This is a research-heavy course that focuses on populist movements and regimes. In the first part of the course, we investigate the major sociological approaches to populism: modernization theory; Marxism and post-Marxism; institutionalism; cultural (performative, ideological) analyses; and the political articulation approach. As we discuss these major approaches, we will also cover the world-historical development of populism, and explore its ebbs and flows in different regions of the earth. The overall goal is understanding what has brought us to the current populist moment.

In the second part of the course, we focus on specific contemporary cases: populism in the United States, Brazil, Southern Europe, Turkey, India, Eastern Europe, and Southeast Asia. For each case, we will ask: What are the sociological dynamics behind the rise of populism (and the decline of the liberal-conservative center)?

Students will write a research paper on one or two historical and/or contemporary case(s). The papers will use one (or more) of the major sociological frameworks. The case studies will help students by providing a guide on how to structure the argument and organize the findings.

**Assignments and final paper**

All submissions will be made electronically (on bcourses).

Each student will choose one (or more) populist movement(s) and analyze them along (some of) the following axes: reasons for emergence; demographic bases of support; main resources; policy implications; the prominence of violence; leader-mass organization balance; reasons for success or failure; and impact on democracy and/or capitalism-socialism. Your readings on and analysis of this movement(s) will mature throughout the semester. Here are the specific steps you will take:

**Step 1. By September 30**, you will decide which movement(s) or regime(s) you are going to cover. On that date, you will submit a page on the movement(s) or regime(s) you have chosen and your rationale. (Note: I will provide a set of cases you can choose from, but you will not be restricted to that list. I will also suggest some readings on each of the cases). Your response has to specify the following: why is your case populist? What makes it more interesting than other cases of populism? (These answers will help you with the methodology/case selection and literature review sections of your final paper for the course).

**Step 2. On October 14**, you will submit a bibliography: a collection of at least 5 books and 5 articles you need to read on this topic. As you move along, you need to compile an additional set of 10-
15 texts (which you might not read in their entirety, but will become familiar with). In other words, by the end of the semester, you will have read at least 15 texts (on top of the ones listed in the syllabus).

**Step 3.** On (or before) **November 11**, you will turn in a preliminary outline, which will address the following:

1a) Your research question; 1b) A discussion of how this question addresses the gaps in the populism literature – 1 page;

2) Case selection and justification (along with methods of study) – 1-2 paragraphs;

3) Main argument(s) and the **highlights of your analysis** – 1-2 pages.

**Step 4.** On **November 11**, you will submit preliminary tables summarizing your analysis of topics such as the movements’/regimes’ economic policy (and/or rhetoric), race and immigration policy (and/or rhetoric), and at least four other issues (of your own choosing). A total of (at least) 6 issues need to be addressed by the table. I will provide more guidelines on how to do this. **Notice that Steps 3 and 4 are complementary.** You need to work on them simultaneously.

**Step 5.** By **November 14**, you will be ready to present all comparisons and contrasts to class.

On **October 28** and **December 2**, you will submit short memos (300-500 words each) that summarize the additional articles and/or books you have read (during the past two-three weeks) for your project.

The final paper (around 15 double-spaced pages) is due on **December 15 (6 pm)**. The paper will present your findings on the movements of your choice in an academic article format.

**Class meetings and discussion:** There will be more lectures in the beginning. After the first four weeks, more participation will be required.

**Grading:**

Attendance and participation: 20%

Assignments (Steps 1-4; short memos): 30%

Presentation: 10%

Final paper: 40%

**Texts**

The reader is available at Copy Central (Telegraph Ave). All of the required texts are in the reader. If you are interested in one of the optional texts, contact the instructor.
READINGS

Broad introduction to populism

August 29. Initial meeting, introductions, and a peak at the public debates
Come to class ready to discuss the following texts. This exercise will serve as a warm-up to the academic (and much denser) texts we will read from September 5 onwards.


https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/rethinking-populism/to-achieve-real-political-change-populism-is-necessary/

September 5. Overview of the major theories; brief introduction to Laclau


THE MAJOR APPROACHES

September 12. “Cultural backlash” and modernization theory

Optional reading:


September 19. Marxism and political economy

Optional reading:


September 26. Post-Marxism and discourse analysis

October 3. Institutional analyses

Optional reading:


October 10. Populism as style
October 17: Articulation approach (+ transitioning into the cases)


CASES AND STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

October 24. The United States


Optional reading:


November 7. Latin America and Southern Europe


Optional reading:


November 14: India


November 21: Eastern Europe


Optional reading:


November 28. Southeast Asia


Optional reading:


December 5. RRR week: We might meet to discuss student projects.

No new material assigned.

Additional resources (available to students upon request)


