PS 149W: DICTATORSHIP AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Version Jan 24th, 2022

Lecture: M 2pm-5pm, 9 Lewis
Section: 101: W 4pm-5pm, 242 Dwinelle
Section: 102: W 5pm-6pm, 242 Dwinelle

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: The overwhelming majority of governments throughout history have been dictatorial. Even the recent spread of democracy has not extirpated authoritarian rule: as of 2017 Freedom House rates only 45% of countries as fully free. Whatever the benefits of democracy, it seems dictatorship is here to stay. This course explores the characteristics and dynamics of non-democratic regimes: how and why they come about, what sustains them, why some people resist them and others do not, and how and why they decline and fall. We will explore a variety of examples from across the world. Using films and novels in addition to political science literature, we will investigate how dictators maintain their power, how ordinary people react to repression, and the links between dictatorship and security and economic development.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Students are expected to attend lectures regularly, do the assigned reading, complete all exams, and participate in any discussions. The grade for this course will be based on two midterms (30% each), a research paper (20%), and class/section participation (20%). You are not competing with your classmates for A’s. Everyone who does A-level work will receive an A.

Please note that the course is organized into topics rather than weeks. Some topics require only one course meeting, while others may require more. The first midterm will cover however much of the material we got through by that point. The second midterm is *not* cumulative; it will cover material not covered on the first midterm. To get the most out of the lectures it is best if you do the reading beforehand. Required videos will sometimes be shown during lecture time. When not we will adjourn class early to give you time to view the video asynchronously.

Academic misconduct, also known as cheating and/or plagiarism, will not be tolerated. If you are caught cheating we reserve the right to fail you in the course. For information on what constitutes misconduct please see: http://sa.berkeley.edu/conduct

MATERIALS FOR PURCHASE: The following books are required.
Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and Alastair Smith, *The Dictator’s Handbook: Why Bad Behavior is Almost Always Good Politics*. (Public Affairs, 2011). (Chapter 1 provided on bCourses. The library also has an electronic copy.)


**IMPORTANT NOTE**: New and better readings are always coming to my attention. I therefore reserve the right to add and subtract from the syllabus.

**Class Rules**

1. I do not use lecture notes, but lecture slides will be posted on bCourses.
2. I do not allow students to make announcements to the class regarding any extracurricular activity.
3. I do not hand out study sheets before exams, but we will engage in an extensive review of the material and answer any questions you might have.
4. Please report any suspected errors in the grading of an assignment within one day of receiving the grade. I reserve the right not to effect a grade change if an issue is reported after more than one day has passed.
5. Syllabi are wonderful documents with lots of information on the time of office hours, the dates of exams, and course requirements. Please do not ask for information contained in the syllabus.
6. Unless otherwise specified no appointment or prior warning is necessary to attend office hours. Attend as often as you like.
SCHEDULE OF LECTURES/READING

Topic 1: Introduction and a Premonition

Yevgeny Zamyatin, We. (Modern Library, 2006)

Topic 2: The Origins and Dilemmas of Dictatorship

Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, Chap. 1.

Required: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rStL7niR7gs (The Rules for Rulers, first 6:22 minutes).

Topic 3: The Temptations of Tyranny


Required: Short Film: The Wave: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICng-KRxxJ8

Topic 4: Maintaining and Transferring Power

Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, Chaps. 3-6.

Required: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ig_qpNfXHIU&list=PLqs5Ohhass_QPOfhvHlzxas3Vr9k31Vaz (Death and Dynasties. 5:38)
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpCb_Yg_qJA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpCb_Yg_qJA) (Mobutu: King of Zaire. From minute 26 to minute 51:23)
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S_LhXEOsqoE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S_LhXEOsqoE) (North Korea: The Cult of the Kims, 8:31 mins)
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lemIbJvi3SM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lemIbJvi3SM) (Stalin Cult of Personality, 44 mins.)
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7aEzLJdzi9w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7aEzLJdzi9w) (King of Communism Nicolae Ceausescu, 55 minutes)

**Topic 5: Totalitarian Aspirations: North Korea**


Required: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JS2BK91u69g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JS2BK91u69g) (Life in North Korea).

Documentary: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YgHh6f1GYx0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YgHh6f1GYx0) (Never before seen real life footage inside North Korea).

**First Midterm Exam (March 7, 2-4pm)**

**Topic 6: Autocracy and Prosperity: China**


Required: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OubM8bD9kck](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OubM8bD9kck) (Xi Jinping: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver, 20 minutes).
Required: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0_QeD4W98A (The China Complex Part 2, 49 minutes)

**Topic 7: Strategies of Popular Resistance (and the Dictator’s Response)**

Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, Chap. 8.

Required: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cM695veBSUU (A Force More Powerful: Poland and Chile). Poland from 27:00-51:53. Chile from 51:54-1:17:35.

**Topic 8: Coping with Autocratic Legacies**


Required:

Malajunta (try this first):
https://avplayer.lib.berkeley.edu/Video-UCBOnly-MRC/b24597897 (You need full library access to view it. Link is also available in bCourses.)

OR

Romania: The Spectre of Tyranny
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bp3sZbGmR2c

**Topic 9: Nascent Dictatorship? Hungary**


Required: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7cHap-cGfM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7cHap-cGfM) (Rise of Illiberalism in Hungary, 33 minutes)
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k_7EjaMu0ic](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k_7EjaMu0ic) (Political chaos on the streets of Budapest, 28 minutes)

**Topic 10: Nascent Dictatorship? United States**


**Topic 11: TBD**

Second Midterm Exam during the period of our final exam, May 10 11:30am-1:30pm. Location TBD.

Paper due by May 13 at 2pm.