

Syllabus

Title of the Course:	New Faces of Authoritarianism: Interdisciplinary Perspectives from the Global South	Course Breakdown:	28 teaching hours online, 62 hours independent study
Name of the Instructors:	IRGAC research fellows	Weekly class time:	2 hours / Thursdays, 14.00 – 16.00 (CEST)
Language:	English		
Hosted by:	Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin	Certificate issued by:	Institut für Sozialwissenschaften - Comparative Political Science and Political Systems of Eastern Europe (3 ECTS/ 5 ECTS)
min. number of participants:	15	max. number of participants	25 (with credits) 40 (without credits)

This online lecture series is funded by and organized in collaboration with The Center for Comparative Research on Democracy at the Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, the MA Social Work as a Human Rights Profession at Alice Salomon Hochschule Berlin and Off-University; and hosted by Humboldt Universität zu Berlin.

Course Coordinator: Ülker Sözen

Associated Person at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin: Ertuğ Tomuş

Description of the course

The International Research Group on Authoritarianism and Counter-Strategies ([IRGAC](#)) is an initiative of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation that brings together scholar-activists from across the Global South to share and exchange ongoing research on the rise of the Rights and Far-rights and strategic responses from a left-wing perspective. Thus, IRGAC seeks to combine in-depth studies of national and regional processes with a global perspective that recognizes and analyses the multiple manifestations of authoritarian neoliberalism and the different processes that lie beyond the “rising tide” of authoritarianism.

This lecture series aims to provide a space to think and discuss phenomena related to the emergence of authoritarian governments, movements, and ideologies in countries of the Global South from the different lines of research of the IRGAC members. The course will cover a wide range of central topics to the social sciences today including state violence, biopolitical reproduction of capitalism, sexual dissidence and feminist struggles, the entanglement of authoritarianism with digital technologies, peasant and indigenous movements, the human rights regime, environmental crisis, and urban transformation. Each of these topics will be articulated addressing the common dynamics and diverse forms of the authoritarian response to the global crisis of neoliberalism. Furthermore, the lecture series will examine the possibilities for alternatives, examples of resistance, and counter-strategies from the Global South.

Learning Aims

To provide a general understanding about:

- The recent rise of authoritarian politics in the Global South by focusing on cases from Latin America, Middle East, Africa, and South Asia
- The articulations between neoliberalism and authoritarian politics by considering the transnational frameworks, domestic state-level policies and practices, ideological discourses, and subjectivities
- How digital transformation contributes to the authoritarian turn
- The urban, spatial, and rural dimensions of authoritarianism and counter-movements
- Social movements and uprisings against authoritarianism and counter strategy modalities

Upon the successful completion of the course students will be able to:

- Have a comprehensive perspective on the authoritarian turn and the democratic backsliding in the Global South that have taken place in the last decade

- Engage with different research lines and social science disciplines to study authoritarianism at multiple levels including the transnational, domestic, ideological, and subjective ones
- Conceive and elaborate research and other project ideas for their future studies on the authoritarian practices, ideological trends, counter-movements, and human rights politics in various Global South contexts

Course requirements

Course components include:

- Weekly class meetings
- Weekly readings
- In-class discussions
- Protocols of four sessions

The successful completion of the course will be based on the following:

- Class participation
- 3 ECTS: Protocols of four sessions (**approx. 4.000 characters without spaces**): Students are expected to write four protocols (minutes of a session) for four sessions of their choice. The length of each protocol should be approx. 4.000 characters without spaces. Protocols are not analytical/critical essays but a short summary of each session.
- 5 ECTS: In addition to class participation and 4 protocols as described above, the students need to deliver 2 reaction papers (800-1000 words) reflecting on the issues covered in 2 separate lectures of their choice. Reaction papers need to be delivered within a period of two weeks after the lecture on which the paper is written.

Outline of the Course Schedule

<p>Week 1 April 21</p>		<p>Introduction Ülker Sözen, Börries Nehe, Gustavo Robles</p>
<p>Week 2 April 28</p>		<p>Doing research across violence and paranoia under authoritarianism Erol Sağlam</p>
<p>Week 3 May 5</p>		<p>Police violence after the period of transitional justice, the Argentinean case</p>

		<p>Julietta Mira</p>
<p>Week 4 May 12</p>		<p>Civil society activism in Turkey and transnational solidarity against authoritarianism</p> <p>Ülker Sözen</p>
<p>Week 5 May 27</p>		<p>Authoritarianism and developmentalism in Argentina and Mexico</p> <p>Inés Durán Matute & Mariano Feliz</p>
<p>Week 6 June 2</p>		<p>Unlearning practices</p> <p>Nafiseh Fathollahzadeh</p>
<p>Week 7 June 9</p>		<p>The agrarian dimension of authoritarianism: Empirical and conceptual insights from Southern Africa</p> <p>Boaventura Monjane</p>
<p>Week 8 June 16</p>		<p>Urban authoritarianism and urban boosterism: Discussions on Southern Africa and Turkey</p> <p>Ayşegül Can & Khanyile Joseph Mlotshwa</p>
<p>Week 9 June 23</p>		<p>Gender inequalities and right-wing politics in Latin America: between neo-conservatism and authoritarianism.</p> <p>Ailynn Torres</p>
<p>Week 10 June 30</p>		<p>Crisis of democracy and authoritarian neoliberalism in Brazil: Theoretical views on the current political context.</p> <p>Hugo Fanton</p>
<p>Week 11 July 7</p>		<p>Authoritarian neoliberalism from below. Subjectivity and platform capitalism in Argentina and Brazil</p> <p>Fabio Franco & Gustavo Robles</p>

Week 12 July 14		Digital platforms, informational capitalism, and authoritarianism in India Fathima Nizaruddin
Week 13 July 21		Big data-driven totalitarianism: A preliminary enquiry into implications of universal database of human population for constitutionalism Gopal Krishna

Syllabus / Reading List

Week 1: Introduction

Ülker Sözen, Börries Nehe, Gustavo Robles

- Introducing IRGAC and its objectives, discussing the group’s perspective on authoritarianism and counter-politics, the deployment of multiple disciplines and methodologies in the study of authoritarianism, and critically elaborating on the concepts of “scholar activism” and “Global South”
- Presenting the course outline
- Explaining the grading, assignments, and practicalities

Week 2: Doing Research across Violence and Paranoia under Authoritarianism: Ethnographic Research, Ethics, and Methodological Challenges

Erol Sağlam

Recent ascendance of radical right politics, conspiracy theories, and societal violence as well as the growing prevalence of populist-authoritarian regimes across the world has radically affected the way we conduct research—especially in settings where the researcher's politico-ethical orientations diverge from their interlocutors. How are ethical and methodological conventions to be rethought in such instances? How are we to account for the ever-present surveillance by state institutions? How are our rapport with our interlocutors altered under such conditions? This lecture aims to familiarize the students with the changing research landscapes as well as the strategies to be deployed in return.

Reading materials:

- Teitelbaum, B. 2019. "Collaborating with the Radical Right: Scholar-Informant Solidarity and the Case for an Immoral Anthropology." *Current Anthropology* 60 (3): 414-435.
- Westermeyer, W. H. 2019. *Back to America: Identity, Political Culture, and the Tea Party Movement*. University of Nebraska Press. (Section 2: Troubles: Making Personal Meaning in the Tea Party Movement)

Week 3: Police violence after the period of transitional justice, the Argentinean case

Julieta Mira

This lecture will discuss the recent state violence incidents carried out by police and security force officials in Argentina during the pandemic. It will problematize the public denunciations of police violence against the backdrop of state authoritarianism through a double theoretical-empirical perspective in the field of socio-legal studies and human rights.

Reading materials:

- Kessler, G., & Otamendi, A. (2020). Sociology of fear of crime in Latin America. In X. Bada & L. Rivera-Sánchez (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Sociology of Latin America* (pp. 677–696). Oxford University Press.
- Gayol, S., & Kessler, G. (2017). Violent death, public problems and changes in Argentina. *Current Sociology*, 65(5), 663–679.

Week 4: Civil society activism in Turkey and transnational solidarity against authoritarianism

Ülker Sözen

This lecture will discuss the context in which civil society activism is produced in Turkey and how civil society actors reflect on and navigate through the hardships that they are faced with through focusing on rights-based civil society organizations. These difficulties emerge from domestic authoritarianism and repressive state practices on the one hand, and the internal problems associated with the field of civil society organizations such as the projectification of activism on the other. In connection to this, the lecture will delineate the complications of transnational advocacy networks and solidarity efforts against authoritarian regimes across the Global South by considering the multi-faceted power inequalities and the changes in the liberal international order, global politics, and the human rights regime.

Reading materials:

- Sogge, D. 2020. Civic space: Shrinking from the outside in?, *Revista Iberoamericana de Estudios de Desarrollo*, 9:1, 74-98.
- Sözen, Ü. 2022. Production of activism under authoritarianism: Insights from the rights-based civil society in Turkey. In Boerries, N. (Comp.) *Authoritarian Capitalism. Southern Perspective on the Reactionary Remaking of the World*. Transcript (forthcoming).

Complementary reading:

- Sözen, Ü. 2021. How to Achieve Transnational Solidarity in the Age of Neoliberal Authoritarianism and Border Securitization?, IRGAC Website, <https://www.irgac.org/2021/1053/>

Week 5: Authoritarianism and developmentalism in Argentina and Mexico

Inés Durán Matute & Mariano Feliz

This lecture will focus on the relationship between authoritarianism and developmentalism by analyzing large-scale infrastructures as new frontiers of capitalism, and how ‘development,’ and ‘violence’ shape new forms of dispossession, domination, and exploitation to extract life in Mexico and the growing consensus amongst the dominant classes and their political representations in Argentina, that the country should move towards a new green developmental strategy. The objective is, on the one hand, to understand how the state and capital act together subjectively and materially through the rhetorics of “modernization” and “democracy”. On the other, the lecture will explore the extractivism model, its ecological and social consequences, as well as the experience of resistance and struggle against it.

Reading materials:

- Durán Matute, I. & Féliz, M. Forthcoming. "Authoritarianism and developmentalism framing 'progressive' governments in Mexico and Argentina". In Boerries, N. (Comp.) *Authoritarian Capitalism. Southern Perspective on the Reactionary Remaking of the World*. Transcript (forthcoming).
- Bloom, P. 2016. *Authoritarian Capitalism in the Age of Globalization*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited. (Chapter 1 and 5).

Week 6: Unlearning practices

In the context of a hyper-documented world, the author has camouflaged in the cloud(s) and adoption, appropriation and recycling has standardized. How could we engage with the new conditions of visibility and what kind of practices are emerging? How can we engage with present and past or engage with the imperial grammar of archives, cultural reproductions, examining the ways it could be re-imagined, relearned and rehearsed. This session focuses on unlearning processes through collaborative artistic research methods by studying Ariella Aisha Azoulay’s *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism and The Civil Contract of Photography* and exploring practices emerging from various disciplines in the field of photography and film-making.

Film and reading materials:

- Azoulay, A. 2019. *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism*. Chapter 1: Unlearning Imperialism: Well-documented objects / undocumented people: 1-45
- Jean-Luc Godard, *Here and Elsewhere*, 1976.
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/1cjsld98lf5il96/AACo2sMB1VUsdesI12sY7bkka?dl=0>

Week 7: The Agrarian Dimension of Authoritarianism: Empirical and Conceptual Insights from Southern Africa

Boaventura Monjane

Looking at Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe, this lecture seeks to discuss the origins and manifestations of authoritarianism in the rural world and agrarian sector and to examine the ways in which agrarian movements are forging emancipatory initiatives from below to counter the authoritarian wave and challenge (agrarian) neoliberalism in Southern Africa.

Reading materials:

- Ian Scoones, Marc Edelman, Saturnino M. Borrás Jr., Ruth Hall, Wendy Wolford & Ben White. 2018. Emancipatory rural politics: confronting authoritarian populism, *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, 45:1, 1-20, DOI: 10.1080/03066150.2017.1339693
- Monjane, B. & Bruna, N. 2019. “Confronting Agrarian Authoritarianism: Dynamics of Resistance to PROSAVANA in Mozambique.” *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, October, 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2019.1671357>.

Complementary reading:

- Borrás, S. M. (2019). Agrarian social movements: The absurdly difficult but not impossible agenda of defeating right-wing populism and exploring a socialist future. *Journal of Agrarian Change*. doi:10.1111/joac.12311

Week 8: Urban authoritarianism and urban boosterism: Discussions on Southern Africa and Turkey

Aysegül Can & Khanyile Joseph Mlotshwa

The lecture will start with a discussion on the land occupations and authoritarian evictions that continue in South Africa’s postapartheid moment, which is linked to the long colonial and racialised history of the urban space. Then it will examine and present how urban development policies and urban megaprojects in Istanbul, Turkey are used in less than democratic settings to create the image of a prestigious state as part of their agenda to sugar-coat more authoritarian political dispositions while selectively engaging with free market capitalism.

Reading materials:

- Koch, N. & Valiyev, A. 2016. Urban boosterism in closed contexts: spectacular urbanization and second-tier mega-events in three Caspian capitals. *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 56:5, 575-598, DOI: 10.1080/15387216.2016.1146621
- Levenson, Z. 2019. “Such elements do not belong in an ordered society”: Managing rural–urban resettlement in democratic South Africa.” *Journal of Agrarian Change*, (19): 427 – 446.

Complementary reading:

- Mpfu, B. 2017. The urban land question, land reform and the spectre of extrajudicial land occupations in South Africa.” *Africa Insight*, 46(4): 96 – 111.

Week 9: Gender inequalities and right-wing politics in Latin America: between neoconservatism and authoritarianism.

Ailynn Torres

This lecture will examine the arc of the contemporary right(s) in Latin American and its linkages with the religious neoconservative politics, strategies and organization. The goal is to show the connection between the political right—especially authoritarian neoliberals—and religious neoconservatives in producing an anti-feminist and general de-democratization agenda. At the same time, the session will allow us to identify the discursive and political cleavages and devices through which the neoconservative religious neoliberal pact is generated.

Reading materials:

- Ramirez, G. A. (2020), “Gender Ideology”, Catholic Neointegrismo, and Evangelical Fundamentalism: The AntiDemocratic Vocation”. In Corrêa, S. (ed). Anti-gender politics in Latin America, Rio de Janeiro : Associação Brasileira Interdisciplinas de Aids - ABIA, <https://sxpolitics.org/GPAL/uploads/E-book-Resumos-completo.pdf>
- Torres, A. 2021. Latin American Neoconservatism and Antifeminism: Freedom, Family, and Life. Webpage of the International Research Group on Authoritarianism and Counter-Strategies (Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung). <https://www.irgac.org/2021/876/>

Week 10: Crisis of democracy and authoritarian neoliberalism in Brazil: Theoretical views on the current political context.

Hugo Fanton

The aim of the lecture is to introduce theoretical and political issues of the democratic transition in Brazil in the New Republic and the notion of crisis of democracy and authoritarian rise in the current period, based, above all, on class conflicts. Themes such as the relation between neoliberalism, democracy and political disputes in Brazil in the 2000s will be discussed, with analyses that situate the debate beyond institutions and the state, from the perspective of political sociology. Finally, there will be a discussion of the current moment of crisis, its class basis, and the different ways of analysing and defining the rise of the far right leader Jair Bolsonaro (fascism, populism, bonapartism, autocracy, etc.).

Reading materials:

- Singer, André (2019). The Failure of Dilma Rousseff’s Developmentalist Experiment: A Class Analysis. *Latin American Perspectives*, 47 (1). doi:10.1177/0094582X19877187
- Schwarz, Roberto (2020). Neo-Backwardness In Bolsonaro's Brazil. *New Left Review*, 123 May–June 2020. <https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii123/articles/roberto-schwarz-neo-backwardness-in-bolsonaro-s-brazil>

Week 11: Authoritarian neoliberalism from below. Subjectivity and platform capitalism in Argentina and Brazil

Fabio Franco & Gustavo Robles

The consolidation of digital platform economies can be considered as the latest stage of the long process of neoliberal precarisation of labour, especially intensified in pandemic times. Combining the ideology of flexibility, autonomy, and self-regulation with the arbitrariness of algorithmic management, these platforms have resulted in broad socio-economic transformations across the world, which accentuates the connections between neoliberalism and authoritarian practices, especially over young people, and immigrants. This lecture intends to tackle the impact on the subjectivities of new forms of exploitation and labour management in digital capitalism.

Reading materials:

- Franco, F. L. F. N. (2021). Neoliberal Platform Capitalism and Subjectivity. A Study of the Hybridization between Labor Platformization and Viração in Brazil. *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 120(4), 795–808. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-9443350>
- Franco, F. L. F. N. & Robles, G. (2022). Authoritarian neoliberalism from below. Subjectivity and platform capitalism in Argentina and Brazil. In Boerries, N. (Comp.)

Authoritarian Capitalism. Southern Perspective on the Reactionary Remaking of the World. Transcript (forthcoming).

Week 12: Digital Platforms, Informational Capitalism, and Authoritarianism in India

Fathima Nizaruddin

The lecture will explore the manner in which specific digital platforms and the general mode of functioning of informational capitalism contribute to the strengthening of authoritarian regimes by using the case of India. The use of digital platforms by the Hindu right wing formations that contribute to the electoral success of the majoritarian Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to which the current Prime Minister Modi belongs will be examined to understand how the policies of big technology companies aid such formations. This examination will rely on empirical examples from my ongoing research on right-wing WhatsApp groups in India.

Reading materials:

- Cohen, J. E. 2019. Introduction, Between truth and power: The legal constructions of informational capitalism. Oxford University Press.
<https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/oso/9780190246693.001.0001/oso-9780190246693-chapter-1>
- Nizaruddin, F. 2021. Role of Public WhatsApp Groups Within the Hindutva Ecosystem of Hate and Narratives of “CoronaJihad”. International Journal of Communication, 15(0), 18. <https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/16255>

Week 13: Big data-driven totalitarianism: A preliminary enquiry into implications of universal database of human population for constitutionalism

Gopal Krishna

The making of a universal data repository is paving the way for extinction of the doctrine of separation of powers, since it enables emergence of a totalitarian instrumental architecture. The totalitarian narratives have put the gains of freedom struggles and assumptions of the Westphalian State, social contract, constitutionalism, and separation of powers in democracies under tremendous stress. This lecture will make a case for comprehensive civil disobedience movement as a counter strategy against unjust laws masquerading as computing codes to reclaim the doctrine of separation of powers and constitutionalism.

Reading materials:

- Zuboff, S. 2019. “Conclusion”. In The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power, PublicAffairs
- Krishna, G. 2020. Revisiting the concepts of Panopticon and Synopticon: An inquiry into naturalisation of totalitarian surveillance in the name of covid19 pandemic, Mainstream, Vol. LVIII <https://mainstreamweekly.net/article9625.html>

Week 14: Conclusion and forum (tbd)