

Political Science
[semester]
[course time]

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[office]
[office hours]

Political Life After Dictatorship

Overview: In recent decades, many countries have experienced political transitions from authoritarian rule. Optimistic observers of these transitions—especially in places such as Europe after communism, North Africa after the Arab Spring, and South Africa after apartheid—have at times declared them historical ruptures, “an end of history,” and an opportunity to begin anew. But dictatorship often casts long shadows over political life, shaping political attitudes, interpersonal trust, institutional capacity, and the other ingredients of political life.

In this course, we will study political life in new democracies and the legacies of authoritarianism that affect it. In the first part of the course, we will focus on understanding how dictatorships work. How do these systems shape institutions and ties between citizens? How do they use violence and how do they distribute resources? In the second part of the course, we will focus on how these authoritarian legacies affect different aspects of political life: ideology, enthusiasm for democracy, patterns of participation, polarization, and partisanship. Finally, we will close by critically evaluating a tool touted by the international community as capable of ameliorating some of the scars left by dictatorship: transitional justice. Throughout the course, we will explore a broad set of cases, including Western and postcommunist Europe, Latin America, post-Arab Spring North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, and the U.S. South.

Requirements:

- *Participation* (20 percent): This course is a seminar, meaning that its success will be determined by your collective contributions. Each week you will be asked to prepare the readings before class and to submit a set of discussion questions, which I will use to guide the discussion.
- *Reading Response* (20 percent, 2 pages): You are required to submit a response to any one of the readings assigned between week 6 and 12. The reading response must be submitted before the class for which that reading is assigned. The reading response should devote one paragraph to concisely stating the research question and argument covered by the work. The rest of the reading response should discuss issues with the question, argument, or evidence and make suggestions for how to build upon the work in future research. The goal is not to summarize or to tear down the work. It is to identify ways to build off of the work in future research.
- *Book review* (20 percent, 5 pages, due [date]): Early in the course, you must write a book review of one of the books below, each written for a general audience and each illustrative of the challenges that often face countries transitioning from authoritarianism. The goal of the review is to pull from the book general insights or questions regarding political life after dictatorship. You may eventually use these insights or questions to determine your research paper topic or argument.

If you would prefer to focus on a country or region not covered by these books, please let me know. I am open to finding another book that is closer to your interests.

- *The Struggle for Iraq's Future: How Corruption, Incompetence and Sectarianism Have Undermined Democracy* by Zaid al-Ali
- *Country of My Skull: Guilt, Sorrow, and the Limits of Forgiveness in the New South Africa* by Antjie Krog
- *The Return: Fathers, Sons and the Land in Between* by Hisham Matar
- *Haunted Land: Facing Europe's Ghosts After Communism* by Tina Rosenberg
- *Dancing Bears: True Stories of People Nostalgic for Life Under Tyranny* by Witold Szablowski
- *The Future Is History: How Totalitarianism Reclaimed Russia* by Masha Gessen
- *It's Our Turn to Eat: The Story of a Kenyan Whistleblower* by Michela Wrong
- **Research Paper:** In this assignment, you are required to propose or conduct a project focused on the effects of dictatorship in a particular new democracies or a set of new democracies. You may propose a theory and outline how you would test it. Or you may test the theory in the paper itself. You are required to clear the topic with me by week 4. Halfway through the semester you will be required to submit a one-page proposal, which will be graded. You are welcome to build upon insights from you book review and/or reading response.
 - Proposal (1 page, 5 percent, due [date])
 - Final Paper (12 pages, 35 percent, due [date])

Inclusivity: My goal is to create an inclusive environment in which students of all identities and backgrounds feel empowered to participate. Scholarship is a social enterprise that is enriched by mutual respect, a spirit of constructive criticism, and an embrace of diverse perspectives. If you have ideas for how I can better meet your needs or those of your classmates, please let me know by approaching me, sending me an email, or using the anonymous feedback form on the section website.

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity requires that you properly document the ways in which your work draws upon other works. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty have serious consequences. Please consult the college's policies on academic misconduct: [link]. And if you are ever unsure about how to make sure that you are adhering to them, please reach out!

Schedule:

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: What are the different types of dictatorships?

Is dictatorship a coherent regime type? Or should we focus on the ways that dictatorships differ from each other? This week we will discuss ways of distinguishing dictatorships from democracy and from each other.

Read:

- Larry Diamond, “Thinking About Hybrid Regimes,” *Journal of Democracy* 13 (April 2002): 21–35.
- Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz, “Autocratic Breakdown and Regime Transitions: A New Dataset,” *Perspectives on Politics* 12 (June 2014): 313–331.
- Stephen Haber, “Authoritarian Government” in Donald A. Wittman and Barry R. Weingast, eds., *Oxford Handbook of Political Economy* (17 pages).
- Adam Przeworski, “Minimalist Conception of Democracy: A Defense” in Ian Shapiro and Casiano Hacker-Cordon, eds., *Democracy’s Value* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 13–17.

Week 2: How does dictatorship work?

This week we will discuss the ways that dictatorships coopt, coerce, and habituate desired behaviors among citizens and avoid debilitating conflicts among elites. We will do so discussion of authoritarian practices in four authoritarian regimes: Hafez al-Assad’s Syria, Zine Abidine Ben Ali’s Tunisia, the PRI’s Mexico, and the Communist Party’s China.

Read:

- Beatrice Hibou, *The Force of Obedience: The Political Economy of Repression in Tunisia* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011), 81–109.
- Gary King, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts, “Reverse-engineering censorship in China: Randomized experimentation and participant observation,” *Science* 345 (August 2014): 891–901.
- Beatriz Magaloni, *Voting for Autocracy: Hegemonic Party Survival and Its Demise in Mexico* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
- Lisa Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 1–34.

Week 4: How do dictatorships become democracies?

In this lesson, we will discuss the process by which states transition from dictatorship to democracy, as well as the factors that usually cause them to do so.

Read:

- Stephan Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman, *Dictators and Democrats: Masses, Elites, and Regime Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 1–19.
- Adam Przeworski, “Conquered or Granted? A History of Suffrage Extensions,” *British Journal of Political Science* (April 2009): 291–321.

- Ian Shapiro, *The State of Democratic Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 78–103.

Week 5: The problem of consolidation in new democracies

Note: There are no assigned readings for this week. This is to allow you to focus on your book reviews, which are due by this class.

Due: Book Review

Week 6: Institutions

How do new democracies pick their institutions? What determines how democratic they are? This week we will talk about the fashioning of newly democratic constitutions and the consequences of the choices embedded in them.

Read:

- Michael Albertus and Victor Menaldo, *Authoritarianism and the Elite Origins of Democracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 25–62 & 99–140.

Week 7: Participation and Protest:

Read:

- Robert M. Fishman, “Democratic Practice after the Revolution: The Case of Portugal and Beyond,” *Politics & Society* 39 (2, 2012), 233–67.

Note that the reading load is lighter for this class to give you extra time to complete your research proposal.

DUE: Research Proposal

Week 8: Ideology

Does the type of ideology propagated by a dictatorship systematically affect political attitudes in the subsequent democratic regime? If so, how—and who is most likely to embrace the values emphasized by the dictatorship? In this lesson we will focus primarily on transitions from European Communist regimes.

Read:

- Grigore Pop-Eleches and Joshua A. Tucker, *Communism’s Shadow: Historical Legacies and Contemporary Political Attitudes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 1–62 & 136–185.

Recommended:

- Elias Dinas and Ksenia Northmore-Ball, “The Ideological Shadow of Authoritarianism,” *Comparative Political Studies* (July 2019).
- Alberto Alesina and Nicola Fuchs-Schundeln, “Goodbye Lenin (or Not?): The Effect of Communism on People's Preferences,” *American Economic Review* (September 2007): 1507–28.

Week 9: Support for Democracy

Do citizens of new democracies value it as a political system more than citizens of more established democracies? Or are they suspicious of it? This week we will talk about support for democracy in newly democratic Mexico and Central and Eastern Europe.

- David Crow, “The Party’s Over: Citizen Conceptions of Democracy and Political Dissatisfaction in Mexico,” *Comparative Politics* 43 (October 2010): 41–61.
- Gladys I. McCormick and Matthew R. Cleary, “What Ails Mexican Democracy: Too Much Hope, Too Little Change,” *Foreign Affairs* (March 2018).
- Grigore Pop-Eleches and Joshua A. Tucker, *Communism’s Shadow: Historical Legacies and Contemporary Political Attitudes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 99–135.

Week 10: Polarization and Animosity

How do legacies of violence and repression affect the animosity different political groups feel for each other? In this lesson, we will focus on two arguments regarding the legacies of repression and violence in North Africa and the U.S. South.

- Avidit Acharya, Matthew Blackwell, and Maya Sen, *Deep Roots: How Slavery Still Shapes Southern Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 47–102.
- Elizabeth Nugent, “The Psychology of Repression and Polarization,” *World Politics* (Forthcoming).

Week 11: Political Parties I

What determines partisanship in societies with little history of political pluralism? In this lesson, we will discuss partisanship in post–Arab Spring Egypt and postcommunist Hungary.

- Tarek Masoud, *Counting Islam: Religion, Class, and Elections in Egypt* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014): 155–182.
- Jason Wittenberg, *Crucibles of Political Loyalty: Church Institutions and Electoral Continuity in Hungary* (New York: Cambridge 2006), 20–74.

Week 12: Political Parties II: Old Regime Parties

Parties that rule over dictatorships often remain competitive during democracy. In this lesson, we will discuss the sources of this surprising strength as well as its consequences.

Read:

- Anna Grzymala-Busse, *Redeeming the Communist Past: The Regeneration of Communist Parties in East Central Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1 – 18.
- James Loxton, “Authoritarian Successor Parties,” *Journal of Democracy* 26 (July 2015): 157 – 170.
- Rachel Riedl, *Authoritarian Origins of Democratic Party Systems in Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014): 1 – 56.

Week 13: What is “transitional justice” and how does it work?

This week we will discuss the emerge of “transitional justice,” a set of procedures often advocated by international community to address authoritarian legacies, especially those related to violations of human rights.

Read:

- Paige Arthur, “How ‘Transitions’ Reshaped Human Rights: A Conceptual History of Transitional Justice,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 31 (2009): 321–67.
- Jon Elster, *Closing the Books: Transitional Justice in Historical Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press), 79–135.
- Monika Nalepa, “Captured Commitments: An Analytic Narrative of Transitions with Transitional Justice,” *World Politics* 62 (2, 2010): 341–380.

Week 14: Does transitional justice work?

In this lesson, we will discuss the evidence regarding whether transitional justice procedures usually achieve their goals.

- Milena Ang and Monika Nalepa, “Can Transitional Justice Improve the Quality of Representation in New Democracies,” *World Politics* 71 (October 2019): 631–666.
- Susanne Choi and Roman David, “Lustration Systems and Trust: Evidence from Survey Experiments in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland,” *American Journal of Sociology* 117 (January 2012): 172–201.
- Hunjoon Kim and Kathryn Sikkink, “Explaining the Deterrence Effect of Human Rights Prosecutions for Transitional Countries,” *International Studies Quarterly* 54, 939–63.
- Cyanne E. Loyle and Christian Davenport, “Transitional Injustice: Subverting Justice in Transition and Postconflict Societies,” *Journal of Human Rights* 15 (1, 2016).

Due: Final Paper