Backsliding into Authoritarianism
(MA course, Spring 2018)

Instructor
Radoslaw Markowski
University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Warsaw
rmarkowski@swps.edu.pl
& Department of Political Science, CEU
vismarkowski@ceu.hu

Classes
Friday 13:30 – 15:10

Office Hours
Thursday 19:00 – 20:00
Friday 11:00 – 12:00

Credits
2 credits

Course Description

Introduction
The period of universal acceptance of democracy as the most preferred political regime type is certainly over. Several dozen countries in the world today are considered by major ranking institutions as not free. A new – a decade or so - phenomenon seems rightly to attract our attention. Increasing number of 'partly free' countries indicates that we witness decline in the quality of democracy in many countries or even its outright breakdowns. The course offers an in-depth look at these new phenomena and aims at evaluating the scope and intensity of these developments. It combines theoretical approaches with speculative-analytical works and purely empirical analyses. It starts with a brief overview of what constitutes democracies, its liberal type in particular, next we move to discuss its problems and challenges and then focus on non-democratic and authoritarian developments, its causes, manifestations and consequences. Detailed attention on populism, its multiple manifestations as well as the features of new authoritarianism is justified because of a clear (ab-)use of the former concept. We conclude with a very up-to-date debates about the quality of democracy and democratic citizens.

Learning outcomes
As a result of the course, students are expected to understand and be able to interpret on their own the complex developments of contemporary regime changes around the world. The reading assignments should allow students to generate rational, methodologically sound arguments, enabling them to openly discuss, compare and defend their ultimate opinions and knowledge about the phenomena covered. The class activity, in particular students’ presentations of the selected readings should train them in effective appearances in public. Finally, the ultimate choice
of the topic and the final essay itself are expected to enhance students' ability to correctly choose literature, deliberate methodological issues and also improve their ability to use abstract concepts in socio-political reality.

**Course Requirements and Assessment**

(1) Active class participation, which means: intellectual presence at the class meetings - comments, questions – 10% of the grade
(2) Class presentation of a selected topic(s), selected by students and sent to the instructor and course participants no later than 24 hours before class presentation – 30%
(3) Position papers, each student is expected to prepare two position papers, which critically review selected reading from the list (topics different than the one chosen for in-class presentation); each should be no longer than 3 pages – 20%
(4) Final paper; topic of the final paper to be agreed with the instructor at least three weeks prior to its final submission – 40%

**Topics**

**Topic 01: Democracies  (12 Jan 2018)**

Schmitter, Philippe C./Karl, Terry Lynn (1991): What democracy is...and is not. *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 2, issue 3, pp. 75-88

**Topic 02: Liberal democracies: its "travelling capacity" problems and challenges (19 Jan 2018)**


**Topic 03: The ontological status of Democratic Consolidation (26 Jan 2018)**

Topic 04: Economic foundations of Democracies (2 Feb 2018)


Topic 05: Varieties of Non-Democratic Regimes. Orthodoxy and Innovations (9 Feb 2018)


Topic 06: In between – democratic exit: fate or choice? (16 Feb 2018)


Topic 07: Durable Authoritarianisms? (23 Feb 2018)


Topic 08: Populism – conceptual overstretch (2 Mar 2018)

Topic 09: The role of religion (9 Mar 2018)

Fish, M.S. 2002. 'Islam and Authoritarianism', World Politics, 55: 4-37

Topic 10: New Authoritarianism or Authoritarian Clientelism? (16 Mar 2018)

Dresden, Jennifer & Marc Morje Howard. 2016. 'Authoritarian backsliding and the concentration of political power', Democratization, 23 (7): 1122-1143


Foa, Roberto & Yascha Mounk. 2016. 'The democratic disconnect', Journal of Democracy, 27(3): 5-14


Voeten, Erik. 2017. 'Are people really turning away from democracy?' Journal of Democracy, web exchange
**Additional (Recommended) readings:**


