

THE CHALLENGE OF AUTHORITARIANISM
GVPT 203
SPRING 2019

Professor Calvert W. Jones
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BASICS

Course Meeting: MW 2-2:50pm, JMZ 0220

ELMS Site: <https://myelms.umd.edu> (login required)

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1-3pm, 2116 Chincoteague

COURSE OVERVIEW

Since the end of the Cold War, many have proclaimed the triumph of democracy around the world and predicted the inevitable decline of authoritarianism, which has been seen as backward and outdated. But what is authoritarianism? Is it declining around the world, or is it actually on the rise? Is it all bad, or can it sometimes be good? Should the US work harder to counter authoritarianism in other places, or leave things be? Should Americans worry about authoritarianism at home too, and not just abroad? This course introduces students to one of the “big questions” of our time – the persistent challenge of authoritarianism. The course adopts an interdisciplinary approach drawing from films and literature, history and philosophy, and psychology, international relations, and political science. The first section, “History and Fundamentals,” tackles the nature of authoritarianism and its evolution from ancient through modern times. The second section, “Theorizing Authoritarianism,” asks key questions such as how authoritarian regimes vary, why citizens sometimes comply with them, and when and how citizens rebel. The third section, “Authoritarianism in Our Time,” investigates contemporary authoritarianism, focusing on its resilience in the Middle East and East Asia and its potential for a resurgence in the US and Europe.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify the major questions and issues in tackling the challenge of authoritarianism.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the political, social, economic, and ethical dimensions involved in questions of authoritarianism.
- Communicate major ideas and issues raised by the course through effective written and/or oral presentations.
- Articulate how the course has invited them to think in new ways about their lives, their place in the University and other communities, and/or issues central to their major disciplines or other fields of interest.

REQUIRED READINGS

All readings will be available online or in PDF form via ELMS. I have worked hard to select engaging and informative readings and to allow students to be able to learn free of charge. Some readings may have notes on them from previous students, but all should be clear and legible. Please take advantage of these readings being made freely available to you, and read them! ☺ The readings should be completed prior to the associated lecture, if possible, and must be

completed by your section meeting time on Fridays, when you will discuss them as part of your participation grade. Note that any readings labeled as “recommended” will not be formally tested on midterms and exams, but may increase your learning and assist your thinking when participating in sections, working on papers, and constructing essay responses.

TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Ethan Kim (ethankim@terpmail.umd.edu)

Jacob Lewis (jslewis@umd.edu)

COURSE MECHANICS

This course combines lectures with discussion sections, and both will involve active participation and student-driven learning. For example, one week will feature a student-selected film depicting authoritarianism, the basis for one of the two reaction papers. In addition, the Group Paper Project will enable students working in teams to learn more about a contemporary authoritarian regime of their choice, rather than one that has been assigned to them. Students are expected to attend both lectures and discussion sections. In lecture, laptops and tablets may be used for note-taking purposes only, and phones must be put away with sound muted. In discussion sections, TAs will set their own policies on the use of technology. Note that PowerPoint lecture slides will not be posted on ELMS, so it is important to attend class regularly.

Outside of class, the best way to get in touch with me is to come to office hours or email me at cwjones@umd.edu. However, for many basic questions, your first point of reference should be your TA. I will be emailing you via ELMS to make important announcements, such as schedule changes or class cancellations. In the case of inclement weather or another kind of emergency closing the University, I will also be communicating with you via email. It is your responsibility to check your email so that you receive these updates.

EXPECTATIONS AND GRADE BREAKDOWN

Assessment	Assessment Date	Percentage of Final Grade
Midterm 1	Feb 20, in-class	15%
Midterm 2	April 1, in-class	15%
Active Participation (includes two reaction papers, 2-3 pages, double-spaced)	Ongoing, reaction papers due in sections (Week 5 and Week 11, respectively)	25%
Group Paper Project	Due in sections, Week 15	25%
Final Exam (cumulative, but will focus on latter part of course)	May 20, 1:30-3:30pm	20%

The course offers a variety of forms of assessment. Both in-class midterms will feature short-answer or “ID-style” questions. The Final Exam will combine short-answer questions as well as an essay question, and although it will be cumulative, it will focus on the latter part of the course. More information about the midterms and final exam will be provided during the course. Active participation (including the two reaction papers) as well as the Group Paper Project is described in greater detail below.

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

Active participation is an essential component of this class. Weekly discussion sections will be student-driven, structured around debate questions students themselves raise on the basis of lectures and readings. Discussion sections will thus allow students to delve in new and creative ways into the key questions and issues raised by the course as they develop their own unique thinking about the challenge of authoritarianism. Lectures will also engage students in active participation through open debate and discussion, so that students are encouraged to think for themselves as they draw from course material.

Note that active participation is best achieved by your regular attendance and engagement with this class. This is the best way to grasp the concepts and principles being discussed. You are expected to come to your discussion section prepared to participate meaningfully in structured debates and discussions demonstrating that you:

- (1) Have read and comprehended the course material assigned for the class session.
- (2) Have absorbed the material in the lectures.
- (3) Have thought critically about key questions posed by readings and lectures, as well as those that students themselves have posed.

Further information on how to engage meaningfully and productively with the course material can be found in the hand-out “Asking the Right Questions: A Guide to Critical Thinking” (Browne and Keeley, 2010), attached to this syllabus and available on ELMS under “Assistance and Tips.”

REACTION PAPERS

Active participation also includes two reaction papers, due in section in Week 5 and Week 8, respectively. Reaction papers are designed to enhance students’ skills at communicating their ideas in written form. Reaction papers must contain a central argument in response to the question that is asked, and be anchored in course material. Reaction Paper #1 focuses on students’ reactions to the “authoritarian personality” self-test, based on the famous psychological test developed after World War II aimed at testing for authoritarian personality at the individual level of attitudes and values. Reaction Paper #2 focuses on students’ reactions to the in-class film and its depiction of authoritarianism, given what students have learned about authoritarianism in the course. Each reaction paper must be 2-3 pages, double spaced (not including bibliography). Citations and bibliography should be in style of the American Political Science Association (APSA), a guideline for which is posted on ELMS. More guidelines for both reaction papers will be posted on ELMS.

GROUP PAPER PROJECT

The Group Paper Project is designed to help students learn more about a contemporary authoritarian country of their choice. It will cultivate strong teamwork and collaboration skills and also help students to develop their ability to convey their ideas in both written and oral form, since students will be asked for updates on their Group Paper Project in their discussion sections in ways that enable students to share their discoveries with one another in a supportive and collegial way.

For the Group Paper Project, you will be randomly assigned to a group of 2-5 students, and your group will be asked to provide a first-choice and second-choice authoritarian country on which to focus. You may choose any authoritarian or “hybrid” country that interests you, but if too many students select the same country, we will turn to your second choice in order to ensure a diversity of countries covered by the class as a whole. After receiving your country assignment, your group will investigate how and why authoritarianism has persisted in the country in question, given widespread international and domestic pressures to democratize, and what (if anything) the US should do to promote democracy in that country.

Each student will focus on a separate area of inquiry: military, economy, culture, government, and international influence (combining areas as appropriate depending on the number of students in the group). For example, is the strength of the military the main reason that authoritarianism has persisted in the country under investigation, or is it the nature of the economy, predominant cultural norms, political maneuvering by the government, or international factors such as outside support? Each student will write a short and concise chapter in the final group paper, and students together will write a 1-2 page introduction and a 1-2 page conclusion to the final group paper. The final collaborative paper must include a central argument, and is expected to be 25-30 pages (double-spaced and not including bibliography, with citations and bibliography in the style of the American Political Science Association, a guideline for which is posted on ELMS.)

Your individual grade for the Group Paper Project will combine an assessment of the paper as a whole, your chapter contribution, and a peer evaluation by your fellow group members regarding the quality and degree of your participation in the overall group effort. (In other words, it does not pay to free-ride.) Further information about the Group Paper Project will be posted on ELMS.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

In order to succeed, and I want you to succeed in this course, here are some guidelines.

- First, come to lecture, take good notes, and participate actively. Practice the art of self-control by challenging yourself to stay focused and open-minded. Mindfulness and the ability to focus without distraction are fundamental skills in this age of information, and they will serve you well beyond this particular course.
- Second, keep up with the reading. Yes, easier said than done, but still an important goal toward which you should strive. The key is not *how long* you spend reading, but *how efficiently* you read. Learning how to read actively and efficiently is an important skill for you to learn and cultivate, and it will get easier. When reading, take notes, highlight, write comments in the margins, summarize key points in your own words, and ask yourself the “Ten Critical Thinking Questions” provided with this syllabus and under “Assistance and Tips” on ELMS.
- Third, engage with the material: stay up to date on ELMS; keep in mind the exam and due dates, and plan accordingly; talk to your friends and family about the material you are learning; and play devil’s advocate to stimulate deeper thought. This is an interesting course and it’s easy to talk about the issues raised in casual conversations, which is not only enjoyable but also helpful for knowledge retention.

- Be polite, civil, and honorable. During discussion, you are here to learn, try on different analytic hats, experiment with various perspectives, and advance your own knowledge and thinking on these important issues. Check preconceived notions, emotions, ideological hang-ups, and biases at the door. When you are in this class, you are a social scientist and an intellectual, and not a lobbyist, pundit, or activist.
- Please do not use cell phones during lectures, don't walk in and out frequently, don't eat breakfast or lunch, and don't whisper to your neighbor. Of course, you may bring water, soda, coffee, etc. Caffeine is very welcome.

COPYRIGHT

Course materials that exist in a tangible medium, such as written or recorded lectures, PowerPoint presentations, handouts and tests, are copyright protected. This means that class lectures are copyrighted. You may not copy and distribute such materials except for personal use, and with my express permission. This means you may not audio-record or video-record class sessions without my permission, and you may not sell course materials or post them on a website. Be aware that copyright infringements may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

ABSENCE POLICY

Students are expected to attend classes regularly. Students claiming an excused absence must notify the course instructor (or TA) in a timely manner, preferably prior to the excused absence, and provide appropriate documentation. For an excused absence, students are responsible for information and material missed on the day of excused absence, and within reason are entitled to receive materials provided to the class during the excused absence. The Undergraduate Catalog defines an excused absence as follows:

“Events that justify an excused absence include religious observances; mandatory military obligation; illness of the student or illness of an immediate family member; participation in university activities at the request of university authorities; and compelling circumstances beyond the student's control (e.g., death in the family, required court appearance). Absences stemming from work duties other than military obligation (e.g., unexpected changes in shift assignments) and traffic/transit problems do not typically qualify for excused absence.”

In the case of religious observances, athletic events, and planned absences known at the beginning of the semester, the student must inform the instructor (or TA) during the schedule adjustment period (the first 10 days of class). See below for more information on excused absences based on religious observance and medically necessary absences. For all other absences, students must provide verifiable documentation upon request (e.g., court summons).

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

You should notify your instructor or TA within the first 10 days of classes (the schedule adjustment period) if you will miss a class or an examination date due to religious observance. You will be allowed to make up academic assignments or exams for such absences in keeping with university policy. Note that it is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of any intended absences for religious observances in advance. This notification is especially important

if the missed class involves the final examination because of the need to schedule a make-up exam **before** the official final exam date.

MEDICALLY NECESSARY ABSENCES

For every medically necessary absence from class (lecture, recitation, or lab), a reasonable effort should be made to notify your instructor or TA in advance of the class. For one such absence—except in the case of a Major Scheduled Grading Event as identified on the syllabus—students may bring a self-signed note identifying the date of and reason for the absence, and acknowledging that the information in the note is accurate. For all other medically necessary absences, or if the absence occurs on the date of a Major Scheduled Grading Event such as a midterm, exam, or paper deadline, documentation by a health care professional is required. Students must provide documentation from a physician or the University Health Center for the absence to be recorded as an excused one and to receive accommodation. In cases where students are asked to provide verification, the course instructor may request the dates of treatment or the time frame that the student was unable to meet academic responsibilities, but may not request diagnostic information.

MAKE-UP EXAMS

For excused absences that involve a Major Scheduled Grading Event, a make-up exam will be arranged. In the case of closure for inclement weather or other cause, your TA will reschedule the examination or assignment due date as needed. Remember that a self-signed note attesting to illness will not be accepted as the basis for an excused absence on a day during which there is a Major Scheduled Grading Event, in keeping with university policy.

POLICY FOR LATE PAPERS

Due dates for assigned papers are listed on the syllabus. Papers that are submitted late, without arranging with the instructor for an extension based on a university-approved excuse, will be penalized a third of a grade per day.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University has an active Student Honor Council. The Honor Council sets high standards for academic integrity, and I support its efforts. It has a nationally recognized Honor Code, involving the Honor Pledge. The Honor Pledge prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents and forging signatures. On every examination, paper, or other academic exercise not specifically exempted by the instructor, students should write by hand and sign the following pledge:

I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (or assignment).

Compliance with the code is administered by the Student Honor Council, which strives to promote a community of trust on the College Park campus. Allegations of academic dishonesty should be reported directly to the Honor Council by any member of the campus community. For additional information, consult the Office of Student Conduct.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who will need accommodations must contact the Accessibility and Disability Service (ADS) to discuss accommodations and obtain documentation applicable to the current semester. (For updated policies, see <https://counseling.umd.edu/ads/>.) Students are responsible for presenting this documentation to the instructor in a timely fashion to discuss and obtain signed approval for accommodations, so that appropriate accommodations can be arranged. Please note that students with testing accommodations are required to reserve their seat with the ADS Testing Office at least three business days in advance of their testing session. (Business days do not include Saturdays and Sundays.) If students miss this deadline, they will be unable to book a test. See <https://www.counseling.umd.edu/ads/start/testtaking/>.

COURSE SCHEDULE

**** Denotes a “Major Scheduled Grading Event”**

PART 1: HISTORY AND FUNDAMENTALS

Week 1 Course Introduction

Jan 28 Course Introduction

- No required readings.

Jan 30 What is Authoritarianism, and How Do We Know It When We See It?

- Read Fukuyama (1989), “The End of History?” (pp. 1-5).
- Read Glasius, “What Authoritarianism Is...And Is Not: A Practice Perspective,” *International Affairs* (pp. 515-533).

Week 2 Demystifying Authoritarianism

Feb 4 Of Virtues and Vices

- Read Maravall, “The Myth of the Authoritarian Advantage,” *Journal of Democracy* (pp. 17-30).

Feb 6 Regimes from Ancient to Modern

- Read Frederick the Great, “Essay on Forms of Government” (4-page excerpt)

Week 3 20th Century Authoritarianism: Focus on Propaganda

Feb 11 Fascism – Guest Lecture by Dr. Julian Jones and Dr. Cooper Graham

- Read Koonz Interview, “Hitler’s Filmmaker,” *PBS News Hour* (pp. 1-4).

Feb 13 Communism

- Read Soldak, “This Is How Propaganda Works: A Look Inside a Soviet Childhood,” *Forbes* (pp. 1-18).

Week 4 Psychology and the Social Sciences

Feb 18 Is There An “Authoritarian” Personality?

- Take the following personality test, developed by Adorno and colleagues after WW2 in an attempt to measure “authoritarian” personality: <http://www.anesi.com/fscale.htm>
- **Reaction Paper #1:** Write a reaction paper (2-3 pages, double-spaced) on the basis of your experience taking the test. To what extent do you believe the test measures “authoritarian personality”? Why or why not? **Due in sections in Week 5.**

Feb 20 **Midterm 1

PART 2: THEORIZING AUTHORITARIANISM

Week 5 Varieties of Authoritarianism

**** Reaction Paper #1 Due in Sections This Week.**

Feb 25 Toward a Typology of Authoritarian Regimes

- Read Pepinsky, “Life in Authoritarian States is Mostly Boring and Tolerable,” *Vox* (pp. 1-4).

Feb 27 Monarchies

- Read Gause, “Kings for All Seasons: How the Middle East’s Monarchies Survived the Arab Spring,” *Brookings Doha Center Analysis Paper* (pp. 1-33).

Week 6 Varieties (Cont’d)

March 4 Single-Party Dominant Authoritarian Regimes

- Read al-Qaddafi, “The Green Book” (ONLY pp. 1-16).

March 6 Beyond Ruling Elites: Citizens, NGOs, and Consultants

- Read Ibrahim, “Everyday Authoritarianism: A Political Anthropology of Singapore,” *Critical Asian Studies* (pp. 219-229).

Week 7 Why Do Citizens Comply with Authoritarianism?

March 11 Voluntary Compliance.

- Read excerpt from Chan Koonchung, *The Fat Years*, a Chinese dystopian novel (pp. 1-9).
- Read Donno and Kreft, “Sometimes autocrats strengthen their power by expanding women’s rights. Here’s how that works,” *Washington Post* (pp. 1-3).

March 13 Coercion and Habituation

- Read Wedeen, “Acting ‘As If’: Symbolic Politics and Social Control in Syria,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (pp. 503-523).

SPRING BREAK (MARCH 17-24): NO CLASS MARCH 18 AND MARCH 20

Week 8 Why, How, and When Do Citizens Resist Authoritarianism?

March 25 Protest and Rebellion

- Read Kolesnikov and Volkov, “Defending One’s Backyard: Local Civic Activism in Moscow,” *Carnegie Moscow Center* (pp. 1-6).

March 27 Literature, the Arts, and the Arts of Resistance

- Read Jones and Paris, “It’s the End of the World and They Know It: How Dystopian Fiction Shapes Political Attitudes,” *Perspectives on Politics* (pp. 969-983).

Week 9 Transitions from Authoritarianism

April 1 **Midterm 2

April 3 How Authoritarianism Ends: Of Preconditions and Pacts

- Read Carothers, “The End of the Transitions Paradigm” (pp. 5-20).

PART 3: AUTHORITARIANISM IN OUR TIME

Week 10 Persistence of Authoritarianism in the Middle East (Part 1)

April 8 Cultural: Islam, Gender Norms, Etc.

- Read Weiner, “Rethinking Patriarchy and Kinship in the Arab Gulf States,” *POMEPS Studies 19: Women and Gender in Middle East Politics* (pp. 1-4).

April 10 Economic: Oil, the Rentier State, and Late Development

- Read Muasher, “The Next Arab Uprising,” *Foreign Affairs* (pp. 113-124).

Week 11 Student-Driven Film Week¹

**** Reaction Paper #2 Due in Sections This Week.**

April 15 Film²

April 17 Film (Cont’d)

¹ Trigger warning: Film Week will involve videos and footage that, at times, may portray war and violence. This may be disturbing to some students. If you feel the need to step outside the classroom, you are welcome to do so without academic penalty. You will, however, be responsible for any material you miss. Thus, if you do leave the room for a significant time, please make arrangements to get notes from another student or see your TA to discuss the situation, potentially to arrange for an alternative assignment.

² Film TBA: Possibilities include “The Lives of Others,” “Barbara” (East Germany); “This is Not a Film,” “No One Knows about Persian Cats” (contemporary Iran); “Dispatches: Undercover in the Secret State” (North Korea). Selection will be made based on student interest and film running time and availability, and Reaction Paper #2 will be assigned in association with the film.

- **Reaction Paper #2:** Write a reaction paper (2-3 pages, double-spaced) on the basis of your watching the film. The question for the reaction paper will be announced and will depend on which film is selected. **Due in section on Friday of this week.**

Week 12 Persistence of Authoritarianism in the Middle East (Part 2)

April 22 Political and Military: Divide and Conquer, Co-Opt, and Crack Down

- Read MacFarquhar, “Heavy Hand of the Secret Police Impeding Reform in Arab World,” *New York Times* (pp. 1-12).

April 24 International: Friends in High Places

- Read Wehrey, “Saudi Arabia’s Anxious Autocrats,” in *Authoritarianism Goes Global* (pp. 96-116).

Week 13 East Asian Alternatives

April 29 The “Chinese Dream”: Making Autocracy Work?

- Read Fish, “Has China Discovered a Better Political System than Democracy?” *The Atlantic* (pp. 1-5).
- Read Yuen Yuen Ang, “The Real China Model,” *Foreign Affairs* (pp. 1-4).

May 1 NO CLASS

Week 14 Countering Authoritarianism

May 6 “Softer” Approaches: Education, Civil Society, and Diplomacy

- Read Walt, “Why Is America So Bad at Promoting Democracy in Other Countries?” *Foreign Policy* (pp. 1-4).

May 8 “Harder” Approaches: Sanctions and Invasion

- Read Oskarsson, “Economic Sanctions on Authoritarian States: Lessons Learned,” *Middle East Policy* (pp. 88-99).

Week 15 The Future of Authoritarianism

**** Group Paper Projects Due in Sections**

May 13 Future Authoritarianism

- Read Wright, “How Artificial Intelligence Will Reshape the Global Order: The Coming Competition Between Digital Authoritarianism and Liberal Democracy,” *Foreign Affairs*.

FINAL EXAM DATE: MONDAY, MAY 20, 1:30-3:30PM, JMZ 0220