Political Science
**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO**
M I S S I S S A U G A

## POL487H5S Topics in International Relations
## Autocrats of the World:
## International Politics of Authoritarianisms

### Winter 2024

_____

**Course Instructor:**
Semuhi Sinanoglu
semuhi.sinanoglu@mail.utoronto.ca

**Course Schedule:**

**Office Hours:**

_____

## Course Objective and Learning Outcomes
The course will investigate the following key questions: Is there a new emerging post-liberal global order as a backlash against economic globalization? Are we experiencing a new wave of autocratization across the world at the hands of tech-savvy dictators who repress dissidents beyond their borders and disrupt democratic processes abroad? Has autocracy promotion and diffusion replaced the international efforts of democratization? Can the international community feasibly constrain autocratic regimes? This course's primary expected learning outcome is to offer an insight into the international roots of autocratic resilience. Students will also be equipped with analytical tools to assess current policy interventions to contain or curtail autocratic regime practices.

## Requirements and Grading Policy

### Grading Scheme
1. **Attendance & Participation (25%)**: You are expected to attend lectures in person. There will be no recordings. You get one freebie – no questions asked. There are no make-up opportunities for missed lectures. Because this is a 4th-year course, our lectures will be mainly in a discussion format, and I will assume that you did the required readings beforehand. I will post discussion questions for each week in advance. I reserve the right to change the required readings during the semester for pedagogical purposes.
2. **Short Tests (40%)**: Two short exams will be conducted on **February 15** and **March 28,** respectively, each worth 20%. The exams will not be cumulative. They will consist of fill-in-the-blank, multiple-choice, matching, and short-answer questions regarding lectures and required readings. The exams will be administered online. There will be no lectures on test days. The exams must be completed during class, with a limited time window.
3. **Hot take (25%):** You will write one short article (around 2000 words) to engage with the debate listed at the end of the syllabus. You are expected to critically engage with it and share your informed opinion with me. You are not allowed to use scholarly sources other than the ones listed at the end. You should share a brief sketch of your argument with me by **February 29** (5% of the assignment grade). The deadline for the assignment is **March 14.**
4. **Group debate (10%):** You will form groups of three or four to engage in a meaningful debate using ChatGPT about a topic regarding the effectiveness of strategies to counter autocratic practices. Then, you will present the discussion in class on **April 4**. You should submit a brief debate outline by **March 21** (2.5% of the assignment grade)**.** Further instructions are available at the end of the syllabus.

### Grade Appeal

If you wish to appeal your grade for any assignments, you must send me a one-paragraph explanation of why you think the grade you received does not accurately evaluate and reflect your work within three days after posting your grades. Be advised that your mark may go up or down during the appeal process.

### Missed Term Work

Late assignments will be subject to a late penalty of **5%** per day (including weekends) of the total marks for the assignment. Assignments submitted five calendar days beyond the due date will be assigned a grade of zero. Assignments handed in AFTER the work has been returned to the class cannot be marked for credit. Accommodations due to late registration into the course will NOT be approved. If you cannot meet the deadline of your assignment/paper due to unforeseen circumstances, you may apply for an extension of time using the UTM Special Consideration Request [Pilot] application. This request must be submitted within 3 days of the missed deadline. The request must explain the reason for missing the deadline and include appropriate documentation, e.g. Verification of Student Illness or Injury form. Each request for special consideration is carefully reviewed by the department/course instructor based on the information provided and approval is not guaranteed.

### Missed Test

If anytime throughout the term you encounter unforeseen circumstances outside of your control that are impacting your ability to attend your test, you may apply for special consideration using the UTM Special Consideration Request [Pilot] application. Otherwise, students who miss a term test will be assigned a grade of zero for that test. A request for special consideration must be submitted within 3 days of the missed test via the UTM Special Consideration Request [Pilot] application. This request must explain the reason for missing the test and include appropriate documentation, e.g. Verification of Student Illness or Injury form. A student whose explanation is accepted by the department may be granted a make-up test. The department will assign the date(s) for make-up tests, administer them, evenings and Saturdays/Sundays included, and will inform the students. If the student is granted permission to take a make-up test and misses it, they will be assigned a grade of zero for the test unless a valid reason for their absence is provided.

### ACORN Absence Declaration

Students who miss an academic obligation during the term (i.e., in-class assessment, quiz, paper, or lab report) may use the ACORN Absence Declaration Tool (AD) to record an absence in one or more courses. Students may utilize this option once per term for a single absence period of up to seven consecutive days. The declaration period must include the day of declaration and may include past and/or future dates, for a total of up to 7 calendar days. You may not use the ACORN absence declaration for the second quiz. You will be required to provide supporting documentation.

### Quercus & Plagiarism

All assignments must be submitted to Quercus. Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site.

### Important Deadlines

| Assignment | Date |
| --- | --- |
| Short test I | February 15 |
| Hot take brief | February 29 |
| Hot take submission | March 14 |
| Group debate pitch | March 21 |
| Short test II | March 28 |
| Group debate presentation | April 4 |

# Other Policies

### Communication

I typically respond to emails swiftly, but please allow 48 hours for a response.

### *Accessibility and Accommodation*

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the AccessAbility Resource Centre as soon as possible. AccessAbility staff (located in Rm 2047, South Building) are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. Please call 905-569-4699 or email access.utm@utoronto.ca. The sooner you let us know your needs, the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

*I am fully aware that some of you may come from autocratic countries, and having these conversations may be potentially dangerous for you. It is important to keep in mind that repression is often random, and it is a risk you should not underestimate. I will do my best to create a safe space for everyone per university policies. Please let me know in advance if you need specific accommodations.*

### *Notice of Collection*

The University of Toronto respects your privacy. The information on medical certificates is collected pursuant to section 2(14) of the University of Toronto Act, 1971. It is collected for the purpose of administering accommodations for academic purposes based on medical grounds. The department will maintain a record of all medical certificates received. At all times it will be protected in accordance with the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. If you have questions, please refer to www.utoronto.ca/privacy or contact the University's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Office at 416-946-5835. Address: Room 201, McMurrich Bldg., 12 Queen's Park Crescent, Toronto, ON, M5S 1A1.

## A Warning About Plagiarism

**Plagiarism is an academic offence with a severe penalty.**

It is essential that you understand what plagiarism is and that you do not commit it. In essence, it is the theft of the thoughts or words of others, without giving proper credit. You must put others' words in quotation marks and cite your source(s). You must give citations when using others' ideas, even if those ideas are paraphrased in your own words. Plagiarism is unacceptable in a university. What the university calls "plagiarism", non-university institutions might call "fraud".

The University of Toronto provides a process that faculty members must initiate when they suspect a case of plagiarism. In the Department of Political Science, suspected evidence of plagiarism must be reported to the Chair; in most cases, the Chair passes the case on to the Dean.

A faculty member may not mark an assignment or assess a penalty if he or she finds evidence of plagiarism – the matter must be reported. Penalties are assigned by the Chair, by the Dean or by the University of Toronto Tribunal.

The following are some examples of plagiarism:

1. Submitting as your own an assignment written by someone else.

2. Quoting an author without indicating the source of the words.

3. Using words, sentences, or paragraphs written by someone else and failing to place quotation marks around the material and reference the source and author. **Using either quotation marks or reference alone is not sufficient. Both must be used!**

4. Adapting an author's ideas or theme and using it as your own without referencing the original source.

5. Seeking assistance from a friend or family member in respect to work you claim as your own.

Ignorance of the rules against plagiarism is not a defense; students are presumed to know what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. Students are especially reminded that material taken from the web **must** be quoted and cited in the same manner as if it came from a book or printed article.

If you are not sure whether you have committed plagiarism, it is better to ask a faculty member or teaching assistant than risk discovery and be forced to accept an academic penalty.

Plagiarism is **cheating**. It is considered a **serious offence** against intellectual honesty and intellectual property. Penalties can be **severe**, ranging from a mark of "0" for the assignment or test in question, **up to and including expulsion from the university**.

# A. International causes of autocratization and autocratic resilience

***Week 1 (Jan. 11)***      ***Is there a new wave of autocratization and the rise of illiberal values?***

Haggard, Stephan, and Robert Kaufman. 2021. "The Anatomy of Democratic Backsliding." *Journal of Democracy* 32 (4): 27–41.

Levitsky, Steven, and Lucan A. Way. 2023. "Democracy's Surprising Resilience." *Journal of Democracy* 34 (4): 5–20.

***Week 2 (Jan. 18)***      ***Global political economy shocks increase support for populists and the extreme right.***

Rodrik, Dani. 2021. "Why Does Globalization Fuel Populism? Economics, Culture, and the Rise of Right-Wing Populism." *Annual Review of Economics* 13 (1): 133–70.

***Week 3 (Jan. 25)***      ***A new authoritarian international political order is rising.***

Shirk, Susan L. 2022. "Prologue: How China Lost the West." In *Overreach: How China Derailed Its Peaceful Rise*, 1-13. New York: Oxford University Press.

Doshi, Rush. 2021. "The Long Game: China's Grand Strategy to Displace American Order." DC: Brookings, August 2.

***Week 4 (Feb. 1)***      ***Autocrats collaborate with and learn from each other.***

Tansey, Oisín. 2016. "Underwriting Repression: The International Politics of Coercive Crackdowns." In *International Politics of Authoritarian Rule*, 122-50. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hall, Stephen G. F. 2023. "Learning from External and Internal Success." In *The Authoritarian International: Tracing How Authoritarian Regimes Learn in the Post-Soviet Space,* 103-26. New York: Cambridge University Press.

***Week 5 (Feb. 8)***      ***Autocrats can silence opposition abroad, rebrand their image, legitimize their repressive acts, co-opt liberal institutions, and disrupt democratic processes.***

Dukalskis, Alexander. 2021. "Selling Dictatorship and Silencing Dissent." In *Making the World Safe for Dictatorship*, 55-81. New York: Oxford University Press.

---. "Promoting and Controlling the China Dream: China's External Propaganda and Repression." In *Making the World Safe for Dictatorship,* 111-38. New York: Oxford University Press.

***Week 6 (Feb. 15)***      ***Test I (No class)***

***Week 7 (Feb. 22)***      ***Reading Week***

## B. Strategies for constraining autocrats

***Week 8 (Feb. 29)***     ***The international community may enforce compliance with human rights through treaties, international organizations, and condemnation.***

Terman, Rochelle, and Joshua Byun. 2022. "Punishment and Politicization in the International Human Rights Regime." *American Political Science Review* 116 (2): 385–402.

Miller, Andrew Cesare. 2023. "Without an Army: How ICC Indictments Reduce Atrocities." *Journal of Peace Research* 60 (4): 573–87.

***Week 9 (Mar. 7)***     ***The international community may fund human rights organizations and enforce compliance through material incentives with strings attached, such as foreign aid, FDI, and PTAs.***

Bush, Sarah Sunn. 2015. "Introduction." In *The Taming of Democracy Assistance: Why Democracy Promotion Does Not Confront Dictators*, 1-21. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Grewal, Sharan, M. Tahir Kilavuz, and Yuree Noh. 2023. "Does Genderwashing Taint the Struggle for Gender Equality?" DC: Brookings. August 9.

***Week 10 (Mar. 14)***     ***The international community may employ economic coercion through sanctions and boycotts to increase public pressure and induce regime change or compliance.***

Mulder, Nicholas. 2022. "The Greatest Experiment in Modern History, 1935–1936." In *The Economic Weapon: The Rise of Sanctions as a Tool of Modern War,* 202-26. New Haven: Yale University Press.

McDowell, Daniel. 2023. "Introduction." In *Bucking the Buck: US Financial Sanctions and the International Backlash against the Dollar,* 1-10. New York: Oxford University Press.

***Week 11 (Mar. 21)***     ***The international community may use limited force through targeted strikes, no-fly zones, and intelligence operations.***

Bellamy, Alex J. 2022. "No Military Solutions and Other Zombies" and *"*Epilogue: System Failure.*"* In *Syria Betrayed: Atrocities, War, and the Failure of International Diplomacy,* 369-392. New York: Columbia University Press.

Lushenko, Paul, Shyam Raman, and Sarah Kreps. 2022. *"*Multilateralism and Public Support for Drone Strikes.*" Research & Politics* 9(2): 1-9.

***Week 12 (Mar. 28)***     ***Test II (No class)***

***Week 13 (April 4)***     ***Group debate presentations***

# Guidelines On the Writing Assignment

Critically engage with the debate. You are expected to use only the readings listed below. You are expected to cite and meaningfully engage with <u>ALL THESE</u> readings. You may use non-academic sources such as news articles. However, you are <u>NOT</u> allowed to cite other scholarly sources. This assignment aims to incentivize you to <u>map out a debate</u> given in the readings as each focuses on a different set of explanations and <u>formulate an argument</u> around them.

I call this assignment a "hot take" because I do not expect you to be an expert in that debate or know all dimensions of it. The point is to formulate a reasonable argument and have a hot take on a significant debate relevant not just in academia but also among policy circles. However, you should carefully examine each reading, understand the nuances of each argument, and then come up with your take. Do not just read the abstracts; read each paper in detail. Do not misrepresent the readings!

---

*The international community has failed to prevent Russia from invading Ukraine, despite the sanction regime in place since the annexation of Crimea. One major expectation has been that popular support for Putin would decline (as a result of declining economic performance). That did not necessarily happen. Why? How do sanctions impact public support for autocratic regimes?*

Lamberova, Natalia and Daniel Treisman. 2020. "Economic Shocks and Authoritarian Responses: Putin's Strategy after the Global Financial Crisis of 2008–9." In *Economic Shocks and Authoritarian Stability: Duration, Financial Control, and Institutions,* edited by Victor Shih, 97-118. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Rosenfeld, Bryn. 2018. "The Popularity Costs of Economic Crisis under Electoral Authoritarianism: Evidence from Russia." *American Journal of Political Science* 62 (2): 382–97.

Hale, Henry E. 2018. "How Crimea Pays: Media, Rallying 'Round the Flag, and Authoritarian Support." *Comparative Politics* 50 (3): 369–91.

Gold, Robert, Julian Hinz, and Michele Valsecchi. 2023. "To Russia with Love? The Impact of Sanctions on Regime Support." Kiel Institute for the World Economy.

Kozachenko, Ivan. 2019. "Fighting for the Soviet Union 2.0: Digital Nostalgia and National Belonging in the Context of the Ukrainian Crisis." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 52 (1): 1–10.

Chapkovski, Philipp, and Max Schaub. 2022. "Solid Support or Secret Dissent? A List Experiment on Preference Falsification during the Russian War against Ukraine." *Research & Politics* 9 (2).

Frye, Timothy. 2019. "Economic Sanctions and Public Opinion: Survey Experiments From Russia." *Comparative Political Studies* 52 (7): 967–94.

Grauvogel, Julia, and Christian von Soest. 2014. "Claims to Legitimacy Count: Why Sanctions Fail to Instigate Democratisation in Authoritarian Regimes." *European Journal of Political Research* 53 (4): 635–53.

Escriba-Folch, Abel. 2012. "Authoritarian Responses to Foreign Pressure: Spending, Repression, and Sanctions." *Comparative Political Studies* 45 (6): 683–713.

---

You may find some details/guidelines on the writing assignment below:

## *Quality of critical engagement, argument, and evidence (50%)*

1. In your paper, you are expected to advance an argument. This essay is not just a summary of readings. Your paper must be argumentative. In other words, your paper should be an overall critique of the readings. Summarizing will lower your grade since it takes away valuable space from your arguments. The authors you read are often engaged in a conversation, whether implicitly or explicitly. Your goal is to participate in that conversation by identifying the strengths and weaknesses of their arguments. Feel free to drop by my office hours to discuss the argument you have in mind for the paper.
2. In the readings, what is the predominant explanation? Does that account convince you? Is there anything missing? Are these findings generalizable? Under which conditions do you think the argument will hold? What is the empirical evidence that supports or challenges the arguments of these readings?
3. A well-crafted argumentative paper will show an excellent understanding of the arguments, draw specific parallels or highlight contrasts among them; focus on making solid and specific

arguments about the readings; avoid summarizing, and offer precise, well-constructed, and substantiated arguments.
4. Your introduction must have a concise and clear thesis statement encapsulating the overall argument. Throughout, you must closely follow your thesis statement.
5. A coherent set of arguments and evidence should be deployed to support the thesis statement. Arguments and evidence must be sophisticated and persuasive. The connection between each supporting argument and the thesis statement should be clear. Connections to lecture conversations or recent news are highly encouraged.
6. To reiterate: Do not misrepresent the readings. Abstracts usually simplify complex arguments. You are expected to know the details of each argument, and the limitations of findings.

## *Structure/Style (35%)*
1. Your paper should be around 2000 words. There is a wiggle room of 10%.
2. An ideal introduction should be structured as follows: a) You should immediately start with a research question/puzzle/debate. No long stories, overtures. b) Outline the debate. Briefly introduce different sides of the debate. c) What is your take on it? What is your thesis statement? Make sure your thesis has a causal mechanism, and it's clear and precise. d) Offer an argumentative road map for the rest of the paper.
3. The flow of your argumentation must be well-structured. There should be no jumps or gaps.
4. Each paragraph should have only one main idea and a clear topic sentence.
5. Double space, Times New Roman, 12 pt. Submit in .doc or .pdf format. You are responsible for ensuring that the files are not corrupt and submitting the documents by the deadline. Technical glitch is no excuse.

## *Citations/Grammar (15%)*
1. You must cite properly and with **page numbers**. All materials that require citation should be cited. If an idea comes from a specific page, you must cite the page number. If there is no page number, then cite the paragraph number. Use Chicago author-date citation style. I highly encourage you to use software such as Zotero. Do not use outdated citation management websites.
2. Your writing must be clear and concise. Avoid long, convoluted sentences. Proofread before you submit. Make your writing as accessible as possible.

# Guidelines on the Group Debate

- You will form groups of 3-4. Please use the People tab on Qualtrics to sign up for groups.

- Each group will engage in a meaningful debate using ChatGPT about a topic relevant for the class. We should discuss your topic beforehand. By **March 21**, you should sign up for your group AND pitch your idea to me on Quercus.

- You will debate against ChatGPT on the topic of your choosing. Instruct ChatGPT that this will be a debate, and ChatGPT will offer counter-arguments to your point of view. You must pick up a specific debate with two clear sides. You may use the following prompt:

  *Keep in mind the following instructions in your responses:*

    - *If you need more information from me to provide a high-quality answer, please ask any clarifying questions you need—you don't have to answer on the first try.*
    - *Treat me as an expert.*
    - *Be accurate and thorough.*
    - *Be concise and to the point. Avoid repetitive and convoluted texts.*
    - *I don't want to receive justifications related to you being an AI model or having limited access. I already know that.*

  *I would like to engage in a debate with you. Consider yourself a finalist debater of the highest caliber. You have won numerous tournaments and are regarded as the best debater ever. You are debating against me and will debate a resolution that I present. You must respond like a debater and make logically sound claims. We will hold opposite opinions. We will discuss a topic and provide valid and reasonable arguments as to why our points of view and positions are valid. Acknowledge.*

- You are expected to identify its hallucinations and check whether it is up-to-date or if logical loopholes exist. You must "win" your argument against ChatGPT.

- Then, you will present your debate in class and walk us through your thought processes in the debate.

- Please make sure that you canvass the relevant landscape well. Your conversation must rely on evidence and be theoretically informed. You must conduct some research beforehand on the topic. This is not just casual-daily conversation. I will call you out if there is misinformation or if your debate is not theoretically and empirically grounded. Do your due diligence.

- Your debate should be engaging and informative. Let me hear your views on the topic. In other words, do not just pass on others' opinions – engage with the issue from your point of view.

- Also, I want you to enjoy your collective work! Get to know each other.

- On the day of the presentation, ensure you upload your PowerPoint file with a Work Cited page at the end as a slide.

- I will assess your presentation based on the quality of your critical debate with the ChatGPT (70%), that is, whether you can identify its hallucinations and counter its arguments with well-grounded arguments supported by empirical data, your style of presentation (25%), and a fair share of workload within the group (5%).