

POLS 4530/5530: Authoritarian Politics

Fall 2022 – Tuesday 4:15-7:00 pm

Professor Matthew Nanes

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 11-12 and by appointment

Course Description and Goals

This course provides an introduction to research on authoritarian politics. The primary purpose is to review, synthesize, and critique existing scholarly literature on the topic, and to build a foundation on which students may begin their own research. Questions we will cover include:

- What is an autocracy?
- Are all autocracies the same from an analytic perspective? What is to be gained by differentiating and categorizing?
- When and why do democracies die?
- What problems do dictators face? How do they solve those problems?
- Why do autocracies sometimes allow democratic institutions like legislatures, opposition parties, and elections?
- How do autocrats rig elections? Why bother holding an election that is obviously rigged?
- Why do opposition parties and candidates participate in rigged elections?
- How does authoritarianism affect policy outcomes, economic growth, and international interactions?

By the end of the semester, students should be able to a) summarize what existing research has to say about each of these questions, and b) make a coherent case for the way that future research should continue to address these questions. I do not assume that students have any specific knowledge of political science. However, this is an advanced class and we will move quickly.

We will apply a theoretical framework on authoritarianism to several contemporary cases, including China, Egypt, Vietnam, Syria, Russia, Mexico, Africa (cross-national), Jordan, Lebanon, and Uganda.

Attendance Policy

Attendance and active participation are expected. Classroom discussions constitute a major portion of the course, and you cannot make up for missed sessions just by doing the readings or reviewing notes. You are allowed 1 unexcused absence with no penalty. Additional unexcused absences will each result in a 5 point penalty on your final course grade.

Absences will be excused if they are caused by something that is both unforeseeable and out of your control. Illness is an excused absence. Do not come to class if you are sick! If you'd like to request an excused absence, please email me and we will sort it out.

Grading and Assignments

The assignments evaluate you based on the course goals listed above, with an emphasis on a) your ability to explain the existing research, including its strengths and weaknesses, and b) your ability to build on the existing research to propose a creative and productive path forward for contributing to our understanding of authoritarian politics.

- **10% Active classroom participation.** I'd like to hear from you at least once during most classes. The emphasis is on quality, not quantity, of participating. Feel free to check in with me for an update on how you are doing.
- **15% Discussion Leadership.** Each student will lead part of a class discussion. Students registered for 4530 will lead the discussion of one article. Students registered for 5530 or who are taking 4530 for honors credit will lead the discussion of two articles. We will assign dates and papers during the first class.
- **40% Two response papers (20% each).** Throughout the quarter you will write two papers in which you a) summarize and synthesize the existing research on the topic assigned for that week, b) highlight one or two strengths of the research, c) highlight one or two areas where the research remains inconclusive, and d) propose a research project to build on existing research OR propose a change in US foreign policy based on the conclusions of the research (your choice). These assignments are open-book, and you are expected to consult the written materials assigned in class. Dates will be assigned during the first class. The paper dates you select should not overlap with the date you lead the classroom discussion.

- **35% Final Paper.** You will choose to write on one out of several essay prompts which ask you to build creatively on the material we covered during the semester. The prompts are designed to give you considerable flexibility in terms of a research or policy focus. Additional details will be provided.

I will convert your numeric grades to a letter course grade using this scale:

A	93-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D	60-70
A-	90-92	B	83-86	C	73-76	F	below 60
		B-	80-82	C-	70-72		

Academic Integrity:

I take academic integrity very seriously. If you are not sure what is allowed on a particular assignment, it is your responsibility to contact me for clarification. Unless I specify otherwise, assignments should be completed on your own with no input from anyone else. Also unless otherwise specified, all assignments are closed-book and you may not use any resources to help complete them. Any violation of academic integrity will result in an automatic F in the class AND a referral to the academic honesty committee.

You should familiarize yourself with the university's general guidelines on academic integrity found here:

<https://www.slu.edu/provost/policies/academic-and-course/academic-integrity-policy.pdf>

Students with Disabilities

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Please visit the Office of Disability Services website (<http://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/disability-services>) for details. Please also contact me as soon as possible if you wish to discuss any of these options.

Also see: <https://www.slu.edu/provost/faculty-affairs/teaching-resources-for-faculty/course-syllabus-information/syllabus-statements/syllabus-stmt-disability-accommodations.docx>

Title IX

SLU policy and federal law requires that I pass along certain types of information that you share with me. Even if you ask me to keep the information confidential, I am not allowed to do so. You can find full information here:

<https://www.slu.edu/provost/faculty-affairs/teaching-resources-for-faculty/course-syllabus-information/syllabus-statements/syllabus-stmt-title-ix.docx>

Required Books

- All readings can either be accessed online or will be provided via Canvas.

August 29th Week 1: Course Intro

No assigned reading

- What's the point of political science research?
- How to read an academic article
- Course overview
- How to lead class discussion
- Distribute discussion leader and short paper dates

September 5th Week 2: What is Autocracy?

Reading

- Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub, and Limongi (2000), *Democracy and Development*. "Chapter 1: Democracies and Dictatorships."
- Diamond (2002), "Thinking about Hybrid Regimes."
- Bueno de Mesquita et al (1999), "Policy Failure and Political Survival." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 43:2.

September 12th Week 3: Information Problems / The Dictator's Dilemma

Reading

- Wintrobe (1998), *The Political Economy of Dictatorship*. Chapters 1 and 2 ONLY.
- Qin, Amy (2020), "Why are People Protesting in Hong Kong?" *New York Times* 27 May.
- Lorentzen, Peter (2013), "Regularizing Rioting: Permitting Public Protest in an Authoritarian Regime." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*.

September 19th Week 4: Media and Censorship

Reading

- Stockman, Daniela and Mary E. Gallagher (2011), "Remote Control: How the Media Sustain Authoritarian Rule in China." *Comparative Political Studies*.
- Roberts, Margaret (2018), "Chapter 1: Introduction." In *Censored: Distraction and Diversion Inside China's Great Firewall*. Princeton University Press.

September 26th Week 5: Managing Elites

Reading

- Boix and Svolik (2013), "The Foundations of Limited Authoritarian Government: Institutions, Commitment, and Power-Sharing in Dictatorships." *Journal of Politics*. **NOTE:** You are not required to follow the formal model; just get as much as you can out of the verbal version of the theory and the empirical analysis.
- Blaydes (2010), *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak's Egypt*. Chapters 1 and 3 ONLY.
- Meng and Paine (2022), "Power Sharing and Authoritarian Stability." *American Political Science Review*

October 3rd Week 6: Parties, Legislatures, and Cabinets

Reading

- Diaz-Cayeros, Alberto and Magaloni, Beatriz (2001), "Party Dominance and the Logic of Electoral Design in Mexico's Transition to Democracy." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 13(3)
- Arriola, Leonard (2009), "Patronage and Political Stability in Africa." *Comparative Political Studies*
- Malesky and Schuler (2011), "The Single-Party Dictator's Dilemma: Information in Elections without Opposition." *Legislative Studies Quarterly*

October 10th Week 7: Why Autocrats Hold Elections

Reading

- Geddes, Barbara (2006), "Why Parties and Elections in Authoritarian Regimes?" *Unpublished Manuscript*
- Lust-Okar, Ellen (2006), "Elections Under Authoritarianism: Preliminary Lessons from Jordan." *Democratization*
- Blaydes (2010), *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak's Egypt*. Chapter 4 ONLY.

October 17th Week 8: How to Steal an Election (I)

Reading

- Schedler, Andreas (2002), "The Menu of Manipulation." *Journal of Democracy*
- Simpson, Alberto (2008), "Cheating Big: On the Logic of Electoral Corruption in Developing Countries." *Unpublished Manuscript*
- Hafner-Burton, Emily, Susan Hyde, and Ryan Jablonski (2014), "When do Governments Resort to Election Violence?" *British Journal of Political Science*

October 24th: NO CLASS

October 31st Week 9: How to Steal an Election (II)

Reading

- Gans-Morse, Jordan, Sebastian Mazzuca, and Simeon Nichter (2013), “Varieties of Clientelism: Machine Politics during Elections.” *American Journal of Political Science*
- Corstange, Daniel (2018), “Clientelism in Competitive and Uncompetitive Elections.” *Comparative Political Studies*
- Ferree, Karen, Robert Dowd, Danielle Jung, and Clark Gibson (2014), “Experimental Evidence on the Effects of Electoral Inking on Turnout in a Fragile Democracy.” *Unpublished Manuscript*

November 7th Week 10: Economic Development and Public Goods (I)

Reading

- Bueno de Mesquita et al (2001), “Political Competition and Economic Growth.” *Journal of Democracy* 12(1).
- Lake, David and Matthew Baum (2001), “The Invisible Hand of Democracy: Political Control and the Provision of Public Services.” *Comparative Political Studies* 34(6).

November 14th Week 11: Economic Development and Public Goods (II)

Reading

- Blaydes (2010), *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak’s Egypt*. Chapter 5 ONLY.
- Wang (2015), *Tying the Autocrat’s Hands*. Chapters 1, 2, and 4 ONLY.
- Knutsen, Carl Henrik and Magnus Rasmussen (2018), “The Autocratic Welfare State: Old-Age Pensions, Credible Commitments, and Regime Survival.” *Comparative Political Studies*.

November 21st Week 12: Corruption

Reading

- Svensson, Jakob (2005), “Eight Questions About Corruption.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 19(3).
- Rose-Ackerman, Susan (1999), *Corruption and Government*. Chapters 3 and 7 ONLY.
- Wang (2015), *Tying the Autocrat’s Hands*. Chapters 5 and 6 ONLY.

November 28th Week 13: Autocratic Transitions (I)

Reading

- Olson, Mancur (1993), “Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development,” *American Political Science Review*
- Geddes, Barbara (1999), “What do we Know About Democratization After Twenty Years?” *Annual Review of Political Science*.
- Hollyer, James and Leonard Wantchekon (2015), “Corruption and Ideology in Autocracies.” *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization*. Read the whole article, but feel free to skim pages 505-515.

December 5th Week 14: Autocratic Transitions (II)

Reading

- Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce and George W. Downs (2005), “Development and Democracy.” *Foreign Affairs* 84(5).
- Levitsky, Stephen and Lucan A. Way (2002), “Election Without Democracy: The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism.” *Journal of Democracy*

Final Paper due via Canvas. Due December 13 at noon.