Political Science 259  
Workshop on Authoritarian Politics  
Winter 2019

Barbara Geddes  
Office hours Mon, 2:00-4:00, 4289a Bunche  
Geddes@ucla.edu

Although most human beings throughout history have lived under authoritarian rule of one kind or another, political science has focused primarily on democratic politics. Consequently, we have only a few theories of authoritarian politics, and those we have tend to be either highly abstract or untested projections of the experience of a few countries. In this workshop, we will explore the way authoritarian governments work in practice. The class is called a workshop because it will be a discussion seminar in which all of us, including the instructor, are searching for answers. The aim of the class is to develop theories of authoritarian politics that are both generalizable within some domain and also anchored in the real world.

How well this workshop achieves its goals will depend on students’ participation. Students are expected to do the assigned reading before class; to have read actively, comparing what they are reading with what they already know and with theories to which they have been exposed; and to join class discussions. Some of the reading is descriptive and some is analytical. For each reading assignment that does more than describe events in one country, students should be able to: summarize the author’s main point in a sentence or two; assess the quality of the evidence that supports the author’s argument; and articulate an implication of the author’s argument that could in principle be tested.

Grading and Requirements: Students will be required to write two papers, the first under ten pages and the second up to 20 pages, in which theoretical ideas in the reading are compared to real-world experience in one or more countries. At least one paper must deal with a country other than the one in which the student grew up. Appropriate paper topics include: preliminary quantitative tests of theoretical ideas in the literature; comparisons of theoretical claims with descriptions of events in two or more countries; essays that develop the student’s own theoretical speculations and compare them with evidence in a preliminary way. Literature reviews are not appropriate. Anyone who wishes to pursue a paper idea further, as a qualifying paper or convention paper, should plan to take an independent study with me in the future in order to do so.

Reading: All readings are available via JSTOR, some other website, or the class website, https://moodle2.sscnet.ucla.edu/course/view/19W-POLSCI259-1


If you have previously read something assigned for this class, review it before the seminar meets.
Schedule of Topics and Reading Assignments

I   Jan 9: Background, Definitions Used by Different Authors, and Data Sets
These articles introduce some of the most widely used data sets, which you may want to use for papers:


II  Jan 16: Economists’ Models of Dictatorship: Autocrat vs. People (Private Economic Actors)
Reading: Olson, Mancur, “Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development,” *APSR* 83 (1993), JSTOR

III Jan 23: The Real World of Dictatorship
Reading: Geddes, Wright, and Frantz, *How Dictatorships Work*, chs 1-3, class website
Descriptions on dominant-party and personalized dictatorship:
Brooker, Paul, *Defiant Dictatorships: Communist and Middle-Eastern Dictatorships in a Democratic Age*, 1997, pp. 25-217, class website

IV Jan 30: Authoritarian Politics As Analogous to Democratic Politics
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V  Feb 6: Authoritarian Politics As Elite Bargaining over Power, Spoils, and Policy  
Reading: Geddes, Wright, and Frantz, How Dictatorships Work, ch. 4, class website  
Descriptions of the Personalization of Rule:  

VI  Feb 13: How the Dispersal of Armed Force within the Dictatorship’s Inner Circle Affects Elite Bargaining  
Reading: Geddes, Wright, and Frantz, How Dictatorships Work, ch. 5, class website  
Descriptions of dictatorships in which multiple members of the inner circle control armed forces:  
Rule by a factionalized military: Decalo, Samuel, Coups and Army Rule in Africa, 1990, pp. 89, 99-131, class website  
Vickery, Michael, Cambodia:1975-1982, 1984, pp. 66-82 and 144-51, class website

FRIDAY FEB 15: FIRST PAPER DUE

VII  Feb 20: Authoritarian Institutions of Cooptation  
Reading: Geddes, Wright, and Frantz, How Dictatorships Work, ch. 6, class website  
Gandhi, Jennifer, Political Institutions under Dictatorship, 2008, pp. 73-106, class website  
http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13510340600579359
VIII Feb 27: Authoritarian Institutions for Monitoring and Coercion
Reading: Geddes, Wright, and Frantz, How Dictatorships Work, Ch. 7, class website
Dragu, Tiberiu and Adam Przeworski, 2018, "Preventive Repression: Two Types of Moral Hazard," APSR, available on JSTOR.
Svolik, Milan, The Politics of Authoritarian Rule, pp. 123-61, class website
Real world examples of monitoring and coercion:
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v022/22.4.barany.pdf
Policzer, Pablo, The Rise and Fall of Repression in Chile, 56-92 and 97-99, class website
Internal security services: Peterson, Edward, The Secret Police and the Revolution: The Fall of the German Democratic Republic, pp. 24-34
Callaghy, Thomas, The State-Society Struggle: Zaire in Comparative Perspective, 1984, pp. 284-98, class website

IX Mar 6: Dictatorship and War
Weeks, Jessica, “Autocratic Audience Costs: Regime Type and Signaling Resolve,” International Organization 62 (2008), 35-64 JSTOR
Debs, Alexandre and Hein Goemans, "Regime Type, the Fate of Leaders and War," American Political Science Review 104:3 (2010), 430-45 JSTOR

X Mar 13: How Dictatorships End and the Possibility of Democratization
Geddes, Barbara, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz, Ch 8, on class website

FINAL PAPER DUE FRIDAY MAR 22