

POLS 3030/INTL 3000: Authoritarian Politics

Spring 2021

Lecture: Monday & Wednesday & Friday 2:30 – 3:20 p.m.
Professor: Dr. Yaoyao Dai
Email: yaoyao.dai@uncc.edu (include “POLS3030” or “INTL3000” in subject line)
Office: Fretwell 450B (Office hour will be virtual)
Office Hours: Monday 3:30 –4:30 pm and by appointment

This syllabus contains the policies and expectations I have established for POLS 3030/INTL 3000. Please read the entire syllabus carefully before continuing in this course. These policies and expectations are intended to create a productive learning atmosphere for all students. Unless you are prepared to abide by these policies and expectations, you risk losing the opportunity to participate further in the course.

I reserve the right to modify the standards and requirements outlined in this syllabus at any time. I will notify you of such changes by announcements in class and posting a new syllabus on Canvas.

1 Course Description

While most citizens worldwide consider democracy as the preferred form of government, we see declines of democracies globally in the past decade. Why do democratic voters vote for undemocratic politicians? Why do protests not always lead to democratization? Why do some authoritarian governments enjoy the highest domestic popular support in the world? This course helps students to understand the puzzling realities by examining the politics of authoritarian rule. In this course, students will learn the features that distinguish authoritarian regimes from democracies and vice-versa; the conditions that give rise to authoritarianism; the variety of authoritarian regimes; the strategies authoritarian leaders use to retain power; and the consequences of different forms of authoritarianism for economic growth and human development.

2 Required Readings:

- Milan W Svoblik. 2012. *The politics of authoritarian rule*. Cambridge University Press (E-book available through library).
- (Optional:) Bruce Bueno De Mesquita and Alastair Smith. 2011. *The dictator's handbook: why bad behavior is almost always good politics*. PublicAffairs (E-book available through library).
- (Optional:) William Roberts Clark, Matt Golder, and Sona Nadenichek Golder. 2017. *Principles of comparative politics*. CQ Press (Assigned chapters will be available on Canvas).
- **Additional Readings:** Will be available on Canvas.

3 Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation in all lectures and lab sessions are **required and graded** unless otherwise noted by the professor. To facilitate the participation in the virtual classroom, there will be various in-class activities, such as polls, quizzes, and discussions. We will use **Poll Everywhere** for in class polls and quizzes. Students can access Poll Everywhere using a phone, laptop, or tablet to answer in-class polls and quizzes. Please check <https://www.polleverywhere.com/> and <https://teaching.uncc.edu/academic-technologies/student-response-system/student-guides> for more information. You can earn additional participation points by speaking in class. It is hard to actively participate in a virtual classroom, but it is an important component in learning! So, please don't be afraid to speak up! Remember that a

sincere question often adds as much (if not more) to our understanding of the course material as my lecture. If you have a compelling reason for missing class (hospitalization, family death, etc.), you can provide documentation to the Dean of Students Office and they will contact your instructor. Please inform me as soon as possible as well; I reserve the right to grant excused absences (and make-up work) in extraordinary circumstances. If you miss class, you are expected to get notes from a fellow student – “private make-up lectures” with the professor or lab instructor will not occur.

Readings. All readings should be completed before class. Unless otherwise noted, this means that weekly readings should be completed before the first lecture each week. It is very important that you come to class prepared so you can get the most out of the lectures and are ready to ask (and answer) questions about the readings. I may call on students at random with questions from time to time.

Weekly Assignments. There will be weekly assignments given on Fridays after the lecture and due at the *beginning* of next Friday lecture. The assignments usually include multiple-choice questions and occasionally short answer questions. Those assignments will help you to review the weekly course content and to prepare for the two exams. Assignments will be considered late if they are submitted after the start of the lecture. Exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis and should be discussed in advance with the professor or lab instructor.

Exams. Students will take a midterm exam and a final exam. The exams will assess your knowledge of the material contained within the assigned readings, the lecture, and our course discussions. The exams may consist of multiple-choice, problem-solving, and essay questions. I will provide more information as the exam dates approach. The final exam will be cumulative, though its content will be heavily weighted to the material covered between the midterm and final exams.

Presentation Once you learn some of the fundamental elements of authoritarian rule, we will read peer-reviewed scientific research on authoritarian politics after the midterm exam. Those readings are highlighted in **green** on the syllabus. Each student should sign up for one paper to present. You can choose to present the content (as if you are the author) or to discuss the content. You can find more information on the paper presentation on Canvas.

Extra Credit Game Participation. To facilitate your understanding of the authoritarian rule, we will play multiple “Dictator Game” in class with various rules. Students will be randomly assigned one of three roles: the dictator, the ruling elite, or the citizen. The economic output that the citizens produce and the dictator distributes will be the extra credit points. The points you earn at the end of the game will be your extra credit points towards the final grades. Detailed rules will be announced before the game during class.

4 Grading Policy

Lecture Participation/Quizzes	10%
Weekly Assignments on Canvas	20%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	30%
Presentation	15%
Extra credit game participation	5%
Extra credit POLS Lab participation	1%

106 points possible out of 100 points total

Points	Letter Grade
90 – 100	A
80 – 90	B
70 – 80	C
60 – 70	D
0 – 60	F

5 General Policies and Expectations

RESPECT. In this course, we will read and discuss political science research on sensitive and controversial topics. Everyone comes to this course with a different background and knowledge in those topics. It is important that we all treat each other with the utmost respect. The conflict of ideas is encouraged and welcome. However, you should base your opinion on logic and empirical evidence, instead of beliefs and stereotypes. I will exercise my responsibility to manage the classroom so that ideas and arguments can proceed in an orderly fashion. You should expect that if your conduct during class seriously disrupts the atmosphere of mutual respect, you will not be permitted to participate further. Unwelcome conduct directed toward another person based upon that persons actual or perceived race, actual or perceived gender, color, religion, age, national origin, ethnicity, disability, or veteran status, or for any other reason, may constitute a violation of University Policy 406, The Code of Student Responsibility. Any student suspected of engaging in such conduct will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

WORKING TOGETHER. I encourage you to work together on the course materials and assignments. We learn from each other's questions and experiences. Moreover, there is no better way to master the materials than to explain to your peers. However, every keystroke that you type and every mark you make with a pen or pencil must be your own work. You **cannot** collaborate on the midterm and final exams.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS. Assignments not submitted by the assigned due date and time are late. All assignment deadlines are based on the Eastern Time Zone (ET), not your local time zone. Please be sure to pay close attention to any time differences if you are located in a different time zone. Given potential technical difficulties that may arise with things like your internet connection, I strongly recommend that you do not wait until the last moment to submit your assignments. Late submissions will be accepted; however, they will be subject to a 5% scores per day (including weekends) late penalty.

EXTENSIONS. Extensions will be granted in only the most severe circumstances. If you foresee the need for an extension, one needs to be requested and granted at least 24 hours before the due date. No one is entitled to an extension; they will be offered only at my discretion.

ZOOM.

- Your audio will be muted upon entry into the classroom. During the lecture, you should keep your audio muted under most circumstances to prevent any ambient noise interrupting the class and prevent confusion if multiple students choose to speak simultaneously. If you have a question or comment, please use Zooms "raised hand symbol" and wait to be called upon.
- If your bandwidth allows, I encourage you to turn on your video during the lecture and lab. Note that if you do turn on your video, you and your background will be visible to the whole class. While it is optional, I encourage you to use the video feature during office hours and small group discussions (breakout room in zoom).
- Zoom class meetings are not public forums, and only registered students may attend. Do not share zoom links or share your account with anyone else.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY. All students are required to read and abide by the Code of Student Academic Integrity. Violations of the Code of Student Academic Integrity, including plagiarism, will result in disciplinary action as provided in the Code. Definitions and examples of plagiarism are set forth in the Code. The Code is available from the Dean of Students Office or online at <https://legal.uncc.edu/policies/up-407>.

All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless an instructor clearly states that an alternative is acceptable. The instructor and TA may ask students to produce identification at examinations and may require students to demonstrate that graded assignments completed outside of class are their own work. Any reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly cited. Students uncertain about proper citation are responsible for checking with their instructor.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS. Students in this course seeking accommodations for disabilities must first consult with the Office of Disability Services and follow the instructions of that office for obtaining accommodations. I will do everything I can to meet the requested accommodations.

PREFERRED GENDER PRONOUN. This course affirms people of all gender expressions and identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is indicated on the class roster, please let me know. Feel free to correct me on your preferred gender pronoun. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

6 Tentative Course Schedule

This schedule should be treated as tentative and flexible, given that we live in a time full of uncertainty. It may also be the case that it takes us more or less time for a particular topic than I have allotted here. We will adapt accordingly. In the event that deviations from this schedule are necessary, they will be announced in class and updated on Canvas. Additional readings to the textbook will be uploaded to Canvas at least one week before class.

Week 1 (Jan.20-Jan.22): Introduction

- Syllabus
- Geddes. What Do We Know About Democratization? (Introduction pp. 115 -117) (CANVAS)
- Repucci, Sarah. 2020. “Freedom in the World 2020: A Leaderless Struggle for Democracy.”

Week 2 (Jan.25 - Jan.29): What are dictatorships and how are they different from democracies?

- Clark, Golder & Golder. “Democracy and Dictatorship: Conceptualization and Measurement” (pp.143 - 168) (CANVAS)
- Seva Gunitsky. June 23, 2015. “How do you measure democracy?” The Washington Post, Monkey Cage.

Week 3 (Feb.1 - Feb. 5): How do dictators rule? How do they stay in power?

- Bueno de Mesquita and Smith. *The Dictators Handbook*. Ch. 2 (pp.53-68, 84-86)
- Svobik. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. Introduction (pp. 1-13)
- Clark, Golder, & Golder. Selectorate Theory. (CANVAS)

Week 4: Spring Break. No Class

Week 5 (Feb. 15 - Feb.19): Are all dictators the same? How do they differ?

- Clark, Golder & Golder, Ch. 10 “Varieties of Dictatorship” (CANVAS)
- Geddes. What Do We Know About Democratization? (pp. 121-138) (CANVAS)

Week 6 (Feb. 22 - Feb. 26): Personal Dictatorship

- Svobik. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. ch.3 (pp. 53-63, 78-81)
- Andrea Kendall-Taylor, Erica Frantz, and Joseph Wright. 2017. “The global rise of personalized politics: It’s not just dictators anymore.” *The Washington Quarterly* 40 (1): 7–19 (CANVAS)

Week 7 (Mar. 1 - Mar. 5): Review and Exam 1

- Mid-term review sheet (CANVAS)

Week 8 (Mar. 8 - Mar. 12): Why do authoritarian regimes have democratic looking institutions? Civilian Dictatorship.....

- Svobik. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. ch.4 pp.85-100, 110-117
- Joseph Wright. 2008. “Do authoritarian institutions constrain? How legislatures affect economic growth and investment.” *American Journal of Political Science* 52 (2): 322–343 (CANVAS)

Week 9 (Mar. 15 - Mar. 19): Elections in Authoritarian Regimes

- Carl Henrik Knutsen, Håvard Mokleiv Nygård, and Tore Wig. 2017. “Autocratic elections: Stabilizing tool or force for change?” *World Politics* 69 (1): 98–143 (CANVAS)
- Knutsen, Nygard & Wig. Washington Post. “You’d think dictators would avoid elections.”

Week 10 (Mar. 22 - Mar. 26): Political Parties.....

- Svobik. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. ch.6 (pp. 162-167, 192-195)
- Kenneth F Greene. 2010. “The political economy of authoritarian single-party dominance.” *Comparative political studies* 43 (7): 807–834 (CANVAS)

Week 11 (Mar. 29 - Apr. 2): Repression, Coup, and Military Dictatorship

- Svobik. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. ch.5 (pp. 123-138, 148-159)
- Barbara Geddes, Erica Frantz, and Joseph G Wright. 2014. “Military rule.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 17:147–162 (CANVAS)
- R Blake McMahon and Branislav L Slantchev. 2015. “The guardianship dilemma: Regime security through and from the armed forces.” *American Political Science Review* 109 (02): 297–313 (CANVAS)

Week 12 (Apr. 5 - Apr. 9): Propaganda and Censorship

- Gary King, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E Roberts. 2013. “How censorship in China allows government criticism but silences collective expression.” *American Political Science Review*, 326–343 (CANVAS)
- Haifeng Huang. 2015. “Propaganda as signaling.” *Comparative Politics* 47 (4): 419–444 (CANVAS)
- Seva Gunitsky. 2015. “Corrupting the cyber-commons: Social media as a tool of autocratic stability.” *Perspectives on Politics* 13 (1): 42–54 (CANVAS)

Week 13 (Apr. 12 - Apr. 16): Democratic Transition.....

- Clark, Golder & Golder, Chapter 8 (CANVAS)
- Timur Kuran. 1991. “Now out of never: The element of surprise in the East European revolution of 1989.” *World Politics: A Quarterly Journal of International Relations*, 7–48 (CANVAS)

Week 15 (Apr. 19 - Apr. 23): Backsliding.....

- David Waldner and Ellen Lust. 2018. “Unwelcome change: Coming to terms with democratic backsliding.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 21:93–113 (CANVAS)

- Matthew H Graham and Milan W Svobik. 2020. “Democracy in America? Partisanship, Polarization, and the Robustness of Support for Democracy in the United States.” *American Political Science Review* 114 (2): 392–409 (CANVAS)

Week 15 (Apr. 26 - Apr. 30): Does regime type make a difference? Development, Accountability, and Responsiveness

- Clark, Golder & Golder, Chapter 9 (CANVAS)
- Jidong Chen, Jennifer Pan, and Yiqing Xu. 2016. “Sources of authoritarian responsiveness: A field experiment in China.” *American Journal of Political Science* 60 (2): 383–400 (CANVAS)

Week 16 (May. 2 - May 5): Final Review

- Final review sheet (CANVAS)

Final Exam: TBD

7 Additional Information

Counseling and Mental Health Services. It is common for college students to experience challenges that may interfere with academic success such as academic stress, sleep problems, juggling responsibilities, life events, relationship concerns, or feelings of anxiety, hopelessness, or depression. If you or a friend is struggling, we strongly encourage you to seek support. Helpful, effective resources are available on campus at no additional cost.

Visit the Counseling and Psychological Services website at caps.uncc.edu for information about the broad range of confidential on-campus mental health services, online health assessments, hours, and additional information.

Call CAPS at (704) 687-0311 if interested in scheduling an appointment with a counselor. After-hours crisis support is also available through this phone number.

Title IX Statement. UNC Charlotte is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these incidents, know that you are not alone. UNC Charlotte has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

Please be aware that many UNC Charlotte employees, including all faculty members, are considered Responsible Employees who are required to relay any information or reports of sexual misconduct they receive to the Title IX Coordinator. This means that if you tell me about a situation involving sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, I must report the information to the Title IX Coordinator. Although I have to report the situation, you will still have options about how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need.

If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can contact any of the following on-campus resources, who are not required to report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator: (1) University Counseling Center (counselingcenter.uncc.edu, 7-0311); (2) Student Health Center (studenthealth.uncc.edu, 7-7400); or (3) Center for Wellness Promotion (wellness.uncc.edu, 7-7407). Additional information about your options is also available at titleix.uncc.edu under the “Students” tab.

Political Science Honors Program. If you earn an A in POLS 2220 Research Methods and you meet minimum GPA requirements (3.5 in Political Science, 3.25 overall), you will be eligible for admission into the Political Science Honors Program. Students in this program are invited to special events throughout the year, including lunches with guest speakers, panels on applying to graduate school, and “meet the faculty” sessions. In order to graduate with the honors designation affixed on the transcript, POLS Honors students must complete a two-course honors thesis sequence: one semester to write the proposal (including literature review and research design) and another semester to complete and defend the thesis. For more information about the Political Science Honors Program, please contact Dr. Whitaker at BWhitaker@uncc.edu.

Intellectual Property. My lectures and course materials, including presentations, tests, exams, outlines, and similar materials, are protected by copyright. I am the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials I create. I encourage you to take notes and make copies of course materials for your own educational use. However, you may not, nor may you knowingly allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly without my express written consent. This includes providing materials to commercial course material suppliers such as CourseHero and other similar services. Students who publicly distribute or display or help others publicly distribute or display copies or modified copies of an instructor’s course materials may be in violation of University Policy 406, The Code of Student Responsibility. Similarly, you own copyright in your original papers and exam essays. If I am interested in posting your answers or papers on the course web site, I will request your written permission.

Video and/or audio recording is not permitted during class unless the student obtains permission from the instructor. If permission is granted, any distribution of the recording is prohibited. Students with specific electronic recording accommodations authorized by the Office of Disability Services do not require instructor permission; however, the instructor must be notified of any such accommodation prior to recording. Any distribution of such recordings is prohibited.