Populist politics across the globe have prompted widespread alarm as storied democracies drift toward authoritarian politics while long-standing autocracies show signs of retrenchment. Kasparov and Halvorssen note a boom in the authoritarian business, with over half of the world's population living under autocratic rule in 2017.

With the marked rise of authoritarianism, this course will analyze how the political relationships between individuals, institutions and the economy affect (and are affected by) authoritarian rule. The question of transitions from autocracy to democracy has been at the heart of 20th century political science. Recently, however, scholars are making a serious study of non-democratic regimes in their own right, as new data sources and analytical tools shed light on information-scarce authoritarian political systems. Deeply connected to issues such as redistribution, political competition, and institutions, social scientists across the spectrum of economics, sociology, and political science are contributing to this vibrant and growing sub-field.

Students will evaluate theoretical concepts from courses in democratization and the political economy of development in the context of persistent and rising authoritarian rule. They will also have the opportunity to choose a country case in which to gain expertise during the course. At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Define and identify key elements of authoritarian institutions and politics.
- Critically engage with the variety of arguments and theoretical explanations that social scientists have developed to explain the dynamics of persistent authoritarian rule.
- Identify an important research question in the political economy of authoritarianism.
- Gain expertise in one country case and be able to assess the utility and limitations of these arguments with reference to this case.
- Critically analyze empirical social science research.

Prerequisites:
Intro to Comparative Politics, or any upper level Political Science course. It will also be helpful, although not mandatory, to have taken a course on research design in the Social Sciences.

Course Assignments and Grading:
This course has an intensive reading and writing load; the nature of the assignments are to enable students to engage deeply with the material and come away from the course with a fluency in the comparative politics and political economy concepts and theories that underpin our understanding of authoritarian politics. Your grade will be comprised of four primary components: participation, discussion leadership, critical reading responses, and a larger final writing assignment. The breakdown of each as a component of your overall grade is as follows:

• Participation ................................................. 15%
• Discussion Leadership ...................................... 15%
• Critical Reading Responses .................................. 30%
• Writing Assignment ........................................... 40%

– Deadline TBA

Participation: includes class attendance, participating in class and online discussions (including asking clarifying questions). Students will be expected to contribute one question per week for in-class discussion on Moodle (https://moodle.org/) by 5 PM on the day before class. Students should come to class having completed all the required reading for the week. Attending and participating in all classes is expected; if you are unable to come to class for any reason, notify me in advance.

Discussion Leadership: Students will be assigned to lead class discussion at least once during the course. Discussion leadership involves designing a discussion outline based on the week’s reading which will be presented at the beginning of the class. Outlines should identify the core debates and contributions of the week’s readings and provide starting points for the seminar discussion. Students are encouraged to meet with the instructor to discuss your outline in advance of the deadline, which is 5 PM two days before class.

Critical Reading Responses: Students will submit a 1-2 page single-spaced reflection on the weeks assigned readings for weeks 2-13. These short pieces are intended to check your engagement with the material and help prepare for class discussions. Failure to hand in the reading reflection will be counted as a 0 for that weeks assignment. You are allowed to “skip” your critical response assignment twice during term without penalty. Your critical reading response should also include one paragraph on the evidence supporting or refuting the theories discussed in your response in the context of a single country case study. Students will submit their chosen country case to the instructor by the beginning of class in week 2; this will be the student’s assigned country case for the semester.

Final Writing Assignment: All final writing assignments will be double-spaced. Footnotes should be single spaced and the page count does not include bibliography. Undergraduate students will have a choice between writing 1) a 15 page research design essay that explains how you would test one of the concepts discussed in class, 2) a 15 page essay that evaluates the evidence for one of the discussed theoretical approaches in the context of your country case, or, 2) designing a board game with a 10 page written rule book that illustrates one of the theories of authoritarian resilience or policy-making. Students must choose which assignment they will complete by week 4 of the course. Graduate students must complete a research design essay.

Late Assignments: Late reading responses will not be accepted after their assigned class. All other late assignments will be deducted 5 % for each day that it is late. If you anticipate difficulty with a deadline, please see in me advance.

Required Books:

Additional readings are listed in the course outline and will be made available on Canvas.
A Note on Academic Integrity: Honest, open inquiry is the foundation of academia, and novel research should be in dialogue with an established body of literature. Acknowledging your interlocutor is key. If you use ideas, text, or data from any source that is not your own, you must cite it. Essays written for this course may not be submitted for another course without the explicit consent of myself and the other instructor. Please visit the university’s Writing Center website on using sources and revisit the university’s Academic Integrity Policy. The University takes plagiarism infractions seriously, and penalties for students caught plagiarizing include suspension, lowered or failing grades, and possible expulsion.

Diversity and Inclusion: This course should serve the needs of students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives. I welcome and encourage your suggestions to improve the effectiveness of this course for you personally, as well as for other students. Should our class meetings conflict with a religious observance, please let me know so we can make alternate arrangements. If you have established accommodations with the Resource Office on Disabilities, please communicate those to me at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course. In the event of any temporary or permanent physical or mental health conditions that arise during the term, contact campus health to make an appointment.

Course Outline

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<th>PART I: FOUNDATIONS AND CONCEPTS</th>
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Week 1: Introduction and Logistics


Week 2: Foundational Concepts and Researching Authoritarianism


Regime Types


Week 3: Origins of Autocracy


Part II: Institutionalism and Historical Legacies in Modern Authoritarianism

Week 4: Institutions and Historical Legacies

- Mahoney, James and Thelen, Kathleen, eds. 2015. Advances in Comparative Historical Analysis. New York: Cambridge University Press:
  - Levitsky and Way. “Not just what, but when (and how): comparative-historical approaches to authoritarian durability.”
  - Pierson, Paul. “Power and Path Dependence.”

Part III: Authoritarian Resilience and Collapse

Week 5: Power-Sharing

Week 6: Autocratic Legislatures


Week 7: Resource Rents and Longevity


PART IV: POLICY-MAKING AND PREFERENCES

Week 8: Clientelism and Corruption


Week 9: Policy-Making


Week 10: Distribution and Redistribution


Part V: Citizen-State Linkages

Week 11: Individual Preferences


Recommended


Week 12: Opposition and Protest


Week 13: Democratic Backsliding Post-Third Wave