

Tyrants, Dictators and Strongmen (Spring 2024)

Exploring Authoritarian Rule in Asia and the Struggle for Democracy

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Class Date/Period: TBD

Classroom(s): TBD

Course Description/Synopsis:

Following the Cold War, a 'wave' of democracy spread across the globe. As many as 50 countries started the long transition from authoritarianism to liberal democracy. While this was clearly evident in Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and many former Soviet satellite states, democracy has had a much more difficult journey in Asia. The continent provides numerous examples of 'hybrid' or 'electoral autocracies', where a thin veneer of quasi-democratic institutions and multi-party elections masked autocratic manipulation, corruption and severe abuses of power. For example, the emergence of Thaksin Shinawatra in Thailand sparked hopes of democratic expansion, but military-backed *coups d'etat* have quashed hopes for change. Hong Kong was promised universal suffrage by the Chinese as a result of the handover with the British, but limited progress has been made, resulting in social unrest, anxiety and calls for independence. Frustration with crime, corruption, an elite-driven status quo, and a growing insurgency, the Philippines turned to the populist former mayor of Davao City Rodrigo Duterte after he promised swift solutions to persistent national challenges. Questions now linger about his successor, the son of former dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

This interdisciplinary course is divided into three distinct parts. Part one will provide an analytical framework for discussion by establishing core concepts, regime typologies, and baseline indicators for assessing democratization. Part two explores the role of values, norms, and traditions that have ostensibly made Asia resistant to liberal democracy. Finally, part three explores essential case studies: China/Hong Kong, Thailand, and the Philippines each of whom struggle with persistent challenges, from historical traumas, legitimacy crises, and populist leadership. This class is aimed at third and fourth-year undergraduate students. Previous studies in political science, international relations, or social anthropology would be helpful, but are not required.

Course Objectives:

This undergraduate course will explore democratization in Asia after the Cold War, through multiple lenses and prescient case studies. By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- **Understanding and Recognition of Regime Types:** Identifying regime typologies and subtypes in East and Southeast Asia; categorization of states according to typology; contrasting authoritarian and democratic regime types.
- **Evaluating Democratic Progress:** This course will attempt to provide answers to key questions: What factors contributed to democratization or democratic recession in Asia? How can we measure or evaluate democratization? What are the roadblocks or obstacles to further democratization in each country's context?
- **Analyze the Country Context** - Students will learn to distinguish histories and events that explain political behavior in each country context, from diplomatic relations, ideological struggles, past or current conflicts, and national identities.

At the end of this course, students should gain a basic understanding of the challenges facing democratic governance, structures and institutions and gain insight to potential solutions that could strengthen democratic traditions in Asia. Students will be able to use a variety of analytical tools,

concepts and methodologies, incorporating evidence from relevant Asian case studies.

Classroom, Literature and Materials:

This course combines formal lectures by the instructor with assigned group work and student-led in-class activities. Before each class session, students are expected to have read the assigned reading before coming to class, where participation is both encouraged and expected. Reading newspapers, periodicals and other relevant material is encouraged. Student knowledge and analysis of the assigned material will be tested in class through substantive conversation, participation, debate, a mid-term examination, and a final exam. Students will also be required to participate actively and equally to small group activities and presentations.

Each session will last 90 minutes, with classes held twice per week. Some classroom time will be allotted to small groups to discuss and prepare for assigned presentations.

Regular attendance *is* a requirement for this course, and is *strongly* encouraged. However, life will somehow find a way to interfere with regular classroom activities, from family visits, illnesses, pre-arranged travel, and more. Therefore, to avoid an unexcused absence, please notify me no later than 2 hours before class. Medical emergencies can be resolved later. Please use common sense. If you are ill, please do NOT come to class. If you must be absent, please notify me BEFORE class so I can help you catch up on missed discussions or lecture points that you will have missed.

Course Readings: Readings for this course have been uploaded to [Blackboard](#). No textbook is required.

Course Schedule:

Introduction	
1 -	Introductions / Syllabus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Please review the course syllabus, become familiar with Blackboard, access all required course readings and familiarize yourself with the KGU Library.
2 -	Democratic Decay: An Example From Europe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Beauchamp, Z. (2018) It Happened There. How Democracy Died in Hungary. Vox. Web. https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/9/13/17823488/hungary-democracy-authoritarianism-trump ❖ Guasti, P., & Bustikova, L. (2022). Pandemic power grab. <i>East European Politics</i>, 38(4). 529-550.
Regime Typologies	
3 -	Typologies - Definitions of Democracy and So-Called 'Hybrid' Regimes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Wigell, M. (2008). Mapping 'Hybrid Regimes': Regime Types and Concepts in Comparative Politics. <i>Democratization</i>, 15(2). pp. 230-250
4 -	Typologies - Authoritarian Rule <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Cogan, M. S., (2022). Dictatorships and Authoritarian Regimes, Insurrections Against. <i>Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace, and Conflict</i>, 3rd edition. Vol. 2, pp. 418-428. ❖ Levitsky, S, and Way, L. (2006). Linkage versus Leverage. Rethinking

	<p>the International Dimension of Regime Change. <i>Comparative Politics</i>, 38(4), pp. 379–400.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Levitsky S., Way, L. (2002)., The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism. <i>Journal of Democracy</i>, 13(2), pp. 51-65.
5 -	<p>Totalitarian Regimes: North Korea</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Byman, D., & Lind, J. (2010). Pyongyang's Survival Strategy: Tools of Authoritarian Control in North Korea. <i>International Security</i>, 35(1), pp. 44-74.
6 -	<p>Cambodia's Genocidal Regime: The Khmer Rouge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ O'kane, R. (1993) Cambodia in the zero years: Rudimentary totalitarianism, <i>Third World Quarterly</i>, 14(4), pp. 735-748. ❖ Williams, T. & Neilsen, R. (2016). "They will rot the society, rot the party, and rot the army": Toxification as an ideology and motivation for perpetrating violence in the Khmer Rouge genocide? <i>Terrorism and Political Violence</i>, pp. 1-22.
7 -	<p>Class Discussion on Regime Typologies (#1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ With the course readings as a guide, we will discuss the merits and problems associated with binary and two-dimensional regime typologies. ❖ NOTE: Participation in these exercises is critical and will count as part of your Class Participation grade (see Grading Rubric for details).
Singapore and the Asian Values Debate	
8 -	<p>Identity, Myth and Values</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Hood, S. (1998). The Myth of Asian-Style Democracy. <i>Asian Survey</i>, 38(9), pp. 853-866. ❖ Barr, M. D. (2000). Lee Kuan Yew and the 'Asian Values' debate. <i>Asian Studies Review</i>, 24(3), pp. 309-334.
9 -	<p>The Question of Democratization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Emmerson, D. K. (1995). Singapore and the "Asian values" debate. <i>Journal of Democracy</i>, 6(4), 95-105. ❖ Subramaniam, S. (2000). The Asian Values Debate: Implications for the Spread of Liberal Democracy. <i>Asian Affairs</i>, 27(1), pp. 19-35.
10 -	<p>Class Discussion on Asian Values (#2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Based on your understanding of Asian Values, and incorporating your understanding of how authoritarian regimes operate, we will discuss the merits of Asian Values.
11 -	<p>Designated Group Presentation Preparation Period</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ This period has been set aside for preparations for your Group Presentations scheduled for the end of the semester. Attendance is required, unless you have a valid medical/family reason.
China and Hong Kong - National Trauma and Protracted Democracy	

12 -	<p>China's Century of Humiliation and National Trauma</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Galtung, J. (1994) Are there therapies for bad cosmologies? <i>Medicine and War</i>, 10(3). pp. 170-182. ❖ Wang, Z. (2012). Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations. Columbia University Press. Memory, Nationalism, and China's Rise. p. 221- 242
13 -	<p>Hong Kong and Democratization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Boniface, D., and Ilan A. (2010). Is Hong Kong Democratizing? <i>Asian Survey</i>. 50(4). pp. 786–807. ❖ Fong, B.C. (2017). One country, two nationalisms: Center-periphery relations between Mainland China and Hong Kong, 1997–2016. <i>Modern China</i>, 43(5). pp. 523-556.
14 -	<p>From the Umbrella Movement to the National Security Law</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Chan, J. (2014) Hong Kong's Umbrella Movement. <i>The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs</i>, 103(6). pp. 571-580. ❖ Ortman, S. (2015). The Umbrella Movement and Hong Kong's Protracted Democratization Process. <i>Asian Affairs</i>, 46(1). pp. 32-50.
15 -	<p>Mid-Term Examination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Prepare for the mid-term examination that will cover all course readings, lecture, and class discussions to date. The exam contains two (2) essay questions.
Conflict Analysis and Mapping	
16 -	<p>Conflict Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ After the lecture, please review the lecture slides, which will be uploaded to Blackboard. In particular, review the "Conflict Tree" tool. The Conflict Analysis will serve as background knowledge for our discussion on the China/Hong Kong conflict.
17 -	<p>Conflict Mapping Exercise (#3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Using the Hong Kong/China conflict as an example, this classroom exercise will map and analyze on-going tensions in Hong Kong after the implementation of the June 2020 national security law.
Thailand - Legitimacy Crises	
18 -	<p>Imagery and the Thai Monarchy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Stengs, I. (1999). A Kingly Cult: Thailand's Guiding Lights in a Dark Era. <i>Etnofoor</i>, 12(2), pp. 41–75. ❖ Cogan, M. S. (2021) Five years after Bhumibol's passing, images reveal missed opportunities. <i>Southeast Asia Globe</i>. Web. ❖ Heijmans, P. (2021). As Thailand's troubles grow, the king moves to bolster his image, <i>The Japan Times</i>. Web.
19 -	<p>Thailand: Torn Between Democracy and Military Rule</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Heinze, R.I. (1974). Ten Days in October -- Students vs. the Military: An Account of the Student Uprising in Thailand. <i>Asian Survey</i>. 14(6). pp.

	<p>491–508.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Darling, F. (1974). Student Protest and Political Change in Thailand. <i>Pacific Affairs</i>, 47(1), pp. 5–19. ❖ Sripokangkul, S. and Cogan, M. S. (2019), Political Demonology, Dehumanization, and Contemporary Thai Politics. <i>Asia-Pacific Social Science Review</i>, 19(2). pp. 115-130.
20 -	<p>Political Violence and State Control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Cogan, M.S., (2024). Can Thailand’s Military Evolve? Moving Beyond Domestic Interference, Institutional Corruption, and Personal Gain, <i>Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs</i>, 7(1), 97-118. ❖ Paribatra, S. (1993). State and Society in Thailand: How Fragile the Democracy? <i>Asian Survey</i>, 33(9), pp. 879–893.
21 -	<p>Thailand: The Network Monarchy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ McCargo, D. (2005), Network Monarchy and Legitimacy Crises in Thailand. <i>Pacific Review</i>, 18(4), pp. 499-519.
22 -	<p>Legitimacy in Decline and Conservative Resistance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Mériéau, E. (2016). Thailand’s deep state, royal power and the constitutional court (1997–2015). <i>Journal of Contemporary Asia</i>, 46(3), pp. 445-466. ❖ Chachavalpongpun, P. (2015). Neo-royalism and the Future of the Thai Monarchy: From Bhumibol to Vajiralongkorn. <i>Asian Survey</i>, 55(6), pp. 1193-1216.
23 -	<p>Class Discussion (#4) - Thailand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Based on your understanding of the Thailand case study and the concept of legitimacy, we will discuss the implications for democracy in the Kingdom. Participation in this exercise is critical and will be graded as a part of Class Participation (see Grading Rubric for details).
Philippines - A Legacy of Populism	
24 -	<p>The Characteristics of Modern Populism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Canovan, M. (1999), Trust the People! Populism and the Two Faces of Democracy. <i>Political Studies</i>, 47. pp. 2–16.
25 -	<p>The Marcos Legacy in the Philippines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Zich, A. (1986) The Marcos Era, <i>The Wilson Quarterly</i>, 10(3). pp. 116-129. ❖ Overholt, W. (1986) “The Rise and Fall of Ferdinand Marcos,” <i>Asian Survey</i>, pp. 1137-1163. ❖ Durdin, T. (1975) The Philippines: Martial Law, Marcos-Style. <i>Asian Affairs</i>, 3(2). pp. 67–82.
26 -	<p>Populist Governments: From Rodrigo Duterte to “Bong Bong” Marcos</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Curato, N. (2017). Flirting with authoritarian fantasies? Rodrigo Duterte and the new terms of Philippine populism. <i>Journal of Contemporary Asia</i>, 47(1), pp. 142-153.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Reyes, D. A. (2016). The spectacle of violence in Duterte's "war on drugs". <i>Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs</i>, 35(3), 111-137. ❖ Smith, T. (2022) Philippines election: how the Marcos clan might be heading back to power. <i>The Conversation</i>.
Group Presentations	
27 - 28 - 29 -	Group Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ These three (3) class periods are reserved for Group Presentations. See the Course Rubric below for further instruction.
30 -	Final Exam Review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ This classroom period is reserved for preparation for the final exam.

Class Etiquette:

- Come to class prepared to learn and engage.
- Falling asleep or deliberately tuning out class discussions is disrespectful. If you need a drink of water, coffee, or food to help you maintain your focus, please do so by all means.
- Cellular phones or other mobile devices must be put away--turned off or put on silent.

Learning Assessment/Course Rubric:

Class Participation	20%
Group Presentations:	30%
Mid-Term Exam:	25%
Final Exam:	25%

Class Participation (20%): There will be four (4) class discussions of different types, each with different objectives. For some of the discussions, you will be divided into small groups, for others it will be a class discussion involving individual contributions. You will be assessed on the following criteria: 1) Attendance; 2) Contribution to Group Discussions/Research; 3) Individual Contributions; 4) Analysis and Critical Thinking.

The Rubric for Class Participation is as follows:

Attendance	1 point for attendance (no deduction for excused absences, which voids grading) 0 points for an unexcused absence		
Contribution to Group Discussions/Research	<u>0 points:</u> Minimal participation in group discussion or research contribution.	<u>1 point:</u> Some participation in group discussions (required some direction, lack of facilitation).	<u>2 points:</u> Active participation in group discussions, self-directed, led or enhanced discussions.
Individual Contributions	<u>0 points:</u> Minimal or no participation in class discussion or lack	<u>1 point:</u> Some participation in class discussions (required	<u>2 points:</u> Active participation in class discussions (self-

	of individual research contribution.	prompts, research contribution was minimal)	directed, relevant research contribution)
Analysis and Critical Thinking	<u>0 points:</u> Critical thinking or analytical or research contribution is absent.	<u>1 point:</u> Some presentation or reference to course material or research contribution, but critical thinking largely absent.	<u>2 points:</u> Strong critical thinking and analysis of course materials (e.g. compare/contrast, questioning, relevant application of critical concepts & theories)

Group Presentations (30%): You will be divided into small groups. Each group will give a 35-minute presentation on a country of their choice in broader Asia. Your task is to give the class a detailed examination of the country you selected. Your method of analysis can be creative. This is not a descriptive exercise. You are not assessed on a chronological explanation of key events; rather, your analysis of democratization. *Why* is this topic worthy of study? *What* makes it significant and relevant? Audio-visual/multimedia presentations are strongly encouraged. Sample topics *could* include: consolidation of political power in Japan, the role of the Thai “network” monarchy, the struggle for democracy in Hong Kong, populism/rule of law in the Philippines, nationalism in South Korea, or democracy and Islam in Indonesia. All topics must be approved in advance. Each group must provide an outline of their presentation by Session 18 for approval.

Mid-Term Examination (25%): The mid-term examination will feature two (2) essay questions over required readings, class lectures, and discussions covered during the first half of the semester. You will be graded not only on your recollection of key arguments or concepts, but your ability to *critically* think about the course material.

Final Exam (25%): The final exam will feature two (2) essay questions covering key messages in assigned readings or as presented during lectures. Again, you will be graded not only on your recollection of key arguments or concepts, but your ability to *critically* think about the course material. The date for the final exam will be announced later in the semester.

Classroom Policy Information:

- **Plagiarism** (*the practice of taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as one's own*) of any kind will not be tolerated.
- **Disability Statement:** *This course is open to all students who meet the academic requirements for participation. Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible (within the first week of class). It is the responsibility of the student to contact the instructor then meet to determine reasonable accommodation based on the official documentation/accommodation list.*
- **Syllabus:** I reserve the right to modify the course syllabus at any time, especially if I feel it enhances the learning experience or is necessary due to unforeseen circumstances. I will provide advanced warning of any changes.
- **Free Speech/Safe Space:** This course will likely cover difficult topics which will result in a wide range of personal opinions and emotions. It is important to come to class with an open mind and a respect for diversity of opinion. Discrimination, marginalization or other abhorrent behavior based on gender, sex, race, age, national origin, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic

status, or sexual orientation will not be tolerated. Violators will be asked to leave the classroom. In this classroom, we respect each other.

Supplemental Reading:

Regime Types:

- ❖ Ágh, A. (2016). The decline of democracy in East-Central Europe: Hungary as the worst-case scenario. *Problems of Post-Communism*.
- ❖ Diamond, L. (2002). Thinking about Hybrid Regimes. *Journal of Democracy*.
- ❖ Diamond, L. (2008). The democratic rollback: the resurgence of the predatory state. *Foreign Affairs*.
- ❖ Mutalib, H. (2000). Illiberal democracy and the future of opposition in Singapore. *Third World Quarterly*.
- ❖ Noland, M. (1997). Why North Korea Will Muddle Through. *Foreign Affairs*. 76(4). pp. 105–118.
- ❖ Zakaria, F. (1997). The Rise of Illiberal Democracy," *Foreign Affairs*. Web.

Asian Values:

- ❖ Kim, S. Y. (2010). Do Asian values exist? Empirical tests of the four dimensions of Asian values. *Journal of East Asian Studies*, 10(2), 315-344.
- ❖ Thompson, M. (2015). Dead idea (still) walking. In *Routledge Handbook of Southeast Asian Democratization*. ed. Case, W. Routledge.

Hong Kong-China:

- ❖ Ma, N. (2005). Civil society in self-defense: The struggle against national security legislation in Hong Kong. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 14(44), 465-482.
- ❖ Ping, Y.C. and Kwong, K. (2014). Hong Kong Identity on the Rise. *Asian Survey*, 54(6). pp. 1088–1112.
- ❖ Wong, S. H. W., & Wan, K. M. (2018). The housing boom and the rise of localism in Hong Kong: Evidence from the legislative council election in 2016. *China Perspectives*. pp. 31-40. (Optional)
- ❖ Zhao, S. (1998). A state-led nationalism: The patriotic education campaign in post-Tiananmen China *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 31(3) pp. 287-302.

Thailand:

- ❖ Chambers, P. (2010), Thailand on the Brink: Resurgent Military, Eroded Democracy. *Asian Survey*, 50(5). pp. 835–858.
- ❖ Chambers, P., & Waitoolkiat, N. (2016). The resilience of monarchised military in Thailand. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 46(3), 425-444.
- ❖ Dressel, B. (2010). When notions of legitimacy conflict: The case of Thailand. *Politics & Policy*, 38(3), 445-469.
- ❖ Kurlantzick, J. (2016). The Mixed Legacy of King Bhumibol Adulyadej. *Council on Foreign Relations*. <https://www.cfr.org/expert-brief/mixed-legacy-king-bhumibol-adulyadej>
- ❖ Mallet, M. (1978) Causes and Consequences of the October 1976 Coup. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 8(1), pp. 80-103.
- ❖ McCargo, D. (2021). Disruptors' dilemma? Thailand's 2020 Gen Z protests. *Critical Asian Studies*, 53(2), pp. 175-191. (Optional)

Philippines/Populism:

- ❖ McCoy, A. W. (2017). Philippine populism: Local violence and global context in the rise of a Filipino strongman. *Surveillance & Society*, 15(3/4), 514-522.
- ❖ Mudde, C. (2004) "The populist zeitgeist." *Government and Opposition* 39(4), pp. 541-563.
- ❖ Webb, A., & Curato, N. (2019). Populism in the Philippines. *Populism around the world: A comparative perspective*, 49-65.