

## Authoritarianism: A Useful Concept?

POLS 593-03  
T 7:00-9:30  
Location: TBA  
Spring 2014

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*“Approaches and concepts can be used in a stupid way, and if you’re stupid, well?”  
Juan Linz quoted in Munck (2007)*

### Course Description and Objectives:

Since its identification as a regime-type by Juan Linz in 1964, authoritarianism has become a major concept in the field of Comparative Politics. Authoritarianism was initially conceived of as a pre-democratic regime, so the early literature on the subject is frequently referred to as the “Transitions literature.” Given the large number of countries that did not transition to democracy or experienced democratic breakdown in the early 1990s, the research agenda shifted from understanding transition to understanding persistence. The wide variety of regimes categorized as authoritarian has resulted in a proliferation of sub-types such as electoral and bureaucratic authoritarianism.

In this course, we will explore the conceptual utility of authoritarianism. To do so, we begin by examining some of the literature on concepts. What is a useful concept? What work should a concept do? We then explore the classics in the field as context for the rest of the course. The heart of our inquiry explores the transitions literature, sub-types of authoritarianism and contemporary cultural, economic and institutional approaches to the study of authoritarianism. The final assignment for the course requires students to assess the utility of authoritarianism as a concept for students of political science.

The primary objective for this course is for students to develop an understanding of the concept of authoritarianism and the debates that surround it. The secondary objective is for students to familiarize themselves with the literature on concepts, and to train themselves to ask, in future courses and in their daily life, which concepts are useful, and which should be discarded.

### Course Requirements:

Successful completion of this course requires attendance at all class sessions, regular, consistent, meaningful participation in class discussions, completion of all reading and writing assignments, and strong performance in leading classroom discussion (POLS 593 students only) and in the final presentation.

### Attendance Policy/Participation Grade:

Students are expected to attend all class sessions and participate actively in discussions in order to gain full participation credit. One unexcused absence is allowed before the student’s participation grade is impacted. Completion of online evaluation at the end of the course is a part of classroom participation and is expected from all students.

### A note on formality in the graduate classroom:

Graduate courses are an excellent time to put professionalism into practice. If you are already in the workplace, this should not be difficult for you. If you do not yet have a full-time job, use your graduate courses to practice professionalism. Write emails with care. Use proper language and punctuation. Come prepared for class. Do all readings and take notes. Make comments that suggest a careful and thorough reading of texts. Treat your colleagues and professor with respect. Notify your professor of absences as soon as you can. Notify the professor as early (and succinctly) as possible if you face personal challenges that may affect your performance. Never ask, “What did I miss in class?” Read your syllabus. Then read

it again. Build relationships with your colleagues and consult them when necessary. Arrive on time for class. If you are late, do not ask questions that were likely answered prior to your arrival. Do not text. Do not take notes on a computer. Do not confuse the classroom with the gym, the coffee house or your home. If you do these things you will have a happier professor and an easier transition to the professional world.

### **Written Assignments:**

There are three written assignments for this course. They are described below. All written assignments should follow these rules: Use size 12 Times New Roman font, one-inch margins, double-spaced text. Do not go under the page limit; do not go over the page limit. Use parenthetical citations and include a bibliography at the end. The page limit does not include the bibliography. Do not use a cover page. Do not double-space headings. Give your paper a title. Limit quotes. Whenever possible, paraphrase rather than quote. Excessive quoting will be penalized. Most importantly, **demonstrate mastery of the literature**. Read and take notes. Then reread. Then synthesize. Write a draft, and then a second. Always budget your time so that you can write at least two drafts before submission. Use proper grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Employ formal language in your writing; do not use slang. Grammatical and language errors will incur at least one letter grade penalty.

Submit all assignments electronically through the course Blackboard site. Do not submit hard copies.

#### First Reflection Paper:

Length: 4 pages

Topic: What is a concept?

Special instructions: Do not use any quotations. Place all references to course materials in your own words.

Due date: 28 January

#### Midterm:

Length: 6 pages

Topic: Compare and contrast the concept of authoritarianism employed by the Classics and the Transitions literature. What were the contributions of the Transitions literature? What was lost in the move away from classic approaches? If you had to situate yourself in one of these approaches, which would you choose? Why?

Notes: Use quotes judiciously. Write exactly 6 pages.

Due date: 4 March

#### Final Paper:

Length: 10 pages

Topic: Is authoritarianism a useful concept? Why or Why not? Integrate at least ten pieces of literature from the course in your response.

Notes: Demonstrate that you did the course readings, reflected on them, reread them and integrated them. Write exactly 10 pages. Address critiques that I give after your first draft in your final draft.

First draft due: 1 April

Final draft due: 29 April

### **Oral Assignments:**

Discussion leader: *593 Students only*

All students will be assigned a week of readings during which they will guide classroom discussion. Come prepared. You will not be able to make up this assignment should you miss. I encourage you to begin preparing several weeks in advance and to meet with me, if necessary, to clarify any confusion you have about upcoming readings.

Think of the class period as having an arc. First, the material should be introduced. Evaluate if your colleagues can identify the big questions that the work focuses on. Can they explain the significance of this work to a family member or friend? To a bartender? Second, assess if your colleagues understood the work. Can they state in their own words the argument that the scholar is making? What is the scope of the argument? What evidence is offered to support the argument? How was the evidence gathered? Next, push your colleagues to critique the work (but only after they have demonstrated that they understand it). Was the question important? Was the argument clear? Was the method appropriate to the question? Is there a better method to answer this question? Were there biases present in the work? Did you buy the scholar's argument? Finally, integrate the work into the larger question of the class. How was authoritarianism used in the work? What was the definition employed? How is this work related to the question that we are asking in this course? Does this work speak to any of the other scholars that we have read this semester or that you have read in past semesters? Most importantly, know the answers to all of these questions for each of the works for which you are responsible. Try to guide the course to these answers through discussion/asking questions rather than to tell them answers. Make note of important quotations and reference them during the discussion.

**Presentation:** Present your final paper succinctly and thoroughly during our final course session. You will have 12 minutes. Use them effectively. Do not make a powerpoint or handout. Do not read your paper. You are encouraged to treat this experience as if you are at an actual academic conference, describing your work to your colleagues.

**Reading Assignments:**

Students are expected to complete ALL reading assignments. Student progress toward this goal will be evaluated through class discussions. It is expected that students already possess the ability to read and understand scholarly-level publications. Those who are new to reading scholarly writing should consult with the instructor for further resources. I reserve the right to modify readings according to the needs of the class. The reading schedule is below. Each week several journal articles or books are assigned for classroom discussion. There is also one reading for 593 students alone. Read actively. Come prepared to answer the questions listed above for the discussion leader.

**Grade Breakdown and Scale:**

- 20 Participation/Discussion Leader
- 10 First Reflection Paper
- 25 Midterm
- 30 Final Paper (The absence of a genuine draft will result in the loss of 5 points)
- 15 Presentation

A	93-100	C+	77-79
A-	90-92	C	73-76
B+	87-89	C-	70-72
B	83-86	D	60-69
8-	80-82	F	Below 60

**Required Books:** (estimated cost new from Amazon; feel free to buy used)

Darin Acemoglu and James Robinson (2006). *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press). \$22

Michael Bernhard. 2005. *Institutions and the Fate of Democracy*. (Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press). \$28

Jason Brownlee (2007). *Authoritarianism in the Age of Democracy* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press). \$23

Jennifer Gandhi (2008). *Political Institutions under Authoritarianism* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press). \$25

Samuel B. Huntington (1991). *The Third Wave, Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. (Norman, Oklahoma University Press). \$30

Barrington Moore (1964). *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. (Boston, Beacon). \$26

### **Academic Honesty:**

The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity. Academic integrity is violated by any dishonesty such as soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of work submitted toward academic credit. While not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, examples include copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed book exam, submitting materials authored by or revised by another person as the student's own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing or recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination or quiz without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, sharing or receiving the questions from an on-line quiz with another student, taking an on-line quiz with the help of another student, and colluding with another student or students to engage in academic dishonesty

All clear violations of academic integrity will be met with appropriate sanctions. In this course, academic dishonesty on an assignment will result in an automatic grade of 0 for that assignment and a report of academic dishonesty sent to the Academic Honesty Committee of the College of Arts and Sciences. In the case of Class B violations, the Academic Honesty Committee may impose a larger sanction including, but not limited to, assigning a failing grade in the course, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the University.

Students should refer to the following SLU website for more information about Class A and B violations and the procedures following a report of academic dishonesty: <http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml>

### **Student Learning and Disability Statement:**

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Student Success Center (BSC 331) or by going to [www.slu.edu/success](http://www.slu.edu/success).

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at 314-977-8885 or visit the Student Success Center. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.

## **Weekly Schedule (15 classes):**

*Readings marked with \*\*\* are for 593 students only*

### **Unit One: Introduction to Concepts**

Week One: 14 January

Introduction, Reading Journal Articles

Week Two: 21 January

Sartori, Giovanni. 1970. "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics". *APSR* 64(4): 1033-1053

Collier, David, and James E. Jr. Mahon, 1993. "Conceptual 'Stretching' Revisited: Adapting Categories in Comparative Analysis." *American Political Science Review*. 84(4): 845-855.

Collier, David, and Steven Levitsky. 1997. "Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research." *World Politics* 49: 430-451.

Gerring, John. 1999. "What Makes a Concept Good?" *Polity* Spring 1999, pp. 357-393.\*\*\*

Week Three: 28 January

**First Reflection Paper Due**

Gerring, John. 2001. "Concepts: General Criteria". Chapter 3 in *Social Science Methodology: A Critical Framework*. Cambridge University Press

Munck, Gerardo L., and Jay Verkuilen. 2002. "Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: Evaluating Alternative Indices." *Comparative Political Studies* 35(1): 5-34.\*\*\*

Adcock, Robert. 2005. "What is a Concept?" Working Paper No. 1. International Political Science Association Committee on Concepts and Methods. pp. 1-32.

Week Four: 4 February

**CLASS WAS CANCELLED**

*Students are asked to watch a movie or documentary that depicts life under authoritarianism to cover material that they would have received in this class session.*

### **Unit Two: Classic Approaches**

Week Five: 11 February

Seymour Martin Lipset (1959). "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," *American Political Science Review* 53:69-105.\*\*\*

Barrington Moore (1964). *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. (Boston, Beacon).

Week Six: 18 February

Linz, Juan J. 1964. "An Authoritarian Regime: Spain," pp. 291-341, in Erik Allardt and Yrjö Littunen (eds.), *Cleavages, Ideologies and Party Systems*. Contributions to Comparative Political Sociology (Helsinki: Westermarck Society).

Linz, Juan J. 2007. "Political Regimes and the Quest for Knowledge" in Munck, Gerardo L. and Richard Snyder, eds. *Passion, Craft, and Method in Comparative Politics*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, p.150-209.

Linz, Juan J. 1975. "Totalitarianism and Authoritarian Regimes," pp. 175-411, in Fred

Greenstein and Nelson Polsby (eds.), *Handbook of Political Science* Vol. 3, *Macropolitical Theory* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Press).\*\*\*

### **Unit Three: The Transitions Literature**

Week Seven: 25 February

Robert Dahl (1971). *Polyarchy*. (New Haven, Yale University Press), 1-47.

Dankwart Rustow (1970). "Transitions to Democracy," *Comparative Politics* 2:337-63.\*\*\*

Samuel B. Huntington (1991). *The Third Wave, Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. (Norman, Oklahoma University Press).

Week Eight: 4 March MIDTERMS

**Second Reflection Paper Due**

Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter (1986). "Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies," in *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe C. Schmitter, and Laurence Whitehead, eds. (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press), Part IV: 1-72.

Terry Karl and Philippe C. Schmitter (1991). "Modes of Transition in Southern and Eastern Europe," *International Social Science Journal* 128:269-84.\*\*\*

Thomas Carothers (2002). "The End of the Transition Paradigm." *Journal of Democracy* 13:5-21.

Week Nine: Spring Break

### **Unit Four: Proliferation of Sub-Types**

Week Ten: 18 March

O'Donnell, Guillermo (1973). *Modernization and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism*. (Berkeley: Institute of International Studies).

Diamond, Larry. 2002. "Thinking about Hybrid Regimes," *Journal of Democracy* Vol 13, N° 2: 21-35.\*\*\*

Levitsky, Steven, and Lucan Way. "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism." *Journal of Democracy* 13.2 (2002): 51-65.

*Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition*. Ed. Andreas Schedler. Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2006. 77-94.

### **Unit Five: Understanding the Persistence of Authoritarianism:**

Week Eleven: 25 March

Cultural Approaches

Samuel Huntington (1993). "The Clash of Civilizations," *Foreign Affairs* 72: 22-49.

M. Steven Fish (2002). "Islam and Authoritarianism," *World Politics* 55: 4-37.

Donno, Daniela, and Bruce Russett. 2004. "Islam, Authoritarianism, and Female Empowerment: What Are the Linkages?" *World Politics* 56(4): 582-607.

Ross, Michael L. (2008). "Oil, Islam, and Women." *American Political Science Review* 102(01)\*\*\*.

Stepan, Alfred C., and Graeme B. Robertson. 2003. "An 'Arab' More than a 'Muslim' Electoral Gap." *Journal of Democracy* 14(3): 30–44.

Week Twelve: 1 April

Economic Approaches

**First draft of final papers due**

Steven Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman (1997). "The Political Economy of Democratic Transitions," *Comparative Politics* 29:263-284.\*\*\*

Darin Acemoglu and James Robinson (2006). *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).

Week Thirteen: 8 April

Institutional Approaches

Jennifer Gandhi and Adam Przeworski 2007. "Authoritarian Institutions and the Survival of Autocrats," *Comparative Political Studies* 40 :1279-1301.\*\*\*

Jennifer Gandhi (2008). *Political Institutions under Authoritarianism* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).

Week Fourteen: 15 April

Institutional Approaches II

Jason Brownlee (2007). *Authoritarianism in the Age of Democracy* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press).

Bellin, Eva. 2004. "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective," *Comparative Politics* vol. 36, no. 2 (January): 139-157.\*\*\*

Week Fifteen: 22 April

Institutional Approaches III

Michael Bernhard. 2005. *Institutions and the Fate of Democracy*. (Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press).

Week Sixteen: 29 April

In-Class Conference

**Final papers due**