
PLSC 380L
The Politics of Dictatorship

Term: Winter 2015
Location: Distance Learning, Online

Kyle Mackey

Library North G279

e: kmackey1@binghamton.edu

u: [Blackboard](#) (Assignments, Readings)

Lectures: <http://www.kyle-mackey.com/the-politics-of-dictatorship.html>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Over half of the world still lives under some form of dictatorship, and for most of history the majority of governments have been dictatorial. This course aims at exploring the origins and characteristics of authoritarian regimes. We will cover topics that include: the emergence of authoritarianism, authoritarian institutions that affect regime survival, authoritarian power-sharing, leadership dynamics and regime change, and policy outcomes under authoritarianism. Moreover, we will examine theories that explain why some authoritarian governments make the transition to democracy, while others make the transition from oligarchy—rule by the few—to fully established autocracy—rule of one. Students will be able to assess why authoritarianism persists, even though the politics of dictatorship often result in inefficient, suboptimal policy decisions when compared to democracy. Further, we will explore varieties of authoritarianism ranging from unconstrained dictators that eliminate all forms of political opposition to dictators that establish institutions that essentially limit their own power.

READINGS

Readings for the course will consist of books and a set of articles (listed by topic below). Articles and selected chapters will be posted in the appropriate topic folder in the **Content** section on Blackboard. The readings listed below use the following abbreviations (listed in **bold** as a superscript after the citation):

- (L): Available on Binghamton Online Libraries
 - (B): Available online on Blackboard.
 - (R): Book is required for class.
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REQUIRED BOOKS

- Svobik, Milan W. 2012. *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
 - **Referred to as:** Svobik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*.
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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Read the Syllabus! The syllabus is for the benefit of the class; it informs you about required readings, grading expectations, course policies, how to contact me, required assignments, and any other general information pertaining to this class. Most important to the course is keeping up with the reading material and being able to assess and compare the theoretical arguments you encounter in the literature. So the most important thing you must do is keep up with the reading.

Grading: Students will be assessed according to the following Binghamton University grade scale:

| | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| A (93–100) | A– (90–92) | B+ (87–89) | B (83–86) | B– (80–82) |
| C+ (77–79) | C (73–76) | C– (70–72) | D (66–69) | F (< 65) |

Final grades are rounded to whole numbers, where $\geq \#.5$ is rounded up and $\leq \#.49$ is rounded down. Grades for the class will be based on the following points system:

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|----------------|
| Quizzes (best 5 out of 6) | ◇ | 5 × 50 = 250 |
| Class Participation (best 5 out of 6) | ◇ | 5 × 50 = 250 |
| Critical Reviews (2) | ◇ | 2 × 100 = 200 |
| + Final Examination | ◇ | 300 |
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| Total | ◇ | 1000/10 = 100% |

ASSIGNMENTS AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Students will be expected to fully understand the implications of turning in their assignments late. No excuses will be accepted for late assignments. If an emergency arises, creating a situation where an assignment cannot be completed by the deadline, students are required to submit the work they have at the time of the emergency. Send me an email with the assignment as an attachment (kmackey1@binghamton.edu). I will judge the quality of the work, given the emergency. Keep in mind that I will need some sort of proof that an emergency occurred. Absent of an emergency, **all** late assignments will be penalized according to the following procedure:

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|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Each Hour Past Deadline | ◇ | 1 letter grade (e.g. A = B) |
| > 4 Hours Past Deadline | ◇ | Will receive F |

Failure to complete any of the assignments for the course implies more than just a zero for that assignment. Students are required to complete all **graded** and **ungraded** assignments. **Failure to submit all assignments (late or on time) will result in an F for the entire course, regardless of your overall grade in the class.**

| <u>Assignment</u> | <u>Deadline</u> |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| Class Participation | See assignment guideline |
| Quizzes | Jan. 06; Jan. 08; Jan. 12 |
| | Jan. 15; Jan. 19; Jan. 22 |
| Critical Reviews | Jan. 13; Jan. 21 |
| Final Examination | Jan. 23 |

COURSE OUTLINE

| Topic | Date | Name |
|-------|------------|---|
| 1 | Jan. 05–06 | Why Study Dictatorship? |
| 2 | Jan. 07–08 | Origins of Democracy and Dictatorship |
| 3 | Jan. 09 | Authoritarian Power-sharing |
| 4 | Jan. 12 | Moral Hazard and Authoritarian Politics |
| 5 | Jan. 13 | Why Limit Your Own Power? |
| 6 | Jan. 14 | Coups |
| 7 | Jan. 15 | Repression and Co-option |
| 8 | Jan. 16–19 | Leadership Dynamics |
| 9 | Jan. 20 | Foreign Policy Under Dictatorship |
| 10 | Jan. 21 | Transition to Democracy or Autocracy |
| 11 | Jan. 22 | What do we Know About Dictatorship? |

READING SCHEDULE

Topic 1: Class Introduction: Why Study Dictatorship? Jan. 05–06

- Please read the syllabus and assignment guidelines.
- Przeworski, Adam, Michael E. Alvarez, José Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi. 2000. *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950–1990*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. **Ch. 1.**^(B)
- Svobik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. **Ch. 1.**^(R)

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| BLACKBOARD QUIZ 1 (Syllabus Quiz): JAN. 06 |
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| NOTE: ACADEMIC ADD/DROP DEADLINE: JAN. 06 |
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Topic 2: Origins of Democracy and Dictatorship Jan. 07–08

- Olson, Mancur. 1993. Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development. *American Political Science Review* 87(3):567–576.^(L)
- Haber, Stephen. 2008. Authoritarian Government. In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Economy*, , edited by Donald A. Wittman and Barry R. Weingast, Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Sections 1 and 2).^(B)
- Svobik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. **Ch. 2.**^(R)

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| BLACKBOARD QUIZ 2: JAN. 08 |
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Topic 3: Authoritarian Power-sharing Jan. 09

- Suny, Ronald Grigor. 1997. Stalin and his Stalinism: Power and Authority in the Soviet Union, 1930–1953. In *Stalinism and Nazism: Dictatorships in Comparison*, , edited by David L. Hoffmann, New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.^(B)
- Svobik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. **Ch. 3.**^(R)

Topic 4: Moral Hazard and Authoritarian Politics **Jan. 12**

- Myerson, Roger B. 2008. The Autocrat's Credibility Problem and Foundations of the Constitutional State. *American Political Science Review* 102(1):125–139.^(L)
- Svobik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. **Ch. 5.**^(R)

BLACKBOARD QUIZ 3: JAN. 12

Topic 5: Why Limit Your Own Power?? **Jan. 13**

- Gandhi, Jennifer and Adam Przeworski. 2007. Authoritarian Institutions and the Survival of Autocrats. *Comparative Political Studies* 40(11):1279–1301.^(L)
- Svobik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. **Ch. 4.**^(R)

CRITICAL REVIEW 1 DUE

Topic 6: Coups **Jan. 14**

- Quinlivan, James T. 1999. Coup-Proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East. *International Security* 24(2):131–165.^(L)
- Powell, Jonathan M. 2012. Determinants of the Attempting and Outcome of Coups d'état. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56(6):1017–1040.^(L)

NOTE: ACADEMIC WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE: JAN. 14**NOTE: LAST DAY TO CHANGE GRADE OPTION: JAN. 14**

Topic 7: Repression and Co-option **Jan. 15**

- Gershenson, Dmitriy. 2001. Cooption and Repression in the Soviet Union. *Economics and Politics* 13(1):31–47.^(L)
- Haber, Stephen. 2008. Authoritarian Government. In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Economy*, , edited by Donald A. Wittman and Barry R. Weingast, Oxford: Oxford University Press.^(B)(Section 4).
- Svobik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. **Ch. 6.**^(R)

BLACKBOARD QUIZ 4: JAN. 15

Topic 8: Leadership Dynamics **Jan. 16–19**

- Haber, Stephen. 2008. Authoritarian Government. In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Economy*, , edited by Donald A. Wittman and Barry R. Weingast, Oxford: Oxford University Press.^(B)(Sections 3 and 5).
- Egorov, Georgy and Konstantin Sonin. 2011. Dictators and Their Viziers: Endogenizing the Loyalty-Competence Trade-off. *Journal of the European Economic Association* 9(5):903–930.^(L)

- Albertus, Michael and Victor Menaldo. 2012. If You're Against Them You're With Us: The Effect of Expropriation on Autocratic Survival. *Comparative Political Studies* 45(8):973–1003.^(L)

BLACKBOARD QUIZ 5: JAN. 19

Topic 9: Foreign Policy Under Dictatorship **Jan. 20**

- Talmadge, Caitlin. 2013. The Puzzle of Personalist Performance: Iraqi Battlefield Effectiveness in the Iran-Iraq War. *Security Studies* 22(2):180–221.^(L)
- Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce, James D. Morrow, Randolph M. Siverson, and Alastair Smith. 1999. An Institutional Explanation of the Democratic Peace. *American Political Science Review* 93(4):791–807.^(L)

Topic 10: Transition to Democracy or Autocracy **Jan. 21**

- Levitsky, Steven and Lucan A. Way. 2002. The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism. *Journal of Democracy* 13(2):51–65.^(L)
- Acemoglu, Daron and James A. Robinson. 2006. *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. **Pages 133–144.**^(B)

CRITICAL REVIEW 2 DUE

Topic 11: Review: What do we Know About Dictatorship? **Jan 22**

- Diamond, Larry. 2002. Thinking About Hybrid Regimes. *Journal of Democracy* 13(2):21–35.^(L)
- Boix, Charles and Susan C. Stokes. 2007. *Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. **Ch. 16, “Dictatorship: Analytical Approaches” by Ronald Wintrobe.**^(B)
- Svobik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*. **Ch. 7.**^(R)

BLACKBOARD QUIZ 6: JAN. 22

FINAL EXAMINATION **Jan 23**

- A copy of the final examination will be on Blackboard. It is open book/open notes; just not open collaboration! You will have 2 hours and 10 minutes to complete the exam, and you can take the exam at any time between **9:00am EST to 5:00pm EST on January 23** (that’s an 8 hour window that you can choose any time to take it). Examination answers **MUST** be submitted as a Word or .PDF document to the Turnitin link on Blackboard within the 2 hour and 10 minute allotted time. Exams will be penalized **1 letter grade every 5 minutes** after the allotted time, so students are expected to keep track of their test-taking time. I encourage you to use that last 10 minutes to make sure you get the test submitted on time. While the examination is open book/notes, please keep in mind that you are still accountable for maintaining academic honesty.

Gen. Ed. Requirements This course satisfies the Social Science N requirement. Students in N courses will demonstrate: (1) Knowledge of major concepts, models, and issues (and their interrelationships) of at least one of the social sciences: anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science, or sociology; (2) An understanding of the methods used by social scientists to explore social phenomena, including, when appropriate to the discipline, observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, and analysis by mathematics or other interpretive frameworks.

Academic Honesty Plagiarism and cheating are serious matters that, should they occur, will be pursued to the limits of University rules. Moreover, academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade for the course. For details regarding the University's policy on cheating and plagiarism and academic dishonesty more generally, see the University Handbook.

Course Material Students are advised to **retain all course material** for all course work for **two weeks** after final grades are received. This includes: returned assignments, Turnitin email receipts, and electronic versions of written assignments. I will not consider any grading questions without evidence of the assignment. All writing assignments are to be submitted through Turnitin. Each time you submit to Turnitin, an electronic receipt is emailed to you—no receipt means something went wrong, so check your email after you submit to the Turnitin link. No evidence from Turnitin means the assignment will be treated as an incomplete assignment.

Students with Disabilities Students with disabilities should register with the office of Services for Students with Disabilities (607.777.2686), University Union (Room 119), ssd@binghamton.edu. Extra time and necessary arrangements can be made in conjunction with that office and the instructor.

Course Website/Syllabus Please visit the course website on Blackboard; I'll update it weekly with electronic versions of the chapters from books that are not listed as *required* for the course. Students will be expected to find articles through the [Binghamton Libraries](#) website. The online version of the syllabus is the official syllabus for this course as it is updated periodically. I reserve the exclusive right to alter the syllabus if I feel such changes are necessary for the class. Visit the course website to view the most recent version of the syllabus (updated date is located at the lower right corner of the document). You will be notified in your Binghamton email of any changes to the syllabus. **YOU** as the student are responsible for having the most updated copy of this document, and I will make sure you are notified of any changes.

Internet Access & Assignments Failure to complete an assignment because of a faulty or lacking internet signal will not be excused. Assignment dates and times are posted well in advance, and it is your responsibility to ensure that you will have adequate access to Blackboard during those and other times required to fulfill assignment requirements, if necessary.

Assignment Extensions No extensions will be allowed for any assignment, as all assignments are posted well in advance of the due date. Students are expected to know the deadlines and complete all assignments by their due date, preparing in advance for any unforeseen events that may fall around the assignment deadline. I will not respond to extension requests, and **no** excuses will be accepted.

Extra Credit No extra credit assignments will be provided for this course; I will not respond to requests.