

# **GOVT 1101: Power and Politics**

## **Protest and Political Participation in Authoritarian Regimes**

Freshman Writing Seminar  
Cornell University  
Spring 2016

**Instructor:** Natalie Wenzell Letsa

**Seminar:** T Th: 2:55-4:10pm, White Hall 106

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays: 4:15-5pm ; Thursdays: 2-2:45pm

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**Course Description:** Despite major obstacles, citizens in authoritarian regimes often choose to participate in politics through voting in rigged elections, contacting their governments, and protesting. How does such participation parallel similar participation in democratic countries, and how does it differ? Why do some citizens participate in politics, and what can their participation tell us about the (in)stability of authoritarian regimes? By reading and critiquing academic literature, policy documents, and journalistic reports, this course aims to understand what political participation looks like in authoritarian regimes, and the effects it can have on politics in nondemocratic countries. Students will critically engage with these topics through a series of writing assignments that will culminate in an original research paper on a topic of their choice.

### **Learning Outcomes: Writing**

There are two overarching writing goals for this course. First is to learn how to write an appropriate undergraduate paper for the social sciences. The second broad goal is to learn how to adapt this type of writing for different audiences. In order to support these two main objectives, this course will teach students how to:

- Construct an argument that is appropriate for an undergrad research paper
- Understand the difference between theory and hypothesis
- Know what is manageable, constructive, and persuasive about an argument
- Use secondary sources of evidence to support an argument
- Organize a research paper
- Craft a meaningful and useful outline
- Address both academic and non-academic audiences in writing
- Write clearly, concisely, and convincingly

### **Learning Outcomes: Content**

Since the end of the Cold War, protests and revolution have become increasingly frequent in much of the non-Western world. The color revolutions in Eastern Europe, the Arab Spring, recent protests in Hong Kong, and the 2014 popular uprisings in Burkina Faso exemplify the spread of democratization movements in the past 30 years. Understanding

the importance of everyday political participation in democratic regimes has become commonplace, but political participation in authoritarian regimes has only recently become critical to understanding global politics. Students interested in current affairs and global politics will find the course useful to understanding newspaper headlines and world politics in general. Students will learn to critically analyze current events and begin to see relationships and common cause between seemingly unrelated events. Further, they will learn what an argument is and how to craft one that is defensible and convincing.

**Assignments:**

All assignments should be turned in BOTH as hardcopy on the day it's due and by email (njw57).

Assignment 1: Introductory Assignment

*Due: February 4*

Assignment 2: Making an Argument

*Due: February 18*

Assignment 3: Policy Memo

*Part A due: February 25*

*Part B due: March 3*

Assignment 4: Op-Ed

*Due: March 8*

Assignment 5: Crafting a Theory and Hypotheses

*Due: March 17*

Assignment 6: Using Evidence to Support an Argument

*Part A Due: April 5*

*Part B Due: April 12*

Assignment 7: First Draft of Research Paper

*Due: May 3*

Assignment 8: Final Research Paper

*Due: Day of Final, TBA*

**Course Policies and Resources:**

Evaluations and Grading

Grading will be de-emphasized in this course. Instead, the focus will be on qualitative evaluation and the assessment of your overall progress during the semester. In the humanities and social sciences, grading is at least somewhat arbitrary, and individual grades tend to be based on the relative performance of others in the course. Further, regardless of the career you choose, after you are finished with your education you will no longer receive grades, and you will have to learn how to interpret and respond to qualitative evaluations of your work. With this in mind, your individual assignments for this course will not be graded. Instead you will receive detailed feedback on your work, which will be evaluated according to your personal strengths and weaknesses, and your ability to improve your writing throughout the semester. With each successive assignment, I will specifically be looking for whether or not you are responding to feedback from previous assignments.

Nonetheless you will be receiving a grade in the course. Therefore there will be TWO MANDATORY 15 MINUTE ONE-ON-ONE STUDENT-TEACHER MEETINGS scheduled during the semester. The first will be during Week 8 (March 14-18); the second will be during Week 13 (April 18-22). During this meeting we will discuss your overall grade in the course so that you won't be ambushed at the end of the semester with your final grade. During these meetings we will also discuss your overall progress in the course and strategies for improving your writing.

#### Computers in the Classroom

There will be no laptops or tablets permitted in seminar. The temptations of Facebook and Instagram are simply too strong, and I have found that the presence of laptops in small seminars detracts from the atmosphere of the classroom. Because of this policy, it is *required that you print all of the readings* and bring them with you to class. All readings are posted on Blackboard. You will note that there are no required books or textbooks for this course, which significantly cuts down on costs. Nonetheless, if printing the readings is prohibitively expensive for you, please meet with me and we will figure something out.

#### Classroom Participation

Apart from the quality and progression of your writing assignments, class attendance and participation will also be a part of your final grade. Please note that the classroom is a place of learning, and as such, there are no "good" or "bad" questions, and your thoughts and opinions are always welcome. This is a space where you should feel comfortable expressing your opinions, and if you don't feel comfortable for any reason, please come speak with me. *You are expected to contribute to class discussions every week.* This is extremely important, and something we will discuss in your one-on-one meeting if it is a problem for you. Please note that if you never (or rarely) participate in class discussions, it will affect your final grade.

#### Cornell University Policies and Regulations:

Participation in this class commits students and instructors to abide by Cornell's expectations and policies regarding equal opportunity and academic integrity. Further, it implies permission from students to submit their written work to services that check for plagiarism (such as Turnitin.com). Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with university policies regarding plagiarism and other violations of academic integrity. In particular, please make yourself familiar with the definition of plagiarism, and be aware that you may not turn in the same piece of work (or part thereof) for credit in multiple classes, either in the same semester or while at Cornell in general. Violations of the University Code of Academic Integrity will be firmly dealt with in this class.

## *Course Schedule and Readings*

### **Week 1: Introduction**

*Thursday, January 28*

Readings: None

Assignments: Assignment 1 Instructions + Map Activity Instructions

### **Week 2: The Line between Dictatorship and Democracy**

*Tuesday, February 2*

Readings: None

Assignments: Map Activity DUE

*Thursday February 4*

Readings: Schmitter, Philippe, and Terry Lynn Karl. 1991. "What democracy is... and is not." *Journal of Democracy* 2: 75-88.

Assignments: Assignment 1 DUE

*Note: There is a Roundtable today at 4:30pm in Morrill 106 titled: "The Great Crackdown: A Roundtable on Censorship and Protest in China Today"*

### **Week 3: Different Forms of Authoritarianism**

*Tuesday, February 9*

Readings: Barbara Geddes, *Paradigms and Sandcastles* (University of Michigan, 2003), pp. 50-62.

*Thursday, February 11*

Readings: Henry Hale, "Hybrid Regimes: When Democracy and Autocracy Mix." In Nathan Brown, ed., *The Dynamics of Democratization* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), pp. 23-45.

Assignments: Assignment 2 instructions

### **Week 4: The Viability of Authoritarianism**

*Tuesday, February 16: NO CLASS (February Break)*

*Thursday, February 18*

Readings: Fukuyama, Francis. 1989. "The End of History?" *The National Interest* 16 (Summer): 3-18.

Assignments: Assignment 2 DUE

## **Week 5: Participation in Democratic Regimes**

*Tuesday, February 23*

Readings: Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman and Henry E. Brady. 1995. *Voice and Equality*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. *Chapters 2 and 9* pg. 37-48; 269-287.

Assignments: Assignment 3, Part A Instructions

*Thursday, February 25*

Readings: None

Assignments: Assignment 3, Part A DUE

Assignment 3, Part B Instructions

## **Week 6: Participation in Authoritarian Regimes: Popular Conceptions and Recent Examples**

*Tuesday, March 1*

Readings: Ethiopia. 2015. "Ethiopia Confronts its Worst Ethnic Violence in Years" The Washington Post, January 14.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/ethiopia-is-facing-its-worst-ethnic-violence-in-years/2016/01/13/9dbf9448-b56f-11e5-8abc-d09392edc612\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/ethiopia-is-facing-its-worst-ethnic-violence-in-years/2016/01/13/9dbf9448-b56f-11e5-8abc-d09392edc612_story.html)

Burkina Faso. 2014. "Protesters Storm, Burn Burkina Faso Parliament" The Atlantic, October 30. <http://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2014/10/protesters-storm-burn-burkina-faso-parliament/100843/>

Burkina Faso. 2015. "Burkina Faso Elections Mark Turning Point in Country's Recent Political Turmoil" The Monkey Cage, Washington Post, December 6.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/12/06/burkina-faso-elections-mark-a-turning-point-in-a-country-in-political-turmoil/>

Burundi. 2015. "There Are Signs of Renewed Ethnic Violence in Burundi" The Monkey Cage, Washington Post, December 15.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/12/15/there-are-signs-of-renewed-ethnic-violence-in-burundi/>

*Thursday, March 3*

Readings: TBA

Assignments: Assignment 3, Part B DUE

Assignment 4 Instructions

## **Week 7: Autocratic Elections: Vote-Buying and Patronage**

*Tuesday, March 8*

Readings: Blaydes, Lisa. 2011. *Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak's Egypt*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 6: pg. 100-115.

Assignments: Assignment 4 DUE

Assignment 5 Instructions

*Thursday, March 10*

Readings: Pepinsky, Thomas. 2007. "Autocracy, Elections, and Fiscal Policy: Evidence from Malaysia." *Studies in Comparative International Development*. 42:1, pp. 136-163.

**Week 8: Autocratic Elections: Other Reasons for Voting**

*Tuesday, March 15*

Readings: Miguel, Carolina, Amaney A. Jamal, and Mark Tessler. 2015. "Elections in the Arab World: Why Do Citizens Turn Out?" *Comparative Political Studies*. 48:11, pp.1355-88.

Letsa, Natalie Wenzell. 2016. "Voting in Autocratic Elections: Explaining Who Votes and Why with Evidence from Cameroon." *Working paper*.

*Thursday, March 17*

Readings: None

Assignments: Assignment 5: DUE

Assignment 6, Part A Instructions

**Week 9: Contacting the Government**

*Tuesday, March 22*

Readings: None

*Thursday, March 24*

Readings: Lust-Okar, Ellen. 2008. "Competitive Clientelism in Jordanian Elections." In Ellen Lust-Okar and Saloua Zerhouni, eds. *Political Participation in the Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers. pp. 75-94.

Shehata, Samer. 2008. "Inside an Egyptian Parliamentary Campaign." In Ellen Lust - Okar and Saloua Zerhouni, eds. *Political Participation in the Middle East*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers. pp. 95-120.

**Week 10**

NO CLASS: Spring Break

**Week 11**

*Tuesday, April 5*

Readings: None

Assignments: Country Presentations // Assignment 6, Part A: DUE

Assignment 6, Part B: Instructions

*Thursday, April 7*

NO CLASS TODAY

## **Week 12: Protests and Social Movements**

*Tuesday, April 12*

Readings: None

Assignments: Country Presentations

*Thursday, April 14*

Readings: Baer, Robert. 2003. "The Fall of the House of Saud" *The Atlantic*, May. <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2003/05/the-fall-of-the-house-of-saud/304215/>

Coll, Steve. 2015. "Saudi Shakeup" *The New Yorker*. May 25. <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/05/25/saudi-shakeup>

## **Week 13: Protest and Regime Change**

*Tuesday, April 19*

Readings: Kuran, Timur. 1991. "Now Out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989." *World Politics* 44, 1 (October): 7-48. (focus on pages 16-25)

Gladwell, Malcolm. 2010. "Small Change: Why the revolution will not be tweeted." *The New Yorker* October 4.

[http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/10/04/101004fa\\_fact\\_gladwell?printable=true](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/10/04/101004fa_fact_gladwell?printable=true)

Assignments: Assignment 6, Part B: Due  
Assignment 7 Instructions

*Thursday, April 21*

Readings: Bunce, Valerie, and Sharon Wolchik. 2011. *Defeating Authoritarian Leaders in Postcommunist Countries*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 5: Ukraine, pgs. 114-47.

## **Week 14: Regime Responses: Repression and Concession**

*Tuesday, April 26*

Readings: Schedler, Andreas. 2002. "The Menu of Manipulation." *Journal of Democracy* 12:2, pp.36-50.

*Thursday, April 28*

Readings: Geddes, Barbara and John Zaller. 1989. "Sources of Popular Support for Authoritarian Regimes." *American Journal of Political Science* 33:2, pp. 319-347.

**Week 15: Regime Responses: Repression and Concession**

*Tuesday, May 3*

Readings: Lankov, Andrei. 2015. “North Korea Dabbles in Reform” The New York Times.

Assignments: Assignment 7: DUE

Instructions for peer review

*Thursday, May 5*

Readings: Weiss, Jessica Chen. 2013. “Authoritarian Signaling, Mass Audiences, and Nationalist Protest in China.” *International Organization* 67 (Winter): 1-35.

King, Gary, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret Roberts. 2013. “How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression.” *American Political Science Review* 107: 2, pp.326-43.

**Week 16: Wrap-Up**

*Tuesday, May 10*

Readings: None

Assignments: Peer Review DUE