

## SURVIVAL AND DEMISE OF DICTATORSHIPS

POLD92H3F

Fall 2019

Tuesdays, 11:00-1:00

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course explores the world of dictatorships in modern history. What are dictatorships? How do they start? How do dictators and their allies consolidate power? How do policymaking and politics work under autocracies? How do dictatorships vary from one to another? Why do some authoritarian regimes survive for many years while others quickly collapse? How do the international system and powerful states affect the durability of dictatorships? When are dictatorships likely to democratize? The course covers both current and historical cases of authoritarian rule. We will explore how social scientists have come to explain these questions through a variety of methods.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Students are expected to (a) attend all seminar sessions; (b) read assigned materials *before* the start of each class; (c) complete 6 weekly response papers; (d) complete a bibliography; (e) complete a research proposal; (f) complete a rough draft; and (g) complete a final research paper.

## WEEKLY RESPONSE PAPERS:

Students will be required to write 6 weekly response papers from any of the readings weeks 2-11 (week 1 and week 12 will not have response papers). The student may pick any 6 of these 10 eligible weeks to write a response paper. These response papers will focus on *one* reading that week (the student will still be expected to have read the other readings). They will involve a quick summary of the main argument of the reading (about 2/3 of a page) and an analysis of the reading (about 1/3 of a page). Analysis will include a critical assessment of the plausibility of the argument, a consideration of extensions of the work, and/or parallels

drawn to other readings in the course. The response paper will be a maximum of 1 page in length (double-spaced). Papers should be submitted in .pdf format and uploaded to Quercus *before* the start of class.

#### RESEARCH PAPER: BIBLIOGRAPHY, PROPOSAL, ROUGH DRAFT, AND FINAL PAPER

The main assignment for this course outside of weekly response papers involves writing a research paper. This paper will use the theories discussed in class readings and discussions explain the emergence, consolidation, and collapse of an authoritarian regime since 1945. Students will be able to select the autocratic regime from a given list of all 223 authoritarian regimes that have collapsed since 1945. Suggestions will be made by the instructor if a student is struggling to select a regime to research. The paper will involve using academic sources to describe how and why this regime came to power, the characteristics of its ruling elite, and how/why it lost power.

In week 5 (October 1) a bibliography will be due which will identify sources the student will be using to produce the proposal and the research paper. Students will need to identify a minimum of 5 sources outside of course readings. Strategies for locating academic sources will be discussed in class and the instructor will be available for assistance. In week 7 (October 22) a research proposal (1 page, double-spaced) will be due which will outline the regime chosen and the research plan. A research plan will identify a minimum of one explanation for the emergence, the consolidation, and the collapse of the chosen regime. For the research proposal, the student will only need to use theories discussed in class to provide the explanations. Ideally, the student will have read some of the sources identified in the bibliography before producing the research proposal. In week 9 (November 5) a rough draft of the research paper will be due. The rough draft will be a minimum of 5 pages (double-spaced) not including references. The rough draft can be an entire draft of the final paper, but must be at least 5 pages. The rough draft must incorporate the theories used in class as well as materials from secondary sources identified by the student in the bibliography and proposal.

The final research paper will be due one week after the last class. Critical to a successful paper will be an analysis of how the theories discussed in class help explain this outcome. The final paper will be a minimum of 10 and maximum of 15 pages (double-spaced) not including references. Paper grades will be assessed on the extent to which the student accurately followed the paper assignment (explaining the emergence, consolidation, and collapse of a particular authoritarian regime). Of particular importance will be the connection of arguments to evidence. The paper should draw on the course readings as well as additional journal articles, academic books, and, if appropriate, newspaper articles. A highly successful paper will explain why certain theories explain the emergence, consolidation, and collapse of the regime better than alternative explanations and connect these arguments to evidence from academic sources. Papers should be submitted in .pdf format and uploaded to Quercus by 11:59PM, December 3.

## GRADING:

Seminar participation (10%); 6 weekly response papers (5% each, 30% total); bibliography (5%); research proposal (5%); rough draft (10%); final research paper (40%).

## IMPORTANT DATES:

- October 1: Bibliography Due
- October 22: Research Proposal Due
- November 5: Rough Draft Due
- December 3: Research Paper Due

## LATE ASSIGNMENTS:

Each assignment is due before class on the assigned date. Late assignments lose 5% as soon as class begins, and another 5% each 24-hour period thereafter. Any exceptions or missed class periods (for participation marks) must be discussed with the instructor prior to class (to the greatest extent possible).

## SEMINAR DISCUSSION:

Classes each week will be devoted to a seminar-style discussion of the readings. Students are expected to have read and reflected on the readings *prior* to class. To this end, it is expected students will have taken notes on the readings and will be ready to discuss. Participation will be evaluated (it will be impossible to gain any participation points for the day if the student is not in attendance).

## REQUIRED READINGS:

No textbooks are required to be purchased for this course. Instead, we will primarily use readings that can be accessed online through the library. Other readings will be scanned and uploaded by the instructor to the Quercus page. The following two books will be used extensively, and are both available through the University of Toronto Library website. Unless noted, all readings are available online through the University of Toronto Library.

Geddes, Barbara, Wright, Joseph, and Erica Frantz. 2018. *How Dictatorships Work: Power, Personalization, and Collapse*. New York: Cambridge University Press. [available online through library]

Svolik, Milan. 2012. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. New York: Cambridge University Press. [available online through library]

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Purchasing assignments and plagiarism are serious academic offenses. They will be punished accordingly. If a student is found to have submitted work they did not write themselves or the student has plagiarized in their own work, this offense will be reported to the Department Chair and the Academic Integrity Officer in the Dean's Office in accordance with the [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#). At a minimum, such actions will result in a zero for the assignment. At a maximum, the student will be expelled from the University and have the sanction permanently marked on the student's academic record. Students with questions about what constitutes plagiarism or submitting work written by others are strongly encouraged to discuss them with the instructor.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

**Sept. 3 — Week 1: What are dictatorships?**

- Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz. 2018. *How Dictatorships Work: Power, Personalization, and Collapse*. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-22.
- Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way. 2010. *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 3-35.
- Dan Slater. 2013. "Democratic Careening." *World Politics*, vol. 65, no. 4, pp. 729-63.

**Sept. 10 — Week 2: How do dictatorships start?**

- Geddes, Wright, and Frantz. 2018. *How Dictatorships Work*, pp. 25-58.
- Daniel Ziblatt and Steven Levitsky. 2018. *How Democracies Die*, pp. 11-32.<sup>1</sup>
- Milan Svoblik. 2018. "When Polarization Trumps Civic Virtue." Working Paper, Yale University.<sup>2</sup>

**Sept. 17 — Week 3: How do dictatorships differ from one another?**

- Barbara Geddes. 1999. "What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years?" *Annual Review of Political Science* vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 115-44.
- Milan Svoblik. 2012. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 162-92.
- Geddes, Wright, and Frantz. 2018. *How Dictatorships Work*, pp. 95-126.

**Sept. 24 — Week 4: How do dictators consolidate power over society?**

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<sup>1</sup>Uploaded to Quercus by Instructor

<sup>2</sup>Uploaded to Quercus by Instructor (also available here [\[link\]](#))

- Geddes, Wright, and Frantz. 2018. *How Dictatorships Work*, pp. 129-53.
- Jennifer Gandhi and Adam Przeworski. 2007. "Authoritarian Institutions and the Survival of Autocrats." *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 40, no. 11, pp. 1279-1301.
- Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way. 2012. "Beyond Patronage: Violent Struggle, Ruling Party Cohesion, and Authoritarian Durability." *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 10, no. 4, pp. 869-89.

### Oct. 1 — Week 5: How do dictators consolidate power over other elites?

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE

- Svobik. 2012. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*, pp. 53-63, 72-81.
- Geddes, Wright, and Frantz. 2018. *How Dictatorships Work*, pp. 61-94.

### Oct. 8 — Week 6: Dictators and their militaries

- Naunihal Singh. 2014. *Seizing Power: The Strategic Logic of Military Coups*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 1-14.<sup>3</sup>
- Sheena Chestnut Greitens. 2016. *Dictators and Their Secret Police: Coercive Institutions and State Violence*, pp. 3-16.
- Geddes, Wright, Frantz. 2018. *How Dictatorships Work*, pp. 154-74.

### Oct. 15 — No Class (Reading Week)

### Oct. 22 — Week 7: Are dictators good for economic development?

#### RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE

- Mancur Olson. 1993. "Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development." *American Political Science Review*, vol. 87, no. 3, pp. 567-76.
- Nicolas van de Walle. 2001. *African Economies and the Politics of Permanent Crisis, 1979-1999*, pp. 115-129.
- Joseph Wright. 2009. "Do Authoritarian Political Institutions Constrain? How Legislatures Affect Economic Growth and Investment." *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 52, no. 2: 322-43.

### Oct. 29 — Week 8: Why do dictatorships collapse?

- Maria J. Stephan and Erica Chenoweth. 2008. "Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict." *International Security*, vol. 33, no. 1: 7-44.

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<sup>3</sup>Uploaded to Quercus by Instructor

- Geddes, Wright, and Frantz. 2018. *How Dictatorships Work*, pp. 177-217.
- Svobik. 2012. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*, pp. 1-18.

**Nov. 5 — Week 9: How does the international system affect dictatorships?**

ROUGH DRAFT DUE

- Carles Boix. 2011. "Democracy, Development, and the International System." *American Political Science Review*, vol. 105, no. 4: 809-28.
- Sean L. Yom. 2016. *From Resilience to Revolution: How Foreign Interventions Destabilize the Middle East*, pp. 1-44.
- Seva Gunitsky. 2017. *Aftershocks: Great Powers and Domestic Reforms in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 198-230.

**Nov. 12 — Week 10: Foreign interventions to overthrow dictatorships**

- Joseph Wright and Abel Escribà-Folch. 2015. *Foreign Pressure and the Politics of Autocratic Survival*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 211-49 (chapter 8).
- Geddes, Wright, and Frantz. 2018. *How Dictatorships Work*, pp. 218-235.

**Nov. 19 — Week 11: Why do some dictatorships democratize?**

- Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way. 2010. *Competitive Authoritarianism*, pp. 37-84.
- Lucan Way. 2015. *Pluralism by Default: Weak Autocrats and the Rise of Competitive Politics*, pp. 1-32.

**Nov. 26 — Week 12: 21st century dictatorship**

RESEARCH PAPER DUE IN ONE WEEK - LAST OFFICE HOURS BEFORE PAPER DUE

- Ronald Diebert. 2019. "The Road to Digital Unfreedom: The Threat of Postmodern Totalitarianism." *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 30, no. 1: 25-39.
- Yuval Noah Harari. 2018. "[Why Technology Favors Tyranny](#)." *The Atlantic* (October).
- Erica Frantz and Joseph Wright. 2019. "Contemporary Democratic Breakdown and the Rise of Personalist Rule." *Annals of Comparative Democratization*, vol. 17, no. 1: 8-12.<sup>4</sup>
- Barbara Geddes. 2019. "Dictatorship Then and Now." *Annals of Comparative Democratization*, vol. 17, no. 1: 13-16.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Uploaded to Quercus by Instructor.

<sup>5</sup>Uploaded to Quercus by Instructor.

- Thomas Pepinsky. “[Life in Authoritarian States is Mostly Boring and Tolerable.](#)” *Vox*, January 9, 2017.
- Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way. 2015. “The Myth of Democratic Recession.” *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 26, no. 1: 45-58.
- [Optional] “[‘Eradicating Ideological Viruses’: China’s Campaign of Repression Against Xinjiang’s Muslims.](#)” *Human Rights Watch*, September 9, 2018.

**Dec. 3 — Research Papers Due (No Class)**