Political Science 244A/344A:
Authoritarian Politics

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Class: 2:15-5:05 pm, Thursday
Office Hours: 10:00 am - 12:00 pm, Wednesday (Encina West 408)

Course Overview

This course offers a thematic approach to the study of authoritarian politics. We will cover the major areas of political science research on authoritarian politics and governance while simultaneously building empirical knowledge about the politics of particular authoritarian regimes. Students will be expected to produce a piece of original scholarly research related to the topic of authoritarian politics by the end of the quarter. Because this class is an advanced seminar, students will lead the discussion and also serve as discussants for the research projects of their fellow students.

Evaluation

In addition to participating actively in class, students will be evaluated on the basis of three written assignments:

1. Annotated bibliography. An annotated bibliography lists the key sources on a topic with the goal of reviewing the existing literature on a particular research area. Each item will include full bibliographic information (i.e., author, title, publisher, etc) as well as a short discussion of the main topics and arguments covered in the book or article. This might also include a reflection on the usefulness of the source. In Week 5, each student will circulate their annotated bibliography and make a short presentation about the existing literature on their research subject.

2. Book review. The book selected for review should be relatively recently published (i.e., in the last five years) and on a topic related to the student’s research paper topic. A book review provides readers with a summary of the contents of the book with particular emphasis on the main argument. In addition, the review should offer a critical assessment of the book and its scholarly contribution. In Week 7, each student will circulate their book review and make a short presentation summarizing the main points of the review.

3. Research paper. The annotated bibliography and book review are both designed to assist the student in writing a research paper. The research paper should reflect original empirical analysis — either qualitative or quantitative — or theory development, or both. In Week 10, each student will circulate a draft of the research paper and make a short presentation on the project.
Grades will be assigned based on the following weighting scheme:

10 percent: Annotated bibliography *(due 10/23)*
25 percent: Book review *(due 11/6)*
25 percent: Class participation
40 percent: Research paper *(final draft due 12/12)*

Students will have the option to enroll in PS 244A/344A for 3, 4 or 5 units. The evaluation scheme is common for students enrolled for different numbers of units but the length of the research paper will vary depending on the units. For students enrolled for three units, an 8-10 page paper is required; four units, 10-15 pages; five units, 15-25 pages.

**Agenda of Topics and Readings**

All readings will be available on Courseworks. The agenda of topics and readings is as follows:

**Class 1 (9/25): Concepts and Definitions**


**Class 2 (10/2): Varieties of Autocracy**


**Class 3 (10/9): Wealth Protection, Patronage and Distributive Politics**


**Class 4 (10/16): Institutions of Control and Repression**


**Class 5 (10/23): Symbolic Politics and the Cultivation of Public Support**

**Presentation of annotated bibliography**


**Class 6 (10/30): Authoritarian Elections and Parliaments**


**Class 7 (11/6): Autocrats and Foreign Affairs**

**Presentation of book review**


**Class 8 (11/13): Resistance to Domination**


**Class 9 (11/20): Coups, Revolution and Transitions**


**Class 10 (12/4): Transitional Justice**

**Presentation of research paper (with discussant)**


**Note for Students with Documented Disabilities**

Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) located within the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). SDRC staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the SDRC as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk, (650) 723-1066.