PSCI 360
Right-Wing Populism

Spring 2022

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597-2327
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 2.00-3.00, Fridays 9.30-11.00, and by appointment

Course Description

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the political scientist Francis Fukuyama famously declared “the end of history”. From now on only liberal democracy, free market capitalism, and global integration had a future. Everything else – including political ideology, nationalism, conservative religion, and sovereignty – was consigned to the ash heap. Thirty years later the future looks seriously derailed. A right-wing populism marked by Brexit, Trump, Le Pen, and a host of ‘far-right’ political movements in the very heartland of democratic globalizing capitalism has shaken liberal certainties.

This course is an investigation into contemporary right-wing populism in Europe and North America in its social, economic, and political context. We will discuss theories of right-wing populism’s appeal from both left and right perspectives. We will also investigate national cases of right-wing populism including France’s National Rally and Eric Zemmour, Italy’s Lega, Sweden’s Sweden Democrats, Hungary’s Fidesz, Poland’s Law and Justice Party, and America’s Trumpism and QAnon. We will also reflect on three important electoral tests of right-wing populism occurring this semester: Hungary’s parliamentary elections (April 3); France’s presidential elections (April 10 & 24); and Slovenia’s parliamentary elections (April 24).

Readings

All the required readings in this course are contained in four books and a course reader divided into several parts. The books are:


All but Eatwell & Goodwin are available for purchase at The Williams Bookstore on Spring Street; all four are available in new and used format from your favorite online retailer. You may pick up the first course reader now at Whitmans Dining Hall through Feb. 8. Beginning Feb. 10 the packets will be available in the packet room in the Class of ’37 House (51 Park St.). Subsequent reading packets will be available later in the semester.
We are reading approximately 75 pages per class this semester. While this amount is a somewhat heavy reading load, it is certainly nothing beyond your capabilities. All students are expected to faithfully keep up with the readings throughout the entire semester. This course is a seminar and depends upon your preparation for its success. Please come to each class prepared to listen, learn, and discuss.

Course requirements

- **Two (2) short reflection papers** – short critical engagements with a discrete collection of course readings, 1200-1600 words (double-spaced, 11-pt. font minimum).
  1. a critical engagement with the ‘left explains’ literature from the syllabus, **due Tuesday, March 1, 5pm.**
  2. a critical engagement with the ‘right explains’ literature from the syllabus, **due Tuesday, March 15 5pm.**

I will hand out prompts for the short reflection papers one week before they are due.

- **One (1) research paper proposal** – As this class is a research course for the Political Science Department, one of its objectives is to develop your skills for independent research. This will culminate in a formal research paper proposal that you will write in parts over the second half of the semester on a topic of your choice related to contemporary right-wing populism. Detailed expectations for each aspect of the process will be forthcoming.
  1. research question, 50-100 words, due April 8, 5pm.
  2. annotated bibliography, min. 10 academic sources, min. 20 total sources, due April 22, 5pm.
  3. preliminary proposal, 300-500 words, due April 29, 5pm.
  4. first draft, min. 3000 words, due May 9, 5pm.
  5. peer edits of first draft, due May 13, 5pm.
  6. final draft, min. 4500 words, due May 21, 5pm.

Please note: Due dates for papers and the components of the research paper proposal are firm. Meeting the due dates are particularly important for your progress toward a completed proposal. Except in truly extraordinary circumstances, please do not ask for extensions.

Early papers are always welcome. Papers received on the due date but after the time deadline are beggars seeking undeserved mercy and will be dealt with at my discretion.

Papers received after midnight on the due date are irredeemably late and will be penalized one partial letter grade (e.g. A to A-, B+ to B) per 24 hours after the original deadline. If you can only write a poor paper by the deadline, consider taking the grade penalty and the extra time to write an excellent one.

- **Every class discussion questions** – Prior to each class, you will submit 1-2 discussion questions relevant to the day’s readings. These questions should be thoughtful engagements with the main ideas from the text(s) and thus go beyond a simple one-sentence query. Possible questions might explore unclear passages in the readings, point out notable gaps in an author’s discussion, or offer critiques of an author’s argument. The best questions will be framed by a brief (< 300 words) discussion. I will use these questions to guide class discussion each day, including calling on you in class based on your remarks. Use our course Glow page to submit them. Questions are due by 9am the day of class. Glow will lock automatically at that time and will not accept any submissions after
the deadline. If you miss a day’s questions, don’t bother writing them later. Take a ‘pass’ and resolve
to do better in the future.

- Class participation – Regular attendance and constructive participation is necessary for this course
to be successful and is therefore expected. Unexcused absences and a failure to engage the material
in class will be noted. More than one unexcused absence will result in a grade penalty.

Speech policy

Right-wing populism is a topic that stirs many emotions. While I want to cultivate a respectful and
welcoming classroom environment, I also want to cultivate an open and dynamic one. With the aim of
advancing and deepening everyone’s understanding of the issues addressed in this course, I urge
students to speak their minds, explore ideas and arguments, play devil’s advocate, and engage in robust
discussion. I expect students to do business in the proper currency of intellectual discourse—a currency
consisting of reason, evidence, and argument—but no ideas or positions are out of bounds. I will engage
in no thought- or language-policing beyond the minimum required for respectful dialog. If you have any
concerns about classroom climate, please come to me to share them.

Honor Code

While you may consult with friends, fellow classmates, professors, and printed sources on the ideas
discussed in this class, all written work must ultimately be yours and yours alone. In particular, be
scrupulous in avoiding plagiarism. Be sure to use quote marks when quoting directly and cite
appropriately. The Honor Code applies in this course!

Grades

Your overall grade in this course will be determined according to the following formula:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short reflection papers</td>
<td>15% ea.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research paper steps (combined)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final research paper proposal</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion questions</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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I am always happy to talk over course topics, discuss a class assignment, or chat about current events –
especially over coffee. Drop by during office hours or set up an appointment
Course Calendar

INTRODUCTION

Wednesday
Feb. 2

What is right-wing populism (RWP)?

- no readings

Tuesday
Feb. 8

An introduction to explaining RWP

Creeping fascism

- “Remarks by President Biden to mark one year since the January 6th deadly assault on the U.S. Capitol,” *The White House*, 6 January 2022.

Liberal oligarchy

- Darryl Cooper, “Author of the mega-viral thread on MAGA voters, Darryl Cooper, explains his thinking.” *Glenn Greenwald*, 12 July 2021.

THE LEFT EXPLAINS RIGHT-WING POPULISM

Thursday
Feb. 10

RWP as psychological defect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>RWP as cultural backlash</td>
<td>Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart, <em>Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism</em> (2019), chs. 4-6.</td>
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**THE RIGHT EXPLAINS RIGHT-WING POPULISM**

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<td>Thursday</td>
<td>RWP as class struggle</td>
<td>Christopher Lasch, <em>The True and Only Heaven</em> (1991), ch. 11.</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
<td>RWP as a democracy movement</td>
<td>Pierre Manent, “Populist demagogy and the fanaticism of the center,” <em>American Affairs</em> 1 (2) (Summer 2017), 9-18.</td>
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Tuesday  
March 8  

RWP as dealignment


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RIGHT-WING POPULISM IN WESTERN EUROPE

Thursday  
March 10  

France

- “I am a candidate for the presidential election,” *YouTube*, uploaded by Éric Zemmour, 30 November 2021. [see Glow]

Tuesday  
March 15  

Italy


Thursday March 17
No class – enjoy an early spring break!

Spring break

Tuesday April 5
Sweden
• Chapter TBA from Henrik Enroth and Magnus Hagevi, eds., Cartelisation, Convergence or Increasing Similarities?: Lessons from Parties in Parliament (2018).

Thursday April 7
Does the cordon sanitaire work?
• Jakob Schwörer and Belén Fernández-García, “Demonisation of political discourses? How mainstream parties talk about the populist radical right,” West European Politics 44 (2021), 1401-1424.
• Ian Down and Kyung Joon Han, “Marginalisation or legitimation? Mainstream party positioning on immigration and support for radical right parties,” West European Politics 43 (2020), 1388-1414.
• Roger Eatwell and Matthew Goodwin, National Populism: The Revolt Against Liberal Democracy (2018), Conclusion.

Tuesday April 12
SIDEBAR: Reflections on the 2022 Hungarian and French elections
• TBA
## RIGHT-WING POPULISM IN CENTRAL EUROPE

### Thursday
**April 14**

**Social conservatism**

- “Viktor Orbán's speech at the 14th Kőtcse civil picnic,” 5 September 2015.

### Tuesday
**April 19**

**Illiberal constitutionalism**

- “Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s Speech at the 25th Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp,” 26 July 2014.

### Thursday
**April 21**

**RWP versus the EU I**

- Ivan Krastev and Stephen Holmes, The Light that Failed: Why the West is Losing the Fight for Democracy (2020).

### Tuesday
**April 26**

**RWP versus the EU II**

- Frank Furedi, Populism and the European Culture Wars (2017).
# RIGHT-WING POPULISM IN THE UNITED STATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
• Rogers M. Smith and Desmond King, “White protectionism in America,” *Perspectives on Politics* 19 (2021), 460-478.  
• Eric Kaufmann, “The social construction of racism in the United States,” Manhattan Institute, April 2021.  
• Matt Taibbi, “Master list of official Russia claims that proved to be bogus,” *TK News by Matt Taibbi*, 18 March 2021.  
Tuesday
May 10

QAnon and the Capitol riot

- Siddharth Venkataramakrishnan, “QAnon, a year after Q,” Financial Times, 8 December 2021.

CONCLUSION

Thursday
May 12

The future of populism