

Politics of Dictatorship

MW 9:50 AM, F 9:40 AM, Weitz 132

Professor Huan Gao

Office: Hasenstab 317

Office hour: MW 2:30-4:30PM or by appointment

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Course Overview

This course explores theories about non-democratic regimes. Here in the United States and the broader “west”, liberal democracy is still considered a stable—if challenged—aspect of life, yet seventy percent of the world’s population live in closed autocracies or electoral autocracies today. There is an ever more urgent need to better understand those seventy percent of the world’s population and the lives they lead. This course takes a deep dive into dictatorships past and present, exploring the key question of democratization versus authoritarian resilience. We will also investigate the social and economic consequences of dictatorship, focusing primarily on how a lack of democracy interacts with economic development, governance, and political opposition.

Class Requirement and Expectations

This course is about reading, analyzing, and criticizing the classic theories and cutting-edge research in political science, as well as leveraging things learned to pursue new inquiries. Therefore, it is crucial that students keep up with their readings assignments and always arrive in class having read the assigned materials and ready to discuss their own insight. This course does not require any book purchase; all readings will be made available electronically. You are encouraged to markup questions, reflections, and points of interest as you read, and you should bring these responses to class discussions.

Classroom Policy

Active participation in class discussions is a crucial part of this course and contributes to your own as well as your peers’ learning process. You are expected to participate in class discussions often, engage with your peers meaningfully, and contribute your fair share in all group activities and assignments. Just as importantly, you are expected to contribute to a positive classroom environment. It means being punctual in class, showing courtesy, and being supportive of your peers in discussions and group activities. The class is well-sized so that everyone should have an opportunity to share all their thoughts and responses. If you have unanswered questions or additional comments, I encourage you to come to office hours for further discussion, which is another form of participation. However, contributing to in-class discussions brings irreplaceable value to everyone.

Office Hours

Office hours are Monday and Wednesday afternoon, from 2:30 to 4:30PM. You should also feel welcome to come to office hours with any question or concern. Please use the sign-up sheet on my office door to plan for a timeslot and avoid line-ups. You can also email me for appointment time outside of usual office hour should you be busy during regular office hour.

Student Evaluations

Student evaluations will be based on six components:

- 1) Participation 20%
- 2) Case study short paper 15%
- 3) Data exploration assignment 10%
- 4) Debate (group) 10%
- 5) Special topic presentation 10%
- 6) Final paper 35%

Translation of percentages to letter grades is as follows:

A: 94+	A-: 90-93	
B+: 87-89	B: 84-86	B-: 80-83
C+: 77-79	C: 74-76	C-: 70-73
D: 60-69	F: under 60	

Summary of Assignments

Participation (20%)

Your participation grade is determined by both your participation in class discussions and your contribution toward a constructive learning environment. Participation means actively analyzing, questioning, and otherwise engaging with readings as well as comments from your classmates in discussions. You are expected to participate often and demonstrate that you consistently complete reading assignments.

Every Saturday, a set of reading questions related to next week's readings will be posted to Moodle. These questions will help guide you to find the most important questions and debates within the readings. If you have to be absent from class or feel that you cannot find an opportunity to share your thoughts in class, you can also post on the reading questions forum on Moodle, which will help improve your participation grade in the course.

Case study paper (15%)

For this assignment, you will conduct a detailed case study of one authoritarian regime's history, development, institutions, etc. to explain its democratization process or the lack of it thereof. This paper should present a clear thesis with appropriate scope conditions and use evidence from a single country case to support the thesis. The paper should be 5-7 pages in length.

Data exploration assignment (10%)

The data assignment guides students in operationalizing a key variable. In the course we discuss key concepts such as democracy, freedom, state capacity, etc., but how should these concepts be measured? In this assignment, you will explore one key concept, ideally relevant to your final research, and find at least three ways to measure this concept. You will collect data on as many countries as possible for your concept and create summary statistics and visualization of the data collected. In a written report 4-6 pages in length, you will discuss the statistics you collect measure your concept well, how you compromised conceptual integrity and data availability, as well as analyze and evaluate the quality of the data you are working with.

Debate (group) (10%)

For this assignment, the class will be randomly split into two groups and assigned positions on a debate statement. An entire class will be dedicated to debate preparation, and the actual debate will take place in the following two classes. This will take place in week 5 and serve as a midterm review.

Research paper (35%)

This course requires a final research paper, due on the last day of the exam period. This paper needs to propose and then answer a clear, narrowly defined question about some aspect of politics in non-democratic regimes. You can employ any appropriate research method to answer your question, including but not limited to statistical modeling, surveys, interviews, text analysis of documents, case studies, etc. This final paper should be a culmination of your learning throughout the course. Both the case study assignment and the data exploration assignment are opportunities to conduct initial exploration and research for your final paper, and you should feel encouraged to use materials from both assignments towards the final paper.

This paper is a term-long project that we will visit throughout the course. Students are required to submit a paper proposal in week five. This proposal should lay out the research question and explore some potential methods of inquiry and data sources. You will also have a chance in week five to discuss your ideas with peers and receive feedback. In week 8 there will be another opportunity to have others review your draft and receive feedback.

Special topic presentation (10%)

For this assignment, you will submit a complete draft literature review for your final paper and prepare a presentation with slides/notes. The goal of your presentation is teaching your peers about your specific question/topic. Your presentation should present your research question, lay out relevant theories and ideas, discuss prominent cases and research, and provide a comprehensive overview of the question at hand. This will also be an opportunity for you to share some aspects of your final paper and receive further feedback.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Jan 3	Thinking about non-democracies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction • Going over the syllabus
Jan 5	Conceptualizing regime types and changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Papada, Evie, David Altman, Fabio Angiolillo, Lisa Gastaldi, Tamara Köhler, Martin Lundstedt, Natalia Natsika et al. "Defiance in the face of autocratization. Democracy Report 2023." <i>Democracy Report</i> (2023).

Jan 8	Conceptualizing states and regimes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Huntington, Samuel P. <i>Political order in changing societies</i>. Yale university press, 2006. Chapter 1
Jan 10	Democratization I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moore, Barrington. <i>Social origins of dictatorship and democracy: Lord and peasant in the making of the modern world</i>. Vol. 268. Beacon Press, 1993. Chapter 1,5.
Jan 12	Democratization II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dahl, Robert A. <i>Polyarchy: Participation and opposition</i>. Yale university press, 2008. Chapter 1-3
Jan 15	Democratization III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Przeworski, Adam, and Fernando Limongi. "Modernization: Theories and facts." <i>World politics</i> 49, no. 2 (1997): 155-183. Svolik, Milan. "Authoritarian reversals and democratic consolidation." <i>American Political Science Review</i> 102, no. 2 (2008): 153-168.
Jan 17	Democratization IV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geddes, Barbara. "What do we know about democratization after twenty years?." <i>Annual review of political science</i> 2, no. 1 (1999): 115-144. Cheng, Tun-jen. "Democratizing the quasi-Leninist regime in Taiwan." <i>World Politics</i> 41, no. 4 (1989): 471-499.
Jan 19	Authoritarian resilience I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lachapelle, Jean, Steven Levitsky, Lucan A. Way, and Adam E. Casey. "Social revolution and authoritarian durability." <i>World Politics</i> 72, no. 4 (2020): 557-600.
Jan 22	Authoritarian resilience II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Levitsky, Steven, and Lucan A. Way. <i>Competitive authoritarianism: Hybrid regimes after the Cold War</i>. Cambridge University Press, 2010. Chapter 1-2.
Jan 24	Authoritarian resilience III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mann, Michael. "The autonomous power of the state: its origins, mechanisms and results." <i>European Journal of Sociology</i> 25, no. 2 (1984): 185-213. Slater, Dan, and Sofia Fenner. "State power and staying power: Infrastructural mechanisms and authoritarian durability." <i>Journal of International Affairs</i> (2011): 15-29.
Jan 26	Debate preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case study assignment due
Jan 29	Debate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
Jan 31	Democratic reversals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bermeo, Nancy. "On democratic backsliding." <i>J. Democracy</i> 27 (2016): 5. Waldner, David, and Ellen Lust. "Unwelcome change: Coming to terms with democratic backsliding." <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> 21 (2018): 93-113. Glasius, Marlies. "What authoritarianism is... and is not: a practice perspective." <i>International affairs</i> 94, no. 3 (2018): 515-533.
Feb 2	Final paper proposal discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final paper proposal due
Feb 7	Economic development I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> North, Douglass C., and Barry R. Weingast. "Constitutions and commitment: the evolution of institutions governing public choice in seventeenth-century England." <i>The journal</i>

		<p><i>of economic history</i> 49, no. 4 (1989): 803-832.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wright, Joseph. "Do authoritarian institutions constrain? How legislatures affect economic growth and investment." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 52, no. 2 (2008): 322-343.
Feb 9	Economic development II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maravall, Jose Maria. "The myth of the authoritarian advantage." <i>J. Democracy</i> 5 (1994): 17. Sallai, Dorottya, and Gerhard Schnyder. "What is "authoritarian" about authoritarian capitalism? The dual erosion of the private–public divide in state-dominated business systems." <i>Business & Society</i> 60, no. 6 (2021): 1312-1348.
Feb 12	Corruption and transparency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collier, Michael W. "Explaining corruption: An institutional choice approach." <i>Crime, Law and Social Change</i> 38 (2002): 1-32. Carothers, Christopher. <i>Corruption Control in Authoritarian Regimes: Lessons from East Asia</i>. Cambridge University Press, 2022.
Feb 14	Patronage and clientelism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hicken, Allen. "Clientelism." <i>Annual review of political science</i> 14 (2011): 289-310. Trantidis, Aris. "Clientelism and the classification of dominant party systems." <i>Democratization</i> 22, no. 1 (2015): 113-133.
Feb 16	Clientelist state case study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fox, Jonathan. "The difficult transition from clientelism to citizenship: Lessons from Mexico." <i>World politics</i> 46, no. 2 (1994): 151-184. (Film showing) Data exploration assignment due
Feb 19	Protests and social movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reuter, Ora John, and Graeme B. Robertson. "Legislatures, cooptation, and social protest in contemporary authoritarian regimes." <i>The journal of politics</i> 77, no. 1 (2015): 235-248. Lorentzen, Peter L. "Regularizing rioting: Permitting public protest in an authoritarian regime." <i>Quarterly Journal of Political Science</i> 8, no. 2 (2013): 127-158.
Feb 21	Civil society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ekiert, Grzegorz, and Jan Kubik. "Myths and realities of civil society." <i>J. Democracy</i> 25 (2014): 46. Toepler, Stefan, Annette Zimmer, Christian Fröhlich, and Katharina Obuch. "The changing space for NGOs: Civil society in authoritarian and hybrid regimes." <i>VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations</i> 31 (2020): 649-662. Altan-Olcay, Ozlem, and Ahmet Icduygu. "Mapping civil society in the Middle East: The cases of Egypt, Lebanon and Turkey." <i>British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies</i> 39, no. 2 (2012): 157-179.
Feb 23	Special topics final	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final paper literature review draft due

	<i>paper presentation</i>	
Feb 26	<i>Special topics final paper presentation</i>	•
Feb 28	Censorship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lorentzen, Peter. "China's strategic censorship." <i>American Journal of political science</i> 58, no. 2 (2014): 402-414. • Shen, Xiaoxiao, and Rory Truex. "In search of self-censorship." <i>British Journal of Political Science</i> 51, no. 4 (2021): 1672-1684.
Mar 1	Ideology and legitimization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dukalskis, Alexander, and Johannes Gerschewski. "What autocracies say (and what citizens hear): proposing four mechanisms of autocratic legitimation." In <i>Justifying Dictatorship</i>, pp. 1-18. Routledge, 2018. • Von Soest, Christian, and Julia Grauvogel. "Identity, procedures and performance: how authoritarian regimes legitimize their rule." In <i>Justifying Dictatorship</i>, pp. 37-55. Routledge, 2018.
Mar 4	Theocracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Osa, Maryjane. "Creating solidarity: the religious foundations of the Polish social movement." <i>East European Politics and Societies</i> 11, no. 02 (1997): 339-365. • Chehabi, Houchang E. "Religion and Politics in Iran: How Theocratic Is the Islamic Republic?." <i>Daedalus</i> (1991): 69-91. • Kazemipur, Abdolmohammad, and Ali Rezaei. "Religious life under theocracy: The case of Iran." <i>Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion</i> 42, no. 3 (2003): 347-361.
Mar 6	The future of democracy	•
Mar 8	Final paper writing session	•
Mar 13	End of exam days	• Final project due 9AM

Resources for Students

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Carleton College is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Office of Accessibility Resources (Henry House, 107 Union Street) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, autism spectrum disorders, chronic health, traumatic brain injury and concussions, vision, hearing, mobility, or speech impairments), please contact OAR@carleton.edu or call Sam Thayer ('10), Director of the Office of Accessibility Resources (x4464), to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.

Assistive Technologies: Technological Resources for Students

The Assistive Technologies program brings together academic and technological resources to complement student classroom and computing needs, particularly in support of students with physical

or learning disabilities. Accessibility features include text-to-speech (Kurzweil), speech-to-text (Dragon) software, and audio recording Smartpens. If you would like to know more, contact aztechs@carleton.edu or visit go.carleton.edu/aztech.

Library

Library staff can help you find and evaluate articles, books, websites, statistics, data, government documents, and more. [You can make an appointment with a librarian](#), get help via chat 24/7 from any page on the library's website, [email, or call](#). The Library building has lots of great study spaces, and we'd love for you to visit! For more information and our hours, visit the Gould Library website at carleton.edu/library.

Writing

The Writing Center

The Writing Center a space with peer writing consultants who can work with you during any stage of the writing process (brainstorming to final proofreading). Hours and more information can be found on the [writing center website](#). You can reserve specific times for conferences by using their [online appointment system](#).

The Term-Long Program for Multilingual Writers

If English is not your first language and you believe you might benefit from working regularly with a writing consultant this term, email Melanie Cashin, [Multilingual Writing Coordinator](#), at mcashin@carleton.edu. She can arrange once- or twice-a-week meetings between you and a specific writing consultant throughout the term.