dynasties (Mar 23)

+++In-class presentation (Mar 23)+++.

Coups d’etat and Military Dictatorships (Mar 25-Apr 1)


Final Paper Meeting I: Apr 6

Dominant party rule (Apr 8)


Case study: China (Apr 13-15)

- Li, Yuan, Yu, Shu and Zhang, Yongjing. 2014. "The Successors Dilemma in Authoritarian Regimes: The Role of Social Mobilisation "

Institutions (Apr 20-22)


Economic Development in Dictatorships (Apr 27)


Final Paper Presentations (Apr 29)