Winter Term 2026/27

Dr. Düzgün Arslantaş
Course number: 14335.0113 (Political Science)
Module: SM Politische Institutionen (1335BSPIN1)

Course Title: Authoritarian Politics

Time: Wednesdays, 14:00 – 17:30
Room: IBW Building 211 / S103
First Session: 14 October 2026

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Course description

This is an introductory course to understand authoritarian politics. The course will address some fundamental questions: What are the personal roots of authoritarian rule? How do authoritarian leaders come to power? How do authoritarian regimes survive? Why do they break down?

This course includes seven sections. The first section looks at the personal roots of authoritarianism with reference to political psychology literature. The second section analyses non-democratic regimes, namely, military dictatorships and totalitarian regimes. The third section highlights sub-types of authoritarian regimes such as "electoral" and "competitive" authoritarianism. The fourth section discusses the role of elections in authoritarian settings. The fifth section delves into an authoritarian breakdown. The sixth section highlights the prospects for democratization under authoritarian rule. The last section compares and contrasts authoritarian regimes in Latin America and the Middle East.

Prerequisites

A good knowledge of general political science concepts, theories, and basic qualitative and quantitative methods is required. Students should be able to understand and articulate themselves in English as the medium of instruction will be English.

Relevance for study programs

The course is open to **bachelor's students** of the WISO Faculty with an interest in political science. It will be offered in the module "**SM Politische Institutionen (1335BSPIN1)**" (for further information, please confer with the Modulhandbuch).

Registration

The course will be taught on a weekly basis. Registration takes place via **KLIPS**. I strongly recommend registration as this ensures that you may get information about ad hoc changes in the schedule.

Grading

Participants are **expected to**:

- make a **presentation** on one of the required readings (max. 15 minutes + 15 minutes discussion)
- submit a **term paper** (max. 3500 words)

Exam composition

Presentation	30%
Paper	70%

***deadline for the term paper submission will be announced later.**
*** powerpoint slides must be sent to one of my e-mail addresses via e-mail at least two days in advance. Late sending will result in a loss of points in calculating the final grade.**

Reading assignment

The required reading is indicated as such, but you will also find *recommended* readings that are not required for class. The recommended readings list only serves as orientation in case you intend to delve deeper into the particular research topic. All required texts for the seminar sessions can be found on **ILIAS.**

Most texts can only be accessed from within the **UKLAN** network of the University of Cologne. If you do not know how to obtain access to UKLAN, please consult the **RRZK's** websites: http://rrzk.uni-koeln.de/netzzugang.html?&l=1

Basic reading recommendations:

- Sartori, G. (1987). *The theory of democracy revisited*. Chatham: Chatham House Publishers.
- Linz, J. J. (2000)[1975]. *Totalitarian and authoritarian regimes*. Boulder, CO: Rienner.
- Dahl, R. A. (1988). *On democracy,* CT. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Schedule

1) 14 October 2026- Personal roots of authoritarianism

Introduction [14:00-15:30]

Authoritarian personality [16:00-17:30]

- Altemeyer, R. A. (1996). *The authoritarian specter*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, pp. 6-49 (Chapter 1: "previous research on right-wing authoritarianism")
- Tucker, R. C. (1965). The dictator and totalitarianism. *World Politics*, *17*(4), 555-583.

2) 21 October 2026– Non-democratic regimes

Totalitarianism [14:00-15:30]

- Linz, J. J. (2000). *Totalitarian and authoritarian regimes*. Boulder, CO: Rienner, pp. 65-142.
- Arendt, H. (1962). *The origins of totalitarianism*. Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, pp. 389-459 (Chapter 12: "totalitarianism in power").

Military Dictatorships [16:00-17:30]

- Perlmutter, A. (1980). The comparative analysis of military regimes: formations, aspirations, and achievements. *World Politics*, *33*(1), 96-120.
- Cohen, Y. (1987). Democracy from above: the political origins of military dictatorship in Brazil. *World Politics*, *40*(1), 30-54.
- Geddes, B., Frantz, E., & Wright, J. G. (2014). Military rule. *Annual Review of Political Science*, *17*(1), 147-162.

3) 28 October 2026 –Authoritarianism with adjectives (ONLINE)

Types of authoritarianism [14:00-15:30]

- Alvarez, M., Cheibub, J. A., Limongi, F., & Przeworski, A. (1996). Classifying political regimes. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, *31*(2), 3-36.
- Hadenius, A., & Teorell, J. (2007). Pathways from authoritarianism. *Journal of Democracy*, *18*(1), 143-157.

Electoral authoritarianism [16:00-17:30]

- Schedler, A. (2002). Elections without democracy: The menu of manipulation. *Journal of Democracy*, *13*(2), 36-50.
- Levitsky, S., & Way, L. A. (2002). Elections without democracy: The rise of competitive authoritarianism. *Journal of Democracy*, *13*(2), 51-65.

4) 4 November 2026 – Elections under authoritarianism [14:00-17:30]

- Gandhi, J., & Lust-Okar, E. (2009). Elections under authoritarianism. *Annual Review of Political Science*, *12*, 403-422.
- Seeberg, M. B. (2014). State capacity and the paradox of authoritarian elections. *Democratization*, *21*(7), 1265-1285.
- J. Gandhi and Przeworski, A. (2007). Authoritarian institutions and the survival of autocrats. *Comparative Political Studies*, 40(11), 1279-1301.

5) 11 November 2026 – Authoritarian breakdown [14:00-17:30]

- Smith, B. (2005). Life of the party: The origins of regime breakdown and persistence under single-party rule. *World Politics*, *57*(3), 421-451.
- Stepan, A., & Linz, J. J. (2013). Democratization theory and the "Arab Spring". *Journal of Democracy*, *24*(2), 15-30.
- Geddes, B., Wright, J., & Frantz, E. (2014). Autocratic breakdown and regime transitions: A new data set. *Perspectives on Politics*, *12*(2), 313-331.

6) 18 November 2026 –Democratization [14:00-17:30]

- Geddes, B. (1999). What do we know about democratization after twenty years?. *Annual Review of Political Science*, *2*(1), 115-144.
- Huntington, S. P. (1991). Democracy's third wave. *Journal of Democracy*, *2*(2), 12-34.
- Esposito, J. L., & Piscatori, J. P. (1991). Democratization and Islam. *Middle East Journal*, *45*(3), 427-440.
- Boix, C., & Stokes, S. C. (2003). Endogenous democratization. *World Politics*, *55*(4), 517-549.

7) 25 November 2026 – Authoritarianism in comparative perspective -ONLINE

Latin America – [14:00-15:30]

- Levitsky, S., & Loxton, J. (2013). Populism and competitive authoritarianism in the Andes. *Democratization*, *20*(1), 107-136.
- Cardoso, F. H. (1978). On the characterisation of authoritarian regimes in Latin America. In D. e (Eds.), *The new authoritarianism in Latin America* (pp. 33-57). Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Middle East – [16:00-17:30]

- Hinnebusch, R. (2006). Authoritarian persistence, democratization theory and the Middle East: An overview and critique. *Democratization*, *13*(3), 373-395.
- Bellin, E. (2004). The robustness of authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in comparative perspective. *Comparative Politics*, *36*(2), 139-157.