

Authoritarian Regimes

PLCP 7500
Spring 2024
Mondays 2:00 – 4:30 PM
142 Gibson Hall

Prof. Anne Meng
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OH: Mondays after class (or by appt)

Overview. What is an authoritarian regime? How do autocratic leaders come into power, stay in power, and fall from power? In this course we will read and discuss all things dictatorship! There are two central goals for this class: 1) to help students prep for the CP exam and 2) to help students develop research ideas, including potential dissertation topics.

Requirements. All class members are expected to complete the assigned readings before the class meeting for which the particular readings are assigned. That basic requirement will permit students to complete the following categories of work.

- ***In-class participation.*** Students' thoughtful comments on course readings, along with their careful consideration of others' remarks, form an essential part of our seminar. Keep in mind that good questions contribute just as much to discussion as do affirmations and answers. Class participation is worth **20%** of the course grade.
 - *Having said that, your health comes first! If you are sick, please do not come to class. Stay home, rest, and take care of yourself. Thanks for being considerate of your classmates.*
 - I also strongly encourage you to attend the LLB seminar and the IR job talks this semester. Practice asking questions when you attend! Learning how to engage with new research and give good talks are extremely important skills.
- ***Discussion memos.*** Students will sign up twice per semester to write a discussion memo on a given session's set of readings, and to help lead class discussion on that session. The memos should be 2-4 pages each (double spaced, 12pt font). The first part of each memo should be dedicated to synthesizing and critically reviewing the assigned readings. How do the readings fit together? Where do they converge in the arguments they make, and where do they diverge? What gaps do you see? The second part of the memo should pose an original research question drawing and extending from the week's readings: what puzzle(s) do you see, and why are they interesting/important? How might you go about exploring that puzzle? Please email me your memos by midnight before class (11:59 PM on Sundays). Altogether, the two memos are worth **20%** of the course grade.
- ***Final research paper.*** The main assignment for this class will be a 30-page research paper. The paper should include the following components: i) research puzzle, ii) theoretical argument, iii) either an empirical test of the argument or a proposed

research design, iv) contributions of the study. We will work on the paper together in disaggregated pieces:

- An initial 1-page research proposal is due on April 1. I will provide feedback on your proposal.
- We will be doing in-class APSA-style presentations on April 22 and April 29. Each student will prepare a 12 to 14 minute presentation based on their research paper.
- The final research paper is due by 11:59pm on **May 8**. The final research paper is worth **60%** of the course grade.

How to access the readings. There is no Canvas page for this class. All the readings (articles and e-books) are available through the UVA library website Virgo.

<<https://search.lib.virginia.edu/>>

- To access articles, type the name of the journal into the search bar. Find the correct journal and click on “Library Catalog (Access Online).” UVA has subscriptions to all the major political science journals. Once you navigate to a journal home page, you can either search for the article by title, or you can navigate to the specific issue.
 - Most academics also have personal websites that list all their publications. You can often find links to articles from these websites.
- To access e-books, type the name of the book into the search bar. Find the correct book and click on “Library Catalog (Access Online).”
 - Note that you have access to the *entire* book! I mostly assigned just intro chapters to keep the reading load manageable, but if a topic really interests you, definitely feel free to skim other chapters!

Course Outline and Required Readings

January 22: The Modern Dictatorship

- Geddes. 1999. “What Do We Know about Democratization After Twenty Years?” *Annual Review of Politics Science*.
- Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, Erica Frantz. 2014. “Autocratic Breakdown and Regime Transitions: A New Data Set” *Perspectives on Politics* 12(2).
- Gandhi, Jennifer. 2008. *Political Institutions under Dictatorship*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 0 (Introduction) and Chapter 1 (The World of Dictatorial Institutions).

January 29: Power, power-sharing, and personalism

- Milan Svoblik. 2012. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1 (Introduction: The Anatomy of Dictatorship), Chapter 2 (The World of Authoritarian Politics), and Chapter 3 (And then there was one! Authoritarian power-sharing and the path to personal dictatorship).
- Anne Meng. 2020. *Constraining Dictatorship: From Personalized Rule to Institutionalized Regimes*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1 (Introduction), Chapter 2 (Why do leaders institutionalize?), and Chapter 3 (Two illustrative cases).
- Robert Powell, Anne Meng, and Jack Paine. 2023. “Authoritarian Power Sharing: Concepts, Mechanisms, and Strategies.” *Annual Review of Political Science*.

February 5: Institutions and cooptation

- Jason Brownlee. 2007. *Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 0 (Introduction) and Chapter 1 (The political origins of durable authoritarianism).
- Rory Truex. 2016. *Making Autocracy Work: Representation and Responsiveness in Modern China*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1 (Introduction).
- Thomas Pepinsky. 2014. “The Institutional Turn in Comparative Authoritarianism.” *British Journal of Political Science* 44(3).
- Dan Slater. 2003. “Iron Cage in an Iron Fist: Authoritarian Institutions and the Personalization of Power in Malaysia.” *Comparative Politics* 36(1).
- Bryn Rosenfeld. 2021. *The Autocratic Middle Class: How State Dependency Reduces the Demand for Democracy*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 1 (The autocratic middle class).

February 12: Choosing a leader: electoral and non-electoral succession

- Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way. 2010. *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*. Chapter 1 (Introduction).
- Jennifer Gandhi and Ellen Lust. 2009. “Elections Under Authoritarianism.” *Annual Review of Political Science*.
- Andrej Kokkonen and Anders Sundell. 2014. “Delivering Stability—Primogeniture and Autocratic Survival in European Monarchies 1000–1800.” *American Political Science Review* 108(2).
- Anne Meng. 2021. “Winning the Game of Thrones: Leadership Succession in Modern Autocracies.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 65(5).
- Edward Goldring and Peter Ward. 2024. “Elite Management Before Autocratic Leader Succession: Evidence from North Korea.” *World Politics* forthcoming (instructor will email a copy).

February 19: Coercion and repression

- Sheena Greitens. *Dictators and Their Secret Police: Coercive Institutions and State Violence*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1 (Introduction) and Chapter 2 (A theory of coercive institutions and state violence).
- Lisa Blaydes. 2018. *State of Repression: Iraq under Saddam Hussein*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 1 (Introduction) and Chapter 2 (Compliance and resistance under autocracy). E-book not available from library, instructor will email a copy.
- Brett Carter and Mai Hassan. 2021. “Regional Governance in Divided Societies: Evidence from the Republic of Congo and Kenya.” *The Journal of Politics* 83(1).
- Arturas Rozenas, Sebastian Schutte, and Yuri Zhukov. 2017. “The Political Legacy of Violence: The Long-Term Impact of Stalin’s Repression in Ukraine.” *Journal of Politics* 79(4).

February 26: Coups

- Naunihal Singh. 2014. *Seizing Power: The Strategic Logic of Military Coups*. Johns Hopkins Press. Chapter 1 (Introduction) and Chapter 2 (Theory).

- Phil Roessler. 2011. "The Enemy Within: Personal Rule, Coups, and Civil War in Africa." *World Politics* 63(2).
- Kristen Harkness 2016. "The Ethnic Army and the State: Explaining Coup Traps and the Difficulties of Democratization in Africa." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 60(4).
- Josef Woldense. 2022. "What Happens when Coups Fail? The Problem of Identifying and Weakening the Enemy Within." *Comparative Political Studies* 55(7).

March 4: Spring Break! *No class*

March 11: Rebellions and revolutions

- Jean Lachapelle, Steven Levitsky, Lucan Way, and Adam Casey. 2020. "Social Revolution and Authoritarian Durability." *World Politics* 72(4).
- Anne Meng and Jack Paine. 2022. "Power Sharing and Authoritarian Stability: How Rebel Regimes Solve the Guardianship Dilemma." *American Political Science Review* 116(4).
- Shelley Liu. 2024. "Coercive Legacies: From Rebel Governance to Authoritarian Control." *Journal of Politics* forthcoming (instructor will email a copy).
- Killian Clarke. 2022. "Revolutionary Violence and Counterrevolution." *American Political Science Review* 117(4).
- Jack Paine. 2022. "Reframing the Guardianship Dilemma: How the Military's Dual Disloyalty Options Imperil Dictators." *American Political Science Review* 116(4).

March 18: Mobilization, protest, and civil society

- Timur Kuran 1991. "Now Out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolutions of 1989." *World Politics* 44(1).
- Charles Crabtree, David Darmofal, and Holger Kern. 2015. "A spatial analysis of the impact of West German television on protest mobilization during the East German revolution." *Journal of Peace Research* 52(3).
- Mai Hassan. 2024. "Coordinated Dis-Coordination." *American Political Science Review* forthcoming (instructor will email a copy).
- Adrienne Lebas and Lauren Young. 2023. "Repression and Dissent in Moments of Uncertainty: Panel Data Evidence from Zimbabwe." *American Political Science Review* First View Online.
- Dan Mattingly. 2020. *The Art of Political Control in China*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1 (Introduction) and Chapter 2 (A theory of political control).

March 25: Propaganda and information control

- Lisa Wedeen. 1998. "Acting "as if": symbolic politics and social control in Syria." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40(3).
- Erin Baggot Carter and Brett Carter. 2021. "Propaganda and Protest in Autocracies." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 65(5).
- Sergei Guriev and Daniel Treisman. 2019. "Informational Autocrats." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 33 (4).

- Gary King, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts. 2013. "How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression." *American Political Science Review* 107(2).
- Arturas Rozenas and Denis Stukal. 2019. "How Autocrats Manipulate News: Evidence from Russia's State Controlled Television." *Journal of Politics* 81(3).

April 1: International influence and dictators at war

Final paper proposals due!

- Mike Miller. 2020. "The Strategic Origins of Electoral Authoritarianism." *British Journal of Political Science* 50(1).
- Emily Beaulieu and Susan Hyde. 2009. "In the Shadow of Democracy Promotion: Strategic Manipulation, International Observers, and Election Boycotts." *Comparative Political Studies* 42(3).
- Daniela Donno, Sara Fox, Joshua Kaasik. 2021. "International Incentives for Women's Rights in Dictatorships." *Comparative Political Studies* 55(3).
- Jessica Weeks. 2012. "Strongmen and Straw Men: Authoritarian Regimes and the Initiation of International Conflict." *American Political Science Review* 106(2).
- Caitlin Talmadge. 2015. *The Dictator's Army: Battlefield Effectiveness in Authoritarian Regimes*. Cornell University Press. Chapter 1 (Introduction).

April 8: Economic policy and development

- Yuhua Wang. 2015. *Tying the Autocrat's Hands: The Rise of the Rule of Law in China*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1 (Introduction).
- Wright, Joseph. 2008. "Do Authoritarian Institutions Constrain? How Legislatures Affect Economic Growth and Investment?" *American Journal of Political Science* 52(2).
- Ora John Reuter and Jennifer Gandhi. 2010. "Economic Performance and Elite Defection from Hegemonic Parties." *British Journal of Political Science* 41(1).
- Michael Albertus. 2015. *Autocracy and Redistribution: The Politics of Land Reform*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1 (Introduction).
- Benjamin Smith and David Waldner. 2021. *Rethinking the Resource Curse*. Cambridge Elements. Section 1 (Introduction) and Section 2 (Exploration and Findings) [pages 1-26].

April 15: Workshop on doing research/ final papers

- Pick out your favorite book from this semester and read the rest of it!

April 22: Student presentations

April 29: Student presentations

Final papers due on Wednesday, May 8.