

# **PLSC 414: Dictators and Their Demise**

Summer 2018

Instructor: Molly Ariotti

M T W R F : 9:35-10:50 am

167 Willard Building

**Office Hours:** 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm Wednesdays

**Office:** 314 Pond Lab

**Email:** [mha5082@psu.edu](mailto:mha5082@psu.edu)

## **Course Description:**

There are many types of governments around the world. While many of you might feel that you have a clear understanding of what it means to be a democracy, you might not realize the tremendous amount of variation that exists in authoritarian regimes. This course is designed to introduce you to the types of authoritarian regime that exist, as well as help you understand how they form, how they last – and how they collapse.

## **Course Aims:**

1. Understand the differences between democracies and dictatorships
2. Identify different types of authoritarian rule
3. Identify the effects of authoritarian rule
4. Understand how dictators get into power, and how they stay there
5. To better understand political transitions

## **Course Requirements:**

Students are expected to (1) attend all lectures; (2) completed the required reading before the start of each class; (3) complete all assignments. In the event of an emergency, it is expected the student will contact me with appropriate documentation within 24 hours of a missed class or assignment deadline.

## Grading and Scale:

Class participation (20%), six assignments worth 10% each (60%), and one final (20%).

A (95-100), A- (90-94.9), B+ (87.9-89.9), B (83.33-87.8), B- (80-83.32), C+ (75-79.9), C (70-74.9), D (60-69.9), FAIL (0-59.9)

## Assignments:

Each assignment is due at 9:35 (start of class) on the date listed in the next section (paper copy in person in class, unless specifically noted otherwise). Late assignments will accrue a penalty of one letter grade (e.g. a B+ becomes a C+) each 24-hour period until the assignment is given to the instructor. After 96 hours no late assignment is accepted. Students who arrive late to class cannot hand in assignments without accruing the late penalty.

## SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Notes: Readings should be completed *prior to class* on the day they are listed. For example, 15 May says “CGG 154-166”; I expect that you will come to class on 15 May prepared to discuss CGG 154-166. Assignments are listed on the day I will discuss them in class, and the due date is clearly listed along with the instructions below.

Throughout this class I assign readings from *The Dictator’s Handbook*; by Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and Alastair Smith. This book can be downloaded (for free!) from Penn State’s libraries [here](#). You can also search it on the library webpage; in either case you will need to login using your PSU access account.

### **Week 1: What are dictatorships? How are democracies and dictatorships different?**

14 May: What are dictatorships, and why should we care?

[No reading for today]

15 May: How can we measure democracy and dictatorship?

Clark, Golder & Golder “Three Measures of Democracy” p.154-166 (CANVAS)

**Assignment 1 due 5/16:** Using the DD criteria, code Burkina Faso and Venezuela in 2017. Write one sentence for each dimension of their coding rules (4 for each country, 8 sentences total), explaining why you code it the way you do. Be prepared to discuss these in class tomorrow! Please write or print a copy to turn in at the end of class.

16 May: How do dictators get power? Pt. 1

Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, *The Dictator’s Handbook*. Ch. 2, p.53-68, 84-86

**Assignment 1 due**

17 May: How do dictators get power? Pt. 2

Kendall-Taylor et al. 2017. "The Global Rise of Personalized Politics" p. 7-17 (CANVAS)

18 May: Why do dictators have democratic-looking institutions?

Knutsen, Nygard & Wig. *Washington Post*. "[You'd think dictators would avoid elections.](#)"

## **Week 2: Are all dictators the same?**

21 May: Overview of different types of dictatorship

Clark, Golder & Golder "A Common Typology of Authoritarian Regimes" p.355-376 (CANVAS)

**Assignment 2 due 5/24:** Pick a country coded as a dictatorship by Polity IV (NOT one of the case studies included below). Write a two-page (double-spaced) description of the dictatorship, using the typology discussed in class today. Describe what type of dictatorship it is, and how you identified it. Talk about any elements that made your case difficult to classify. Give a brief description of the evolution of the political regime – has it been the same regime for a while, or has it changed over time? Provide enough detail to make it clear how such transitions occurred. Please bring a printed copy to class to turn in.

You must include a list of references with your paper, and clearly document where you found information using in-text citations.

22 May: Case study: Civilian dictatorships Pt 1 = Personalist Power in Zaire (now DRC) Wrong. 2001. *In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz*, Ch.4 (CANVAS)

23 May: Case study: Civilian dictatorships Pt 2 = Dominant party rule in China The Economist. 2018. "Under the Cover" (CANVAS)

24 May: Case study: Monarchies = Saudi Arabia Seznec. "Stirrings in Saudi Arabia" p.33-40 (CANVAS)

**Assignment 2 due**

25 May: Case study: Military dictatorship = Burma/Myanmar Council on Foreign Relations. 2016. "[Understanding Myanmar](#)"

## **Week 3: What are the effects of dictatorships?**

28 May: NO CLASS (MEMORIAL DAY)

29 May: Dictatorships and economic development

Olson. 1993. "Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development" 87:3, p. 567-576 (CANVAS)

**Assignment 3 due 5/31:** Download and read Michael Ross' 2001 article entitled "Does Oil Hinder Democracy?" from the journal *World Politics* (volume 53, p.325-361). Answer the following questions. Please submit a two-page (double-spaced) discussion of your responses to these questions, as well as at least one other piece of information you found interesting in this article to me by 5pm on May 31 through CANVAS:

1. What is the main hypothesis of this article?
2. Why does Ross believe that having oil might be detrimental to the development of democracy? Summarize the argument's three proposed causal mechanisms in a couple of sentences.
3. Does Ross find that being an oil producer hinders the development of democracy only in the Middle East?

30 May: Dictatorships and the resource curse

Frantz, Geddes & Wright. 2014. "[How oil helps dictatorships survive.](#)"

French. 2004. *A Continent for the Taking*, Ch. 6 (CANVAS)

31 May: NO CLASS

**Assignment 3 due (submitted on CANVAS by 5pm)**

1 June: Dictatorships and human rights

Trisko-Darden & Fariss. 2017. "[Duterte has put part of the Philippines under martial law.](#)"

#### **Week 4: How do dictators stay in power?**

4 June: Selectorate theory and the loyalty norm

Clark, Golder & Golder. "Selectorate Theory" p. 382-396 (CANVAS)

5 June: Repression

Davenport. 2007. "State Repression and Political Order"

**Assignment 4 due 6/8:** Using the country you selected for Assignment 2, research the types of state repression, torture, and generalized human rights issues discussed in the Davenport article. Write a two-page (double-spaced) report on respect for human rights and the use of torture in your country. Select two years, which must be at least 10 years apart, and compare how respect for human rights have evolved in this country over time (you may want to pick these two years based on noteworthy events in your country, such as a coup, contentious elections, war, etc.). Please bring a printed copy to class to turn in.

Use the [US State Department reports](#) and the [Amnesty International Reports](#) for this research note. You may also use other sources as necessary; you must include

a list of references with your paper and clearly document where you found information using in-text citations. First-hand reports of human rights violations are often a valuable, though difficult to read, source of insight.

6 June: Institutions

Kendall-Taylor & Frantz. 2015. "[How democratic institutions are making dictatorships more durable](#)"

7 June: Coup-proofing

De Bruin. 2014. "Coup-proofing for Dummies" (CANVAS)

8 June: External support

Latschan (DW). 2013. "[US-sponsored coup still weighs on ties to Iran](#)"

**Assignment 4 due**

### **Week 5: How do dictators lose power? Political Transitions**

11 June: Tipping models

Kuran. 1991. "Now out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989" p.7-48 (CANVAS)

12 June: Nonviolent Resistance and Protest

Chenoweth. *Foreign Policy*. "Think Again: Nonviolent Resistance" (CANVAS)

**Assignment 5 due 6/15:** Answer BOTH of the following questions using your own research. Each response should be no less than a page (double-spaced). Include a complete list of the sources you consulted on the last page, and use appropriate in-text citations to indicate where you found the information you discuss. Please bring a printed copy to class to turn in.

- 1) We have previously discussed the regime transition in Burkina Faso in 2014, when Blaise Compaoré's government collapsed. Identify key political actors in this transition. Based on our discussions, was this a "top-down" or "bottom-up" transition? Explain why, using your research to support your answer.
- 2) Myanmar/Burma was under military rule from 1962-2010. In 2003, the ruling military junta, known as the State Peace and Development Council, announced a "Roadmap to Discipline-flourishing Democracy." Research the political reforms in Myanmar/Burma that have occurred since the new constitution was adopted in 2008. What does our discussion about transitions (including top-down and bottom-up transitions) tell us about these recent developments?

13 June: Losing support from allies

French. 2004. *A Continent for the Taking*, Ch.10 (CANVAS)

14 June: Leaving power

Krcmaric and Escribà-Folch. *Washington Post*. "[Where do ousted leaders go?](#)"

15 June: Transitions to democracy

Coleman and Lawson-Remer. 2013. "A User's Guide to Democratic Transitions" (CANVAS)

**Assignment 5 due**

### **Week 6: Backsliding**

18 June: Too much democracy?

Zakaria. 1997. "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy." *Foreign Policy* p.22-43 (CANVAS)

**Assignment 6 due 6/22:** Could the U.S. become a dictatorship? Based on our discussions and readings over the course from this semester, present an argument about whether the U.S. could become a dictatorship. Use examples from the readings to support your argument either way: talk about institutions, cite examples of what we have seen or would have to see if the U.S. were to experience an authoritarian backslide. If you are unsure where to begin, go back to the reading from 15 May and revisit the various ways of defining a dictatorship! You may use outside resources to supplement the information in the readings and support your argument.

Please include a complete list of the sources you consulted on the last page, and use appropriate in-text citations to indicate where you found the information you discuss. Please bring a printed copy to class to turn in.

19 June: Populism

Excerpts from the Fall 2016 [Comparative Politics Newsletter](#). p.7-14, 31-39

20 June: Not enough democracy?

Berman. 2017. "Populism Is a Problem: Elitist Technocrats Aren't the Solution." *Foreign Policy* (CANVAS)

21 June: Case studies: Poland and Hungary

Rohac. 2018. "Hungary and Poland Aren't Democratic. They're Authoritarian." *Foreign Policy*. (CANVAS)

Berschinski. 2018 "[The Threat Within NATO](#)." *The Atlantic*

22 June: Review and wrap-up

**Assignment 6 due**

### **Finals Week**

25 June: Final (Time and location TBD)