

SOC 190

Populism in Global and Theoretical Perspective

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, Latin America, Southern Europe, India, Turkey, 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) or regime(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) or regime(s) will mature throughout the semester. Here are the specific steps you will take:

Step 1. By **September 29**, 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 13**, 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 10**, 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 10**, 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 13**, you will be ready to present all comparisons and contrasts to class.

On **October 27** and **December 1**, 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 28. Initial meeting, introductions, and a peak at the public debates

Come to class ready to discuss the following two texts. This exercise will serve as a warm-up to the academic (and much denser) texts we will read from September 5 onwards.

<https://jacobin.com/2018/01/populism-douglas-hofstadter-donald-trump-democracy>

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

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/23/opinion/trump-vance-republican-party.html>

Skim:

<https://jacobin.com/2023/10/populism-gilded-age-farmers-alliance-peoples-party-trump-review>

<https://theintercept.com/2024/08/07/trump-league-american-workers-steve-cortes/>

September 4. Overview of the major theories; brief introduction to Laclau

Tuğal, Cihan. 2021. "Populism Studies: The Case for Theoretical and Comparative Reconstruction." *Annual Review of Sociology* 47: 327-347.

Laclau, Ernesto. 1977. *Politics and ideology in Marxist theory: capitalism, fascism, populism*. London: NLB. Pp. 143-198.

THE MAJOR APPROACHES

September 11. “Cultural backlash” and modernization theory

Norris, Pippa and Ronald Inglehart. 2019. *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism*. Cambridge University Press. pp. 32-64, 331-367.

Optional reading:

Di Tella, Torcuato S. 1997. “Populism into the Twenty-first Century.” *Government and Opposition* 32/2: 187-200.

Worsley, Peter. 1969. “The Concept of Populism.” in *Populism: Its Meanings and National Characteristics*, Ed. by Ghita Ionescu and Ernest Gellner. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Di Tella, Torcuato S. 1965. “Populism and Reform in Latin America.” Pp. 47–74 in *Obstacles to Change in Latin America*, edited by Claudio Veliz. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

September 18. Marxism and political economy

Hadiz, Vedi R. 2016. *Islamic populism in Indonesia and the Middle East*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 1-47.

Optional reading:

Abrahamian, Ervand. 1991. “Khomeini: Fundamentalist or Populist?” *New Left Review* 186: 102–119.

Colas, Alejandro. 2004. “The Re-Invention of Populism: Islamist Responses to Capitalist Development in the Contemporary Maghreb.” *Historical Materialism* 12/4: 231-260.

September 25. Post-Marxism and discourse analysis

Laclau, Ernesto. 2005. *On Populist Reason*. London: Verso. SKIM pp. ix-20. READ pp. 67-156.

October 2. Institutional analyses

Mudde, Cas. 2007. *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*. Cambridge University Press. Skim pages 119-137, Read pp. 232-276, 293-304.

Optional reading:

Weyland, Kurt. 1998. "Swallowing the Bitter Pill: Sources of Popular Support for Neoliberal Reform in Latin America." *Comparative Political Studies* 31:539–68.

de la Torre, Carlos. 2000. *Populist Seduction in Latin America: The Ecuadorian Experience*. Athens: Ohio University Center for International Studies.

October 9. Populism as style

Moffitt, Benjamin. 2016. *The Global Rise of Populism: Performance, Political Style, and Representation*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. Read pp. 28-69, 95-112; Skim 70-94

October 16. "Social movement theory"

Jansen, Robert S. 2011. "Populist Mobilization: A New Theoretical Approach to Populism." *Sociological Theory* 29/2: 75–96.

Second hour of class: Discussion of ongoing research projects

October 23: Articulation approach (+ transitioning into the cases)

de Leon, Cedric, Manali Desai, and Cihan Tuğal. 2015. "Political Articulation: The Structured Creativity of Parties." Pp. 1-35 in *Building Blocs: How Parties Organize Society*, edited by Cedric de Leon, Manali Desai, and Cihan Tuğal. Stanford: Stanford University Press. Read 1-7, Skim 8-18, Read 18-31, Skim the rest.

Tuğal, Cihan. 2022. "The strengths and limits of neoliberal populism: the statism and mass organisation of contemporary rightwing regimes." *Contemporary Politics*.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13569775.2022.2064645>

Tuğal, Cihan. 2023. "Three Routes to Autocratic Rule: Market Reforms, Politics, and Masculinist Performance in the Making of Right-Wing Regimes." *Journal of Right-Wing Studies* 1/1: 37-71.

Tuğal, Cihan. 2024. "Democratic Autocracy: a Populist Update to Fascism under Neoliberal Conditions." *Historical Materialism* (published online ahead of print 2024).

<https://doi.org/10.1163/1569206x-20242360>

Read 7-16 (for the relationship between populism and fascism) and SKIM the rest.

CASES AND STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

October 30. The United States

Pacewicz, J. 2023. When Is Populism Good for Liberal Democracy? *Sociological Theory*.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/07352751231167389>

Bonikowski, Bart. 2016. "Three Lessons of Contemporary Populism in Europe and the United States." *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 23/1: 9-24.

Optional reading:

Lamont, Michèle, Bo Yun Park and Elena Ayala-Hurtado. 2017. "Trump's electoral speeches and his appeal to the American white working class." *The British Journal of Sociology* 68/S1: S153–S180.

November 6. Latin America and Southern Europe

Richmond, Matthew A and Elizabeth McKenna. 2023. "Placing the peripheries within Brazil's rightward turn: Socio-spatial transformation and electoral realignment, 2002–2018" *EPC: Politics and Space*.

Salgado, S., Stavrakakis, Y. 2019. "Introduction: populist discourses and political communication in Southern Europe." *European Political Science* 18/1: 1–10.

Optional reading:

Hetland, Gabriel. 2014. "The Crooked Line: From Populist Mobilization to Participatory Democracy in Chávez Era Venezuela." *Qualitative Sociology* 37/4: 373–401.

Roberts, Kenneth M. 2010. "Latin America's Populist Revival," *SAIS Review* 27/1: 3-15.

Mudde, C. and Rovira Kaltwasser, C. 2013. "Exclusionary vs. Inclusionary Populism: Comparing Contemporary Europe and Latin America." *Government and Opposition* 48/2: 147-174.

Aslanidis, Paris & Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser. 2016/ Dealing with populists in government: the SYRIZA-ANEL coalition in Greece, *Democratization* 23/6: 1077-1091.

Gest, J., Reny, T., & Mayer, J. 2018. "Roots of the Radical Right: Nostalgic Deprivation in the United States and Britain." *Comparative Political Studies* 51/13: 1694–1719.

Kioupkiolis, Alexandros. 2016. "Podemos: the ambiguous promises of left-wing populism in contemporary Spain." *Journal of Political Ideologies* 21/2: 99-120.

November 13: India

Chacko, P. 2018. "The right turn in India: Authoritarianism, populism and neoliberalisation." *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 48/4: 541–565.

Jaffrelot, C. 2013. "Gujarat Elections: The Sub-Text of Modi's 'Hattrick'—High Tech Populism and the 'Neo-middle Class.'" *Studies in Indian Politics* 1(1): 79–95.

November 20: Eastern Europe

Scheiring, G. 2021b. "Situations of dependency, mechanisms of dependency governance, and the rise of populism in Hungary and Poland." Pp. 183–206 in A. Madariaga & S. Palestini (Eds.) *Dependent capitalisms in Contemporary Latin America and Europe*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Shields, S. 2019. "The paradoxes of necessity: Fail forwards neoliberalism, social reproduction, recombinant populism and Poland's 500Plus policy." *Capital & Class* 43/4: 653–669.

Greskovits, Béla. 2020. "Rebuilding the Hungarian right through conquering civil society: the Civic Circles Movement." *East European Politics* 36/2: 247-266.

Optional reading:

Toplišek, A. 2020. "The political economy of populist rule in post-crisis Europe: Hungary and Poland." *New Political Economy* 25/3: 388–403.

Scheiring, G., & Szombati, K. 2020. "From neoliberal disembedding to authoritarian re-embedding: The making of illiberal hegemony in Hungary." *International Sociology* 35/6: 721–738.

November 27. Southeast Asia

Jayasuriya, Kanishka. 2020. "The Rise of the Right: Populism and Authoritarianism in Southeast Asian Politics." *Southeast Asian Affairs* 2020/1: 43-56.

Curato, N. 2016. "Politics of Anxiety, Politics of Hope: Penal Populism and Duterte's Rise to Power." *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 35/3: 91–109.

Optional reading:

Garrido, Marco. 2017. "Why the Poor Support Populism: The Politics of Sincerity in Metro Manila." *American Journal of Sociology* 123/3: 647–685.

December 4: Discussion of student projects.

No new material assigned.