

**Political Science 414**  
**Dictators and Their Demise**  
**Summer 2020**

**Instructor:** M. Rosemary Pang  
**Email:** [mzp36@psu.edu](mailto:mzp36@psu.edu)

**Office Hours:** 1:00PM - 2:00PM Mo&Th  
**Class Hours:** 11:10AM - 12:25PM MoTuWeThFr

**Course Description:**

This course examines the politics of non-democratic countries: the conditions that give rise to authoritarianism; the variety of authoritarian regimes; the strategies authoritarian leaders use to retain power; the consequences of different forms of authoritarianism for economic growth and human development; and the domestic and international sources of authoritarian demise. The course covers current and historical cases of authoritarian rule in Mexico, China, Dominican Republic, North Korea, and the former Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo).

**Learning Objectives:**

By the end of the course, students should form an understanding of different types of authoritarian rule, and how common foreign policy tools, such as economic sanctions, foreign aid, and human rights shaming, can affect domestic politics in these countries. This course includes weekly reading assignments, descriptive analysis of quantitative data in graphs, written assignments, and two on-line exam. Students develop skills to apply theoretical concepts to real world examples and skills working with real data. These activities help students develop skills to form and articulate complex arguments, and teaches them the basics of research design.

**Course Materials:**

Book chapters and articles are on CANVAS. A few readings have direct urls embedded in the syllabus.<sup>1</sup> I recommend you buy two books prior to June 10 (not on CANVAS). These books have both paperback and kindle editions:

- Mario Vargas Llosa (2000) *The Feast of the Goat* (Picador USA)
- Michela Wrong (2000) *In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz* (Perennial)

**Using Zoom:**

Classes and office hours will be hold on Zoom. Students can get access to Zoom via links on Canvas. All students will enter lectures muted. Please use the “raise hand” button or group chat function when you have question during lectures. Feel free to unmute when answering questions or joining discussions. Classes will be recorded and posted on class Canvas site. Please note that these recordings should only be used for our class for this semester: they should not be shared

---

<sup>1</sup>Some readings are from the *Monkey Cage*, a feature of the *Washington Post*. This blog publishes short articles written by political scientists for a general audience. The articles are summaries of peer-reviewed articles published in political science journals. In the words of one of its founders, the *Monkey Cage* is intended as a place where “political scientists draw on their own expertise and the discipline’s research to illuminate the news, inform civic discussion, and make some sense of the circus that is politics.” The editors of the *Monkey Cage* are political scientists, not editorial staff or journalists employed by the *Washington Post*.

outside of our class or made available after the semester ends.

**Course Requirement:**

Students are expected to: (a) attend all lectures; (b) read assigned materials before the start of each class; (c) complete three assignments; (d) complete two online exams.

**Course Structure and Grading:**

Final grades will be based on two 3-page assignments (20% of final grade each), and two exams (20% of final grade each).

- **Lecture and Discussion:** Classes will be devoted to lecture and discussion. Lecture notes and readings will be posted on CANVAS before each class.
- **Assignments:** Details of the assignments will be posted on CANVAS.
- **Exam:** For the mid-term and final exam you will be responsible for understanding the major arguments that are discussed in class lectures and in the required readings.
- **Grade Scale:** A: 95-100; A-: 90-94.9; B+: 87.9-89.9; B: 83.33-87.8; B-: 80-83.32; C+: 75-79.9; C: 70-74.9; D: 60 to 69.9; FAIL: 0-59.9

**Exam & Assignment Dates:**

Assignment 1: available online May 21; due May 26 (11:10 AM)

Assignment 2: available online June 1; due June 5 (11:10 AM)

Assignment 3: available online June 11; due June 17 (11:10 AM)

Midterm exam: available online all day on June 9 (11:59 PM)

Final exam: available online all day on June 29 (11:59 PM)

**Late Assignment/Exams:**

Each assignment is due at 11:10 AM (on Canvas) on the assigned date. Late assignments accrue a penalty of one letter grade (e.g. B+ becomes C+) each 24-hour period until the assignment is given to the instructor. After 96 hours, no late assignment is accepted. Students who miss the exams will be required to take alternative exams at a different date agreed upon with the instructor.

**University Policies:**

- **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT:**  
Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at The Pennsylvania State University, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Consistent with this expectation, the Universitys Code of Conduct states that all students should act with personal integrity, respect other students dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts.  
  
Academic integrity includes a commitment by all members of the University community not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the University community and compromise the worth of work completed by others

- **DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION STATEMENT:**

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. Every Penn State campus has an office for students with disabilities. Student Disability Resources (SDR) website provides contact information for every Penn State campus (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/disability-coordinator>). For further information, please visit the Student Disability Resources website (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/>).

In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation.

See documentation guidelines at: <http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/guidelines>.

If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus disability services office will provide you with an accommodation letter. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early as possible. You must follow this process for every semester that you request accommodations.

- **COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES STATEMENT:**

Many students at Penn State face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

Counseling and Psychological Services at University Park (CAPS)

(<http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/>): 814-863-0395

Penn State Crisis Line (24 hours/7 days/week): 877-229-6400

Crisis Text Line (24 hours/7 days/week): Text LIONS to 741741

- **EDUCATIONAL EQUITY/REPORT BIAS STATEMENT:**

Penn State takes great pride to foster a diverse and inclusive environment for students, faculty, and staff. Consistent with University Policy AD29, students who believe they have experienced or observed a hate crime, an act of intolerance, discrimination, or harassment that occurs at Penn State are urged to report these incidents as outlined on the University's Report Bias webpage (<http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/>)

## Class Schedule and Readings

The schedule is tentative and subject to change. We may adjust the schedule due to time or interest.

### Day 01 & 02: What are dictatorships?

(5-18) No readings; first day of class.

(5-19) Clark, Golder, & Golder. "Three Measures of Democracy." (pp. 154-166) CANVAS

### Day 03 & 04: How are dictatorship different from democracies?

(5-20) Zakaria. "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy." (pp. 22-43) CANVAS

(5-20) Levitsky & Way. "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism." (pp. 51-64) CANVAS

(5-21) Slater & Way. *Washington Post*. "Was the 2016 U.S. election democratic? Here are 7 serious shortfalls."

(5-21) Berman. *Washington Post*. "Populists have one big thing right: Democracies are becoming less open."

(5-21) Acemoglu. "The coronavirus exposed America's authoritarian turn" CANVAS

### Assignment 1: Dictatorship in the U.S.? Due before class on Tuesday, 5/26

### Day 05 - 07: How do dictatorships come to power?

(5-22) Geddes, Wright, & Frantz. "Autocratic Seizures of Power." (pp. 25-42) from *How Dictatorships Work*. CANVAS

(5-22) Kendall-Taylor. *Washington Quarterly*. "The Global Rise of Personalized Politics."

(5-25) **Memorial Day, No Class**

(5-26) Kendall-Taylor & Frantz. "How Democracies Fall Apart." *Foreign Affairs*. CANVAS

(5-26) Levitsky & Ziblatt. "Fateful Alliances." (pp. 11-32) from *How Democracies Die*. CANVAS

### Day 08 & 09: Are all dictators the same? How do they differ?

(5-27) Clark, Golder, & Golder. "Credible Commitment Problems." (pp. 185-188) CANVAS

(5-27) Haber. "The Logic of Authoritarian Government." (pp. 2-23) CANVAS

(5-28) Geddes. "What Do We Know About Democratization?" (pp. 121-138) CANVAS

### Day 10 & 11: How do dictators rule? How do they stay in power?

(5-29) Clark, Golder, & Golder. "Selectorate Theory." (pp. 331-344) CANVAS

(6-1) Geddes, Wright, & Frantz. "Power Concentration." (pp. 61-94) from *How Dictatorships Work*. CANVAS

**Assignment 2: Median voters, inequality, and the prospects of democratization. Due before class on Friday, 6/5**

**Day 12 & 13: Why do dictators have democratic-looking institutions?**

(6-2) Morgenbesser. *Behind the Facade: Elections under Authoritarianism...* (pp. 1-33). CANVAS

(6-3) Knustsen, Nygard & Wig. *Washington Post*. "You'd think dictators would avoid elections."

**Day 14 & 15: Are dictatorships good for economic growth and human development?**

(6-4) Olsen. "Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development." (pp. 567-576) CANVAS

(6-4) Sen. "Famine and Other Crisis." in *Development as Freedom*. (pp. 160-188) CANVAS

(6-5) Demick. Letter from Yanji, "Nothing Left." *The New Yorker*, July 12, 2010, (pp. 44-49) CANVAS

(6-5) Subramanian. "The Inevitable Superpower" (pp. 66-78) CANVAS

**Day 16 & 17: Midterm review & exam**

(6-8) Midterm review session in-class

(6-9) **Midterm available all day on CANVAS**

**Day 18 & 19: Dominant party rule in Mexico**

(6-10) Magaloni. *Voting for Autocracy*. (pp. 28-42, 44-55, 63-76) CANVAS

(6-11) Magaloni. *Voting for Autocracy*. (pp. 82-108, 117-131) CANVAS

**Assignment 3: Why did Mexico democratize in 2000? Due before class on Wednesday, 6/17**

**Day 20 & 21: Communist party rule in China**

(6-12) *The Economist*. "The Second Long March." CANVAS

(6-12) McGregor. "China Inc." (pp. 827-854) CANVAS

(6-15) Wallace. "Return to Sender." (pp. 159-185) CANVAS

(6-15) *The Economist*. "Apartheid with Chinese characteristics: China has turned Xinjiang into a police state like no other." CANVAS

(6-15) Frantz & Kendall-Taylor. "The Move to One-Man Rule in China and Beyond."

**Day 22 & 23: Trujillo's dictatorship in the Dominican Republic**

(6-16) Vargas Llosa. *The Feast of the Goat*. Chapters 1-2, 5-9

(6-17) Vargas Llosa. *The Feast of the Goat*. Chapters 12-14, 18-22

**Day 24 & 25: Kim family rule in North Korea**

(6-18) Bandi. "City of Specters." Short story from *The Accusation* (pp. 35-60) CANVAS

- (6-19) Lankov. *Foreign Policy*. “Kim Jong Un Is a Survivor, Not a Madman.”  
 (6-19) Fearon. *Washington Post*. “The big problem with the North Koreans...”  
 (6-19) Horowitz & Saunders. *Washington Post*. “Why nuclear war with North Korea ...”

**Day 26 & 27: Personalist power in the former Zaire**

- (6-22) Wrong. *In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz*. (pp. 70-85, 89-108, 112-130, 137-141, 195-215, 219-237)

- (6-23) Wrong. *In the Footsteps of Mr. Kurtz*. (pp. 241-248, 251-267, 271-274, 293-309)

**Day 28: Corruption in dictatorships**

- (6-24) Hough. *Washington Post*. “There’s more to measuring corruption...”  
 (6-24) Wallace. *Washington Post*. “Corruption and a changing China”  
 (6-24) Tucker. *Washington Post*. “The culture of corruption”

**Day 29: Protests in dictatorships**

- (6-25) Clark, Golder, & Golder. “Tipping models.” (pp. 271-276) CANVAS  
 (6-25) Barany. “The Role of the Military.” (pp. 28-38) CANVAS  
 (6-25) Chenoweth. *Foreign Policy*. “Think Again: Nonviolent Resistance.”

**Day 30: Final review**

- (6-26) Final review session in-class

- (6-29) **Final Exam available all day on CANVAS.**

**Further Reading**

- The Accusation: Forbidden Stories from Inside North Korea*, Bandi (North Korea)  
*The Art of Political Murder*, Francisco Goldman (Guatemala)  
*The Autumn of the Patriarch*, Gabriel García Márquez (Colombia)  
*Blindness*, José Saramago (Portugal)  
*The Collapse*, Mary Elise Sarotte (East Germany)  
*The Comedians*, Graham Greene (Haiti)  
*Dinner with Mugabe*, Heidi Holland (Zimbabwe)  
*Dogeaters*, Jessica Hagedorn (Philippines)  
*The Emperor*, Ryszard Kapuscinski (Ethiopia)  
*Exit the Colonel*, Ethan Chorin (Libya)  
*The Fear*, Peter Godwin (Zimbabwe)

*The Gun Dealer's Daughter*, Gina Apostol (Philippines)

*The Hunger Angel*, Herta Müller (Romania)

*"I Didn't Do It For You"*, Michela Wrong (Eritrea)

*In the Time of Butterflies*, Julia Alvarez (Dominican Republic)

*It's Our Turn to Eat: The Story of a Kenyan Whistle-Blower*, Michela Wrong (Kenya)

*Journey Into the Whirlwind*, Eugenia Semyonavna Ginzburg (Soviet Union)

*A Man of the People*, Chinua Achebe (Nigeria)

*The Man without a Face*, Masha Gessen (Putin, Russia)

*The Mantle of the Prophet*, Roy Mottahedeh (Iran)

*The President (El Señor Presidente)*, Miguel Ángel Asturias (Guatemala)

*Reading Lolita in Tehran*, Azar Nafisi (Iran)

*Sardines*, Nuruddin Farah (Somalia)

*Shah of Shahs*, Ryszard Kapuscinski (Iran)