

## PS 149W: DICTATORSHIP AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Version Jan 24<sup>th</sup>, 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.)

Yevgeny Zamyatin, *We*. (Any edition). Electronic copy available through bCourses.

**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

Jason Wittenberg, Syllabus for POLITICAL SCIENCE 149W: Dictatorship and its Discontents.

Yevgeny Zamyatin, *We*. (Modern Library, 2006)

### Topic 2: The Origins and Dilemmas of Dictatorship

Bueno de Mesquita and Smith, Chap. 1.

Stephen Haber, "Authoritarian Government," in Barry Weingast and Donald Wittman, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Political Economy*. (Oxford University Press, 2006).

Mancur Olson, *Power and Prosperity: Outgrowing Communist and Capitalist Dictatorships*. (Basic Books, 2000), pp. 1-14.

Ronald Wintrobe, "How to understand, and deal with dictatorship: an economist's view," *Economics of Governance* 2 (2001), pp. 35-58. Skip part 3: "Dealing with dictatorship."

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

### Topic 3: The Temptations of Tyranny

Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium*. (Secker & Warburg, 1957), pp. 1-32. Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*. (Avon Books, 1964 [1941]), pp. xii-38.

Mark Lilla, "The Lure of Syracuse," *New York Review of Books*, Vol. 48, Issue 14, Sept. 2001.

Arthur Koestler, "Arthur Koestler," in Richard Crossman, ed., *The God That Failed*. (Harper & Brothers, 1949), pp. 15-75 (Skim).

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.

E.A. Rees, "Leader Cults: Varieties, Preconditions and Functions," in Balázs Ápor et al., eds., *The Leader Cult in Communist Dictatorships: Stalin and the Eastern Bloc*. (Palgrave, 2004), pp. 3-26.

John H. Herz, "The Problem of Successorship in Dictatorial Régimes: A Study in Comparative Law and Institutions," *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 14, No. 1, February 1952, pp. 19-40.

Required:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ig\\_qpNfXHIU&list=PLqs5ohhass\\_QPOfhvhl\\_zxas3Vr9k31Vaz](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ig_qpNfXHIU&list=PLqs5ohhass_QPOfhvhl_zxas3Vr9k31Vaz) (Death and Dynasties. 5:38)

Required: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zdhp5JeZkKY> (Documentary: The Africans: A Triple Heritage: A Commentary. Part 6: In Search of Stability, 58 mins. Also DVD X6377)

[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> (Stalin Cult of Personality, 44 mins.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7aEzLJdzi9w>

(King of Communism Nicolae Ceausescu, 55 minutes)

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

Robert Collins, *Marked for Life: Songbun, North Korea's Classification System*. (Washington, DC: The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, 2012), excerpts.

B.R. Myers, *The Cleanest Race: How North Koreans See Themselves—and Why it Matters*. (Melville House, 2009), pp. 25-66.

Barbara Demick, *Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea*. (Spiegel & Grau, 2009), pp. 36-73; 174-184.

UNHRC, "Report of the commission of inquiry on human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea." Summary, February 7, 2014, pp. 1-21.

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

Documentary: <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**

Frederick C. Teiwes, "Mao Zedong in Power (1949-1976)," in William A. Joseph, ed., *Politics in China: An Introduction*. Second Edition. (Oxford University Press, 2014), selections.

Susan Shirk, "China in Xi's 'New Era' The Return to Personalistic Rule," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 29, No. 2, April 2018, pp. 22-36.

Yuen Yuen Ang, "Autocracy with Chinese Characteristics," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2018, pp. 39-46.

Rana Mitter and Elsbeth Johnson, "What the West Gets Wrong About China," *Harvard Business Review*, May-June 2021.

Required: <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](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.

James C. Scott, "Everyday Forms of Resistance," in Forrest D. Colburn, ed., *Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. (M.E. Sharpe, 1989), pp. 3-33.

Jason Wittenberg, *Crucibles of Political Loyalty: Church Institutions and Electoral Continuity in Hungary*. (Cambridge University Press, 2006), selections.

Timur Kuran, "Now Out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989," *World Politics* 44, October 1991, pp. 7-48.

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**

Jan Elster, "On Doing What One Can: An Argument Against Post-Communist Restitution and Retribution," *East European Constitutional Review* Vol. 1, No. 2 (Summer 1992), pp. 15-17.

Naomi Roht-Arriaza, "From Amnesty to Accountability: Transitional Justice in Latin America," *World Politics Review*, Dec 23, 2014.

African Union Panel of the Wise, "Peace, Justice, and Reconciliation in Africa: Opportunities and Challenges in the Fight Against Impunity," The African Union Series, New York: International Peace Institute, February 2013, pp. 10-46.

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**

Ivan Krastev, "Eastern Europe's Illiberal Revolution," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2018, pp

49-56.

János Kornai, "Hungary's U-Turn: Retreat from Democracy," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 26, No. 3, July 2015, pp. 34-48.

George Schöpflin, "Hungarian Elections and After," *Hungarian Review*, July 2014, pp. 8- 15.

Required: <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)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrfbtUpWOsc> (Viktor Orban's 'illiberal democracy', 14 minutes).

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

Sheri Berman, "Populism is not Fascism," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2016, pp. 39-44.

Yascha Mounk, "The Undemocratic Dilemma," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 29, No. 2, April 2018, pp. 98-112.

Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, "Subverting Democracy," in *How Democracies Die* (Crown, 2018), pp. 72-96.

Tom Ginsburg and Aziz Huq, "How We Lost Constitutional Democracy," in Cass R. Sunstein, ed., *Can It Happen Here? Authoritarianism in America*. (Harper Collins, 2018), pp. 135-156.

### **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.**