Political Science 44410
Authoritarian Regimes

Spring 2008
Thursdays 1 – 4pm
Pick 506

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Course Overview

The surprising persistence of authoritarian regimes since the end of the Cold War has inspired a major new literature in comparative politics on how non-democracy works. This graduate seminar considers some conceptual and theoretical issues and debates in this new wave of research, such as: How should authoritarian regimes, including so-called “hybrid regimes,” best be classified? What kind of institutions makes authoritarianism more or less stable and durable? How do these regimes try to generate compliance and support? Why do so many of them hold elections and convene parliaments? And what economic factors tend to bolster or undermine dictatorship?

It is worth stressing at the outset that this is not primarily a course on democratization, or regime change. Our primary purpose is to understand the variety of ways in which authoritarian regimes operate, not how they collapse. Courses on democracy need not include a section on democratic breakdown to be complete. The same is true of a seminar on authoritarianism.

Readings, Assignments, and Grades

The following books are available for purchase at the Seminary Co-Op and on reserve at Regenstein Library. (Article- and chapter-length readings can be accessed through the course Chalk site, under “Library Course Reserves” and “Course Documents.”)

- Andreas Schedler (ed.), Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition (Lynne Rienner 2006)
- Samuel P. Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies (Yale 1968)
- Jason Brownlee, Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization (Cambridge 2007)
Grades in this seminar will be based on three dimensions of course performance. First, each student is required to write three short (about 3-4 page) response papers to the weekly readings over the course of the quarter. These are worth 10% of your grade each, for a total of 30%. Which week these essays are written is at the student’s discretion, with one exception: everyone must contribute an essay on the readings in Week 3 (April 17th). Please e-mail me a copy of your essay by noon on the day of class, and hand in a hard copy of your essay at the beginning of seminar.

Another 30% of your final grade will be based on class participation. Consistent attendance and engagement with the readings and in-class discussions are expected. The remaining 40% of your grade will be based on a take-home final examination, formatted loosely on the template of a qualifying Ph.D. exam.

Course Schedule

April 3: Class Introduction

April 10: Totalitarianism as a Template
  - Daniel Chirot, Modern Tyrants, all.

April 17: Problems of Classification
April 24: Order, Domination, and Compliance
- Huntington, Political Order, pp. 1-92 and 140-191.
- Wedeen, Ambiguities of Domination, all.

May 1: Party Hegemony and Regime Stability
- Huntington, Political Order, pp. 397-461.

May 8: Durable Authoritarianism in the Muslim World
- Brownlee, Authoritarianism in an Age of Democratization, pp. 1-152.
May 15: Military Regimes


May 22: Coalitional Foundations of Authoritarianism

May 29: Political Economy Approaches


June 5: Hybrid Regimes, Elections, and Parliaments

- Schedler, *Electoral Authoritarianism*, chs. 1, 6-7, and 10-12.

* FINAL TAKE-HOME EXAMS DISTRIBUTED AT 8AM TUESDAY, JUNE 10TH; HARD COPIES DUE IN MY BOX IN PICK 401 BY 4:30PM THAT SAME DAY *