

PSC/IR 251: Dictatorship and Democracy

University of Rochester
Spring 2019
TR, 11:05am-12:20pm
Classroom: Gavett 202

Instructor: Jack Paine
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Course overview. This course will teach students about politics in authoritarian regimes, transitions from authoritarian to democratic regimes, and democratic backsliding and reversion. Topics include trends over time in regime types, examining authoritarian survival strategies (repression, elections, parties, media control), causes of electoral contestation and franchise expansion, and democratic backsliding. Although the country coverage is broad, many examples draw from Africa, China, and the United States.

Grading for non-W students:

- **50% essays assigned throughout semester.** There will be three essays of 500-900 words each assigned throughout the semester on dates listed in the schedule of courses. The questions will be closely related to topics discussed in class and in the readings. Essays must demonstrate substantial use of the assigned readings to earn better than a C. You can occasionally reference the lectures in the essays, but do so sparingly because most of the material from the lectures arises from the readings. You are encouraged to use your notes and to consult the readings when writing your essays, but you CANNOT discuss the essays with any classmates until you have handed them in.
- **40% final.** There will be a final exam during the university-scheduled period: Friday May 10 at 8:30am. It will consist of 2-3 essays of the same format as those described above. It is a comprehensive exam, although you are guaranteed at least one question from Part III of the course. Bring your laptop to the exam room. If you need a laptop provided, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can make appropriate arrangements.
- **10% Class attendance, participation, and reading questions.** As discussed below, attendance in lecture is required and participation is encouraged even though this is a lecture course. Additionally, six times during the semester (twice for each of the three parts into which the lectures are organized; see the schedule of classes below), students are required to email the TA with one or several questions about the readings *prior* to the first lecture for which the reading is assigned. For example, to satisfy this requirement for Part I on authoritarian regimes, a student could email questions about the repression reading before January 24, and email questions about the electoral authoritarianism reading before February 12.

Grading for W students:

- Essays are 30%, final is 30%, attendance etc. is 10%.
- The remainder comes from a final paper of roughly 20 pages with instructions provided at the end of the syllabus. The due dates for a first draft of about 10 pages (10% of final grade) and for a final draft (20% of final grade) are listed in the schedule of courses.

More on grading. Unfortunately, students that cannot take the final on May 10 should drop the course, which is too large to accommodate individual exam times for students. Additionally, any student that fails to hand in more than one of the three essays, misses the final exam, or (for W students) does not hand in the final W paper will automatically fail the course.

Role of the TA. The role of the TA is somewhat unique in this course because they will not teach a separate section. However, with a course of this size, they will be an invaluable resource. Think of them as the administrator for this course, your first line of defense for most email inquiries and other questions about the course. That does not mean you should never contact me, but for most questions, it will be best to contact the TA first. They will also grade all the essays, albeit with input from me. I will, however, grade the draft and the final version of the W papers.

Reading. Required reading accompanies each group of lectures. The only required book is *How Democracies Die*, available through the bookstore. All other readings are available on the Blackboard page, or have an Internet link. Students are expected to spend several hours with the readings prior to the first lecture for which it is assigned, and then to spend several more hours after hearing the lecture material reviewing and completing the reading (for topics that span three classes, I don't expect students to have closely completed every reading prior to the first lecture; the readings will be covered roughly in the order in which they are listed on the syllabus). Although it is a lecture course, I encourage students to ask questions throughout and, when appropriate, we will have broader class discussions. Being acquainted with the material prior to lecture will facilitate better questions and discussions during class.

There are several incentives for actually doing the reading, despite the absence of a discussion section. First, as mentioned above, essays must demonstrate substantial use of the assigned readings to earn better than a C. Second, also mentioned above, students are required to email six questions about the reading prior to lecture to the TA throughout the semester. Third, students who consistently do not attempt to complete the readings forgo the right to use office hours for either myself or for the TA. (By contrast, students who attempt the readings and have questions about parts they do not understand are very much encouraged to ask about them in class or office hours.) As the semester goes along, if most students are found not to do the readings prior to lecture, we may do occasional reading quizzes at the beginning of lecture—let's hope it doesn't come to that.

Finally, every week contains questions to help guide the readings and to gain key takeaway points. However, these key questions should not encourage students only to

read until the point at which they can answer those specific questions. Although we will discuss those topics in class, we will cover other questions that arise from the readings as well. Furthermore, students will produce questions of their own that we can discuss.

Attendance. Attendance is required at all sessions. Please notify the TA of any known and unavoidable absences (e.g., University-sponsored academic or sporting event) at the beginning of the semester, and any unforeseen circumstances (e.g., family issues, illness) as soon as possible if they arise. I understand that unforeseen events do happen on occasion, but it is your responsibility to keep us updated. Students who have arranged with the TA to miss a class should contact classmates to receive notes. As noted, students who regularly miss lecture forgo the right to use either of our office hours, and will not receive credit for the 10% of the grade allocated to class attendance and participation.

Submitting assignments and late policy. All assignments will be emailed directly to either the TA or myself (see instructions below for each assignment) as a Microsoft Word document by the day and time indicated on the syllabus. Please save each file as “LAST NAME-ASSIGNMENT TITLE” to make them easy to catalog. We will make comments on the papers, and this is easiest to do in Word. The late policy is that assignments handed in between 1 and 24 hours late will receive a full grade off, assignments handed in between 24 and 48 hours late will receive two full grades off, and assignments handed in more than 48 hours late will not be accepted. As with attendance, it is your responsibility to keep us updated and to coordinate an alternative plan if needed as soon in advance as possible.

Academic honesty. Tempted to cheat? Don't do it. Fortunately, there are few possible opportunities for cheating in this course. Students are encouraged to talk to each other about the readings outside of class, and are encouraged to use their notes when writing the essays. The only exception is that students are NOT ALLOWED to discuss their answers to essay questions with each other or with anyone else prior to handing them in. If I learn that students collaborated or otherwise received help on an essay, then they will receive no credit for that essay and there may be further repercussions. The university's academic honesty policy can be found at: <http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty>.

Academic disabilities. If you have a disability for which you may request an academic accommodation, you are encouraged to contact either of us and the access coordinator for your school to establish eligibility for academic accommodations (please see <https://www.rochester.edu/disability/students.html>).

If any of these policies are unclear or if there are other relevant details for your situation, please contact us sooner rather than later. Although the syllabus is long and somewhat austere, I do hope that this course will be an enjoyable experience for everyone.

Schedule of classes

Part I. Authoritarian Regimes

January 17. No class

January 22. Overview of Contemporary Authoritarian Regimes

Key questions: What are distinguishing characteristics of different types of authoritarian regimes?

Reading:

- Pgs. 28-64 from Escriba-Folch, Abel and Joseph Wright. 2015. *Foreign Pressure and the Politics of Autocratic Survival*.
- Pgs. 3-23 (in chapter 1) from Levitsky, Steven and Lucan A. Way. 2010. *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*. Cambridge University Press.
- Blog post "Everyday authoritarianism is boring and tolerable"
<https://tompepinsky.com/2017/01/06/everyday-authoritarianism-is-boring-and-tolerable/>

January 24, 29, 31. The Double-Edged Sword of Repression

Key questions: How do dictators strategically organize their militaries to survive in power? How do these choices affect prospects for insider removal (coups)? What about popular revolts?

Reading:

- Chapter 7 in Geddes, Barbara, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz. 2018. *How Dictatorships Work*.
- Pgs. 3-26 and 41-54 of Greitens, Sheena Chestnut. 2016. *Dictators and their Secret Police*.
- Roessler, Philip. 2011. "The Enemy Within: Personal Rule, Coups, and Civil War in Africa." *World Politics*, 63(2): 300-346.
- Goodwin, Jeff and Theda Skocpol. 1989. "Explaining Revolutions in the Contemporary Third World." *Politics & Society*, 17(4): 489-509.
- Bellin, Eva. 2004. "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective." *Comparative Politics*, 36(2): 139-157.
- Bellin, Eva R. 2012. "Reconsidering the Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Lessons from the Arab Spring." *Comparative Politics*, 44(2): 127-149.

February 5 and 7. Authoritarian Parties

Key questions: In what ways do parties provide effective organizations for helping authoritarian regimes remain in power? What are the difficulties and tradeoffs involved in creating strong authoritarian parties? What are sources of vulnerability in party regimes?

Reading:

- Magaloni, Beatriz and Ruth Kricheli. 2010. "Political Order and One Party Rule." *Annual Review of Political Science*, 13: 123-143.
- Pgs. 54-70 (in chapter 2) and 236-258 (in chapter 6) of Levitsky, Steven and Lucan A. Way. 2010. *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*.
 - Note that you will read the remainder of chapters 2 and 6 in this book for next week's lectures.
- Read the theory section and sections on Malaysia (pgs. 44-52, 74-93, 116-124, 146-163, 211-225) in Slater, Dan. 2010. *Ordering Power: Contentious Politics and Authoritarian Leviathans in Southeast Asia*. Levitsky and Way (2010, 318-328) provide a condensed summary of more recent events in Malaysia that may prove useful.
- Institutions vs. personalism in China:
 - Nathan, Andrew J. 2003. "Authoritarian Resilience." *Journal of Democracy*, 14(1): 6-17.
 - Shirk, Susan L. 2018. "The Return to Personalist Rule." *Journal of Democracy*, 29(2): 22-36.

Essay #1 released after class on February 7. Due via email to the TA by midnight on Sunday Feb. 10.

February 12 and 14. Electoral Authoritarianism

Key questions: It is very common for contemporary authoritarian regimes to hold at least semi-competitive elections, in contrast to 30 years ago. Why have so many dictators agreed to hold elections? Do authoritarian elections necessarily facilitate democratization? How can rulers firmly hold power even when they compete in elections?

Reading:

- Pgs. 501-513 of Miller, Michael K. 2015. "Democratic Pieces: Autocratic Elections and Democratic Development since 1815." *British Journal of Political Science*.
- Chapters 2, 3, and 6 of Levitsky, Steven and Lucan A. Way. 2010. *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*.
 - Note that you read parts of chapters 2 and 6 for last week.

February 19 and 21. Controlling the Media

Key questions: What are authoritarian rulers' goals when imposing media controls? Under what conditions can rulers achieve these goals? When might authoritarian regimes benefit from loosening media controls? How has the advent of the Internet and social media affected prospects for authoritarian regime survival?

Reading:

- 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): 326-343.
- Pgs. 402-405 (stop at section "Setup") and pgs. 410 (starting with "Evidence") to the end of Lorentzen, Peter. 2014. "China's Strategic Censorship." *American Journal of Political Science*, 58(2): 402-414.
- Gunitsky, Seva. 2015. "Corrupting the Cyber-Commons: Social Media as a Tool of Autocratic Stability." *Perspectives on Politics*.
- McMillan, John, and Pablo Zoido. 2004. "How to subvert democracy: Montesinos in Peru." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 18(4): 69-92.
- Shorter pieces:
 - Section "Two meanings of state power" (pgs. 188-192) from Mann, Michael. 1988. "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results." *European Journal of Sociology*, 25(2): 185-213.
 - *Washington Post*: https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/authoritarian-regimes-retool-their-media-control-strategy/2014/01/10/5c5bfa6e-7886-11e3-af7f-13bf0e9965f6_story.html?utm_term=.3f3e72e7370c
 - *Wired*: <http://www.wired.com/2016/01/social-media-made-the-arab-spring-but-couldnt-save-it/>

Part II. Democratization

February 26. Patterns of Democratization

Key questions: What are the different waves of democratization? What is the state of democracy in the world as of 2018?

Reading:

- Chapter 1 of Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. University of Oklahoma Press.
- Pgs. 16-33 of V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2018. Available at: https://www.v-dem.net/media/filer_public/68/51/685150f0-47e1-4d03-97bc-45609c3f158d/v-dem-annual-dem-report-2018.pdf
- Freedom House Freedom in the World 2018 report. Available at: https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/FH_FITW_Report_2018_Final_Single_Page.pdf

Essay #2 released after class on February 28. Due via email to the TA by midnight on Sunday March 3.

February 28, March 5 and 7. Establishing Limited Government

Key questions: How can citizens police transgressions by the government? Why do electoral losers ever agree to relinquish power? How can elites protect their privileges under democratic rule?

Reading:

- Pgs. 245-253 (stop at section “Democratic stability”) in Weingast, Barry R. 1997. “The Political Foundations of Democracy and the Rule of Law.” *American Political Science Review*, 91(2): 245-263.
- North, Douglass C. and Barry R. Weingast. 1989. “Constitutions and Commitment: The Evolution of Institutions Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth-Century England.” *Journal of Economic History* 49(4): 803-832.
- North, Douglass C., William Summerhill, and Barry R. Weingast. 1999. “Law, Disorder, and Economic Change: Latin America vs. North America.”
- Tucker, Joshua A. 2007. “Enough! Electoral Fraud, Collective Action Problems, and Post-Communist Color Revolutions.” *Perspectives on Politics*, 5(3): 535-551.
- Chapters 1 and 3 of Albertus, Michael and Victor Menaldo. 2018. *Authoritarianism and the Elite Origins of Democracy*.
- Chapter 2 of Dahl, Robert A. 2003. *How Democratic is the American Constitution?*

March 12 and 14. No class. Enjoy spring break!

March 19 and 21. Authoritarian Regimes and Economic Development

Key questions: Because regimes that are strong enough to enforce property rights are also strong enough to take them away, how can dictators ever credibly commit to protect property rights? What incentives do authoritarian regimes have to pursue policies that either promote or undermine economic growth? Under what conditions can authoritarian regimes succeed at promoting economic development?

Reading:

- Haber, Stephen. 2008. “Authoritarian Government.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Economy*, Eds. Donald A. Wittman and Barry R. Weingast. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Pgs. 123-125 and 134-139 (skip section 2 “Model and analysis”) of Gehlbach, Scott and Philip Keefer. 2011. “Investment without Democracy: Ruling-party institutionalization and credible commitment in autocracy.” *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 39: 123-139.
- Chapters 1 and 2 of Shirk, Susan. 1993. *The Political Logic of Economic Reform in China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Chapter 3 of van de Walle, Nicolas. 2001. *African Economies and the Politics of Permanent Crisis, 1979-1999*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

W students only – First paper draft due via email to Prof. Paine by 5pm on Friday March 29.

March 26 and April 2 (no class March 28).

Economic Development and Franchise Expansion

Key questions: Why would elites democratize to solve a commitment problem? What types of elites are most resistant to democratization? Are organized labor and capitalists helpful or harmful for democratization?

Reading:

- Chapters 1 and 2 of Acemoglu, Daron and James A. Robinson. 2006. *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Chapters 1 and 3 of Ansell, Ben W. and David J. Samuels. 2014. *Inequality and Democratization: An Elite-Competition Approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bellin, Eva. 2000. "Contingent Democrats: Industrialists, Labor, and Democratization in Late-Developing Countries." *World Politics*.
- Chapter 1 of Wright, Teresa. 2010. *Accepting Authoritarianism. State-Society Relations in China's Reform Era*.

Part III. Democratic Decline

April 4, 9, 11. Comparative Democratic Collapse and Decay

Key questions: What are different modes of democratic decline? What are common causes of democratic decline? What countries have suffered notable democratic declines within the past decade?

Reading:

- Chapter 4 of Levitsky, Steven and Daniel Ziblatt. 2018. *How Democracies Die*.
- Relatively short *Journal of Democracy* articles (in chronological order):
 - Weyland, Kurt. 2013. "Latin America's Authoritarian Drift: The Threat from the Populist Left."
 - Gyimah-Boadi, E. 2015. "Africa's Waning Democratic Commitment."
 - Rupnik, Jacques. 2015. "Surging Illiberalism in the East."
 - Bermeo, Nancy. 2016. "Democratic Backsliding."
 - Mechkova, Valeriya, Anna Luhrmann, and Staffan I. Lindberg. 2017. "How Much Democratic Backsliding?"
 - Galston, William A. 2018. "The Populist Challenge to Liberal Democracy."

Essay #3 released after class on April 4. Due via email to the TA by midnight on Sunday April 7.

April 16 and 18. Democratic Challenges in the United States (historical)

Key questions: What factors made universal white male suffrage relatively easy to attain in the United States? What incentives did political elites face to disenfranchise blacks, and how did this undermine democratic competition in the U.S. South until 1965? Do/have U.S. political institutions facilitated majority rule?

Reading:

- Paine, Jack. 2018. “Colonial Institutions and Democracy: Resisted Transitions from European Settler Oligarchies.” Working paper.
- Pgs. 891-909 of Engerman, Stanley L. and Kenneth L. Sokoloff. 2005. “The Evolution of Suffrage Institutions in the New World.” *Journal of Economic History*.
- Chapters 1 and 2 of Mickey, Robert. 2015. *Paths Out of Dixie*.
- Excerpts from other research:
 - Pgs. 256-266 and 316-324 of Keyssar, Alexander. 2000. *The Right to Vote*. This is a terrific history of franchise expansion in U.S. history. I highly recommend the entire book for students interested in reading more on this topic.
 - Pgs. 1-6 (stop at the beginning of Section 3) of Komisarchik, Mayya. 2018. “Electoral Protectionism: How Southern Counties Eliminated Elected Offices in Response to the Voting Rights Act.” Working paper.
 - Pgs. 46-54 (section “Unequal Representation”) in Dahl, Robert A. 2003. *How Democratic is the American Constitution?*

April 23, 25, 30. Democratic Challenges in the U.S. (contemporary)

Key questions: What are the main arguments by scholars and commentators who believe the United States currently faces serious democratic challenges? What are the main counterarguments? What evidence supports each position?

Note: I realize this is a lot of reading, although most of the entries are very short. Because of the recent nature of the topic, there are a lot of different viewpoints, and I want to be broad in coverage. *How Democracies Die* is the best-received scholarly research on the topic to date, and we will spend the most time discussing Levitsky and Ziblatt’s arguments. But do your best to skim the other pieces to get a sense of their arguments and key pieces of supporting evidence.

Reading:

- Republican-driven democratic decline?
 - Chapters 5-9 of Levitsky, Steven and Daniel Ziblatt. 2018. *How Democracies Die*.
 - Chapters 1 and 6 of Faris, David. 2018. *It’s Time to Fight Dirty*.
 - Vox. 2018. The Republican Party versus Democracy. <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/12/17/18092210/republican-gop-trump-2020-democracy-threat>.
 - Bright Line report: <http://brightlinewatch.org/wave7/>
- Or overblown claiming and blaming?
 - *The Weekly Standard*: “How Democracies Panic.” <https://www.weeklystandard.com/yuval-levin/how-democracies-panic>

- Holland, Emily and Hadas Aron. “We Don’t Know How Democracies Die.” <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2018/02/08/we-dont-know-how-democracies-die/>
- *Washington Post*: “Democrats have only themselves to blame for their judicial predicament.” https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/with-judicial-nominees-democrats-have-only-themselves-to-blame/2018/07/05/2225c65c-8067-11e8-b660-4d0f9f0351f1_story.html?utm_term=.9e2f909cb33d
- USA Today: “Donald Trump didn't create danger of presidential dictatorship, he inherited it.” <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2017/10/18/we-wouldnt-freaking-out-dictator-trump-if-we-saw-our-past-tyrants-what-they-were-james-bovard-column/587500001/>
- *Wall Street Journal*: “About that Trump ‘Autocracy’” (Available on Blackboard)
- *Washington Times*: “Anti-Trump left a threat to American democracy.” <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/dec/19/anti-trump-left-threat-american-democracy/>

W students only – Email final paper to Prof. Paine by 5pm on Friday May 3.

May 10 – Final exam, 8:30am. Bring your laptop to the exam room. If you need a laptop provided, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

Assignment for W students

Levitsky and Way's (2010) book *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold Cold War* proposes a theoretical framework that examines how various domestic and international conditions affect the likelihood that a "competitive authoritarian" regime will survive and, if not, whether it will be replaced by a democracy. A competitive authoritarian regime, as we will discuss in class, is a regime that holds semi-competitive elections for the executive office, but in which the electoral playing field is heavily skewed toward the incumbent. They include 35 case studies in their book to test their argument. However, questions remain regarding how widely their argument applies. Each W paper will examine two case studies and provide a write-up of approximately 20 pages that resembles the structure of the case studies from Levitsky and Way's book, of which we will read many during the semester. Students will choose their two cases in consultation with the instructor with the restrictions that the country was not democratic in the 1980s, is not covered in their book, and there is no overlap in cases among the students. The following cases would be interesting for various theoretical reasons:

- Turkey and Egypt
- Any country in Latin America besides those covered in the book (perhaps matching Cuba with another Latin American country to have variation on the dependent variable)
- Any Eastern European country not covered in the book, in particular countries that democratized nearly immediately after the Berlin Wall fell (Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic/Czechia, Baltics)
- Mongolia, Laos, Vietnam (other communist regimes, some of which fell and some didn't)
- Comparing an ex-French colony that democratized (Mali or Niger) with one that didn't (Chad, Guinea, etc.)
- Other unlikely democratizers such as Nepal or Bhutan