Instructor: Scott Gehlbach, gehlbach@polisci.wisc.edu
Time and location: Tuesday 3:30–5:30, North Hall 422
Office hours: Wednesday, 10:00-12:00

Overview
This course presents an overview of the literature on nondemocratic politics, an important and growing literature in political science and economics. It covers some classics in the literature, but the emphasis is on more recent empirical and formal work. It is strongly recommended that students enrolled in the course have a solid background in statistics. Prior coursework in game theory is also useful.

Course requirements and grading
A primary goal of this course is to learn and synthesize the literature on nondemocratic politics. Three course requirements directly address this goal.

First, prior to each week’s class, you will post 1–2 questions or comments related to that week’s readings on the class discussion board, available on the course website at https://uwmad.courses.wisconsin.edu/d2l/home/2536054. The deadline for posting questions is 6 am the day of the seminar; this will give everyone a chance to review the discussion before class. Please come to class prepared to:

- Discuss the comment(s) that you posted on the discussion board. I am not looking for anything elaborate, just something to kick off the discussion—say, a minute or two.
- Discuss the comment(s) posted by the person who posted just before you on the discussion board (if you posted first, the person who posted last). Do you agree or disagree? What would you add or subtract? Etc.

I will decide on the order in which we go through the comments, and I may add one or two topics of my own.

Second, you will prepare two “referee reports,” each based on a close analysis of one of the assigned journal articles (not book chapters). Each report should be divided into four sections: 1) Background and question (what prior research motivates this project, what question is the author trying to answer), 2) Methods and conclusions (how does the author attempt to answer the question, what conclusions does s/he reach), 3) Evaluation (what does the article do well, what does it do poorly, what concretely could be done to make it better), 4) Recommendation (should the article be published as is, revised and resubmitted, or rejected). Each section is important, but the third section will probably be the bulk of the report. The total length of the report should be 2–3 pages, single-spaced. There is no
presumption that the recommendation will be to publish as is, even if the article has already been published, though such a recommendation may be appropriate. The report is due at the start of class the day that reading is discussed. You may prepare no more than one report each week.

Third, you will prepare a review of the literature from one week’s class. This review should address a major question, clearly articulated, in the study of postcommunist politics. The emphasis should be on what answer the literature provides to this question and how future work can provide a more complete answer. You must receive my approval of your question before writing your review. In addition to the week’s required readings, you may include readings not listed on the syllabus, including but not limited to recommended readings and other portions of books from which selected chapters have been assigned. The review should be 8–10 pages in length, double-spaced except for footnotes, plus references. (Please use author-year citations and place references in a separate section.) If you wish, you may prepare a referee report and the literature review the same week.

The other major goal of this course is to prepare you to do research on nondemocratic politics. In pursuit of this goal, you will prepare a research paper on a topic related to the material covered this semester. Prior to Thanksgiving break, you should meet with me to discuss your topic; I reserve the right to decide that a topic is inappropriate for this course. The paper should be approximately 15 pages in length, double-spaced except for footnotes, plus references. (As with the literature review, please use author-year citations and place references in a separate section.) The last day of class, you will give a short presentation of your paper.

Grading
The final grade will be based on the following weighting of course requirements:

- (10 percent) Discussion questions and participation
- (30 percent) Referee reports
- (25 percent) Literature review
- (35 percent) Research paper and presentation (25 and 10 percent, respectively)

Accommodations for students with disabilities
Please let me know as soon as possible if you need any special accommodations to fully participate in this course so that I may make appropriate arrangements. I will make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of any information you share with me. You may also find it helpful to contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center, 1305 Linden Drive, 263-2741, if you have questions about campus policies and services.

Department colloquia
You are strongly encouraged to attend the Political Economy Colloquium (https://pec.polisci.wisc.edu) and the Comparative Politics Colloquium (https://www.polisci.wisc.edu/cpc), where you will have an opportunity to see presentations of papers that are related to the work covered in this course.
Schedule

September 2: Course logistics, conceptual issues

September 9: Foundations

September 16: Power sharing

September 23: Electoral authoritarianism


**September 30: Electoral manipulation**


**October 7: Parties**


October 14: Legislatures


October 21: Media


October 28: Protest and compliance


November 4: Repression and military rule


November 11: Accountability and development


November 18: Transitions from authoritarian rule


November 25: “Thick” accounts of autocracy


December 2: No class

No assigned readings. Meetings to discuss paper.

December 9: Paper presentations

No assigned readings.

Final paper due in my mailbox in North Hall and at Learn@UW by December 16, 8 am.

A very partial list of additional readings


