**POLS428**

## Populism in comparative perspective

**Course Number: 14872**

**Classroom:** Multipurpose Classroom Building 108

**Meeting times:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:00 – 10:15 AM

**Instructor:** Dr. Matthew Rhodes-Purdy

**Office hours:** Wednesdays and Fridays, 2:00 – 3:30 PM, and by appointment

**Office location:** ERB 2.157

**e-mail**: matthewpurdy@boisestate.edu

**Course Description:** Bernie Sanders, Donald Trump, the Brexit, Syrzia, and Hugo Chávez: these leaders, movements, and events could not be more different, but they all share a common trait: populism. Populism is as old as representative democracy itself, but in recent years this style of politics has expanded throughout the world, dramatically reshaping both domestic and international politics.

This course will examine the development of populism, understood as the assertion that “the people” (however defined) have had their rightful sovereignty stolen by “the elite”; and its impact on US political development. This course embraces a social scientific approach to the study of political phenomena. Therefore we will not merely be reviewing a large number of facts and figures about populist movements. Instead we will ask and review potential answers to questions regarding the causes and effects of populism throughout the globe. We will focus on how inherent tensions in the global liberal democratic order (e.g. between liberalism and democracy, state sovereignty and international cooperation, diversity and solidarity) drive the populist impulse, and examine the conditions under which these movements are able to come to power.

Questions that will be raised include:

* What is populism? Is it an ideology, a worldview, a form of discourse, or a political strategy? Which groups should be included and excluded from the label?
* Who are “the people”? How do populists make their appeals to unity in a diverse society? How does this process impact the political fortunes of populist movements?
* Why is populism a recurring feature in some countries, and relatively rare or unusual in others?
* How have populist movements reshaped the political institutions of individual countries and the international political system?
* Why did populism split into left-wing and right-wing variants in the 1930s? What distinguishes left-wing and right-wing populism?
* Why have populists, until relatively recently, failed to win power in the developed world?
* Why has a new wave of populism risen in recent years?

**Prerequisites:** POLS 305 & POLS 306

**Readings:** The course will involve a combination of textbook readings, primary source readings and analytical articles. There are three required texts for the course:

* Kazin, Michael. *The Populist Persuasion: An American History (Revised Ed).* ISBN: 0-8014-8558-4
* Carlos de la Torre, ed. *The Promise and Perils of Populism: Global Perspectives.* ISBN:978-0-8131-4687-4
* Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, eds. *Populismin Europe and the Americas: Threat or Corrective for Democracy*?
* Additional readings posted on Blackboard

All required texts are available at the bookstore. All are also available in eBook format on Amazon.com (usually at a considerable discount from the print versions).

Reading for this class is absolutely essential. Lectures will deal with course material that is separate from that contained in the readings. You must come to class each day with the assigned reading completed to get the most out of lecture and to succeed in the course.

**Course Requirements:** Grades for this course will be based on a combination of exams, a research paper and participation.

**Exams.** There will be three exams, which will cover the material between that exam and the one preceding it (exams are not comprehensive). That said, the course is designed in such a way that ideas from earlier sections are vital to understanding later material. Exams will be essay format. Each exam has three prompts; you will choose **one** prompt to answer in your paper. These exams will be **take-home, open book and open note**. Prompts will be posted on Blackboard on **Mondays** of exam weeks, and will be due **Fridays, via Blackboard.**

**Research paper.** The research paper, due towards the end of the course, should examine a populist leader, movement, or a historical or contemporary event which was influenced by populism. The paper should do more than simply describe the topic, but should attempt to explain why it happened when, where, and how it did. You will be required to submit your research topic and scholarly sources (at least five) by the date specified in the syllabus for approval. Failure to do so will result in a **ten point deduction** from your research paper grade. More details on the paper will be posted on Blackboard early in the semester.

**Participation:** Participation will be based primarily on in-class discussion. Points will be awarded for making comments and asking questions in class. You will need to make some contribution to discussion during every discussion to get full points. That said, I am aware that some students feel uncomfortable engaging in discussion in front of large groups. Therefore, students may also attend office hours to discuss the course material to gain participation points.

Additionally, participation points will be given for periodic, short, in-class writing assignments. Random reading quizzes will also count as part of your participation grade.

**Course Policies: Grading.** Final grades will be course will be calculated as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Assignment | Weight |
| Exam 1 | 25% |
| Exam 2 | 25% |
| Exam 3 | 25% |
| Research paper | 15% |
| Participation | 10% |

Grades will be assigned on the scale listed below:

93-100 A 90-92 A-

88-89 B+ 83-87 B 80-82 B-

78-79 C+ 73-77 C 70-72 C-

68-69 D+ 63-67 D 60-62 D-

<60 F

All final percentages will be rounded to the nearest percentage point. No exceptions will be made to the scale listed here.

**Late work**. Late work will be accepted, but a 10-point deduction will be applied for **each day the assignment is late.** There will be no exceptions to this policy unless you notify me **before** the deadline that your work will be late. Extensions with a smaller deduction may be granted based on extreme exigent circumstances, but only with prior approval.

**Grade appeals.** If you feel your grade on an assignment is incorrect, you may explain, in writing, why you feel you have been graded incorrectly or unfairly and submit it to me **no later than one week** from the day the assignment was returned; late appeals will **not be accepted or considered.**

**Lecture notes/slides.** Class attendance is absolutely mandatory and necessary for success in this course. However, to ensure that students can take effective notes and follow lectures, I will post both Powerpoint slides and an outline of the lecture on Blackboard **several days prior to the class meeting in which that lecture is given.** I encourage students to review these outlines and/or bring them to class to use as a guide during lecture.

**Office hours and contact policy:** If at any point in the semester you worry about your grade or your understanding of the course, **please come and see me as soon as possible**. I cannot emphasize enough that I want you all to succeed in this course, but in order for that to happen, you must **ask for help when you need it.** This is a difficult course with a great deal of material. Timely requests for help and use of university resources provide the best chance of success. Any students who wish to discuss any aspect of the course are more than welcome to come to office hours.

Except in extreme circumstances, I will answer e-mails within 1 business day of receipt. I encourage you to contact me with any questions or concerns as soon as possible, as there is no guarantee any issue you may have can be resolved in one e-mail communication. If your issue requires more extensive communication, I will probably ask you to come to office hours to discuss it face to face.

**Make-ups:** Exams can be made up, provided that:

1. You have a reasonable excuse for missing the exam. These include a university-sponsored athletic event, serious illness or accident, or a death in the family. You will be required to submit documentation of your excuse.
2. You provide as much notification as possible. I reserve the right to refuse make-up exams to students who fail to provide timely notification. If an absence is foreseeable, “timely” means as before the assignment, preferably as soon as you know you will be absent.

There will be a single make-up exam period for each exam. All students with approved excuses must make up the exam they missed during the make-up period corresponding to that exam (i.e. you cannot make up the first exam during the make-up period for the second exam).

**Technology in class:** Students will be allowed to use laptops to take notes. Mobile phones are not allowed; please keep them stowed away during class time. Also, please make sure laptops and stowed phones, as well as any other electronic devices, **are silenced prior to the start of class.** I also ask that you limit use of your laptops to class-related activities; individuals who use technology in a manner that interrupts lecture or distracts other students will be asked to leave their laptops at home permanently.

**Academic Dishonesty:** You must comply with the University honor code (<http://deanofstudents.boisestate.edu/student-code-of-conduct/>). Violations of the honor code will be referred to the honor council and receive a grade of 0. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. All violations will be reported to the University, which may lead to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University.

All exams and research papers will be, via Blackboard, checked using plagiarism detection software.

**Students with Disabilities** Students with disabilities needing accommodations to fully participate in this class should contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC). All accommodations MUST be approved through the DRC. Please stop by Administration 114 or call 208-426-1583 to make an appointment with a disability specialist. To learn more about the accommodation process, visit their website at <http://drc.boisestate.edu>.

**Religious Holy Day Observance:** You must notify your instructor of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

**Course Plan**

Readings listed are to be completed by the first day of the week to which they pertain (except for Week 1). Readings with an asterisk (\*) are available on Blackboard. Please be aware that many of these readings have been edited to reduce your reading load. These edits are usually marked, but not always, so if you notice odd “skips” or transitions, that’s probably why.

**Section 1: The origins of populism: the United States and Latin America**

This section introduces the course. In the first weeks we discuss competing definitions of populism and the first wave of democratization, occurring from roughly US American independence to World War II. Democracy at this point in time was the product of two partially overlapping and partially competing ideologies: liberalism and democratic republicanism. We will investigate how the tensions between these two philosophies, as well as other factors, produced populist movements in the United States, focusing on two of the most important: Jacksonian democracy and the People’s Party. We then turn to Latin America, where issues of authoritarianism, corruption, and underdevelopment also produced major populist movements, but with a more important role for charismatic leaders, such as Juan Perón in Argentina and Getúlio Vargas in Brazil.

Week 1 (Jan 9 – 13): Introduction to the course and definitions of populism.

* + Kazin., Introduction
  + Weyland, “A contested concept”\*
  + Hawkins, “Is Chávez populist?”\*
  + de la Torre, selection from *Populist Seduction in Latin America*\*

Week 2 (Jan 16 – 20): **MISSED DUE TO WEATHER**

Week 3 (Jan 23 – 27): Jacksonian Democracy in the US

* Kazin, Chapter 1
* Meyers, *The Jacksonian Persuasion*\*
* Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy*\*

Week 4 (Jan 30 – Feb 3): The People’s Party

* + Kazin, Ch. 2
  + Hicks, “The Persistence of Populism”\*
  + The Omaha Platform Preamble\*

Week 5 (Feb 6 – Feb 10): Latin America: from Independence to the first populist wave (Perón and Vargas)

* + Madsen & Snow, *The Charismatic Bond\**
  + Spalding, *Organized Labor in Latin America\**
  + Germani, *Authoritarianism, Facism, And National Populism\**

**Exam 1 content stops here**

Week 6 (Feb 13 – Feb 17): Section 1 conclusion

* + **Exam 1 prompts available Monday, Feb. 13.**
  + **Exam 1 due via Blackboard Friday, Feb 17, at 5:00 PM.**
  + **Class cancelled on Thursday, Feb 16. Extended office hours during class time.**

**Section 2: The populist split: the decline of the populist left and the rise of right-wing populism**

In the previous section, we covered the development of US populism through the People’s Party, and Latin American populism through World War 2. Populism in that era was presented a “fused” or “mixed” ideology; movements tended to blend left- and right-wing policies and ideas. The People’s Party demanded economic aid from the state, but also embraced Prohibition and had issues with racism, xenophobia, and (especially) antisemitism. The populists of pre-war Latin America gave organized labor a seat at the political table, favored unions over business, and embarked on state-led development plans, but also exerted authoritarian control over civil society.

In the post-war era, populist splits into left- and right-wing variants as democratic systems open to accept a broader spectrum of demands. Those on the left continue to adopt populist language when addressing economic issues, while moral concerns, security fears, and resurgent nativism inspire new populist movements on the right. In this section, we examine how the new post-war order largely erased populism among the political left, while encouraging populism among the right. We analyze three distinct strains of right populism: nativist populism, security populism, and religious populism. The focus of this section is on the US and Europe, in the years between WWII and 9/11, although we will also discuss populism in the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

Week 7 (Feb 20 – Feb 24): The paranoid style of populism: security populism

* Kazin, Ch. 7
* Hanley in Mudde and Kaltwasser, Ch. 4
* Levistky and Loxon in Mudde and Kaltwasser, Ch. 8
* Hofstadter, “The paranoid style in American Politics.”\*

Week 8 (Feb 27 – Mar 3): Nativist populism, origins: George Wallace in the US and the National Front in France

* Kazin, Ch. 9
* Zúquete in de la Torre, Ch. 8

Week 9 (Mar 6 – Mar 10): Nativist populism continued

* De Lange and Akkerman in Mudde & Kaltwasser, Ch. 2
* Fallend in Mudde & Kaltwasser, Ch. 6
* Deegan-Krause in Mudde & Kaltwasser, Ch. 9
* Moffit in de la Torre, Ch. 10
* **Research paper topic and sources due via Blackboard by Friday, March 10, at 5:00 PM.**

Week 10 (Mar 13 – Mar 17): Socially conservative populism: the religious right and regionalism

* Kazin, Ch. 4 & 10
* Laycock in Mudde & Kaltwasser, Ch. 3
* Onar, “The populism/realism gap: managing uncertainty in Turkey’s politics and foreign policy.”\*

**Exam 2 content stops here**

**March 20 – March 24: Spring Break**

Week 11 (Mar 27 – Mar 31): Section 2 conclusion

* + **Exam 2 prompts available Monday, March 27.**
  + **Exam 1 due via Blackboard Friday, March 31, at 5:00 PM.**
  + **Class cancelled on Thursday, March 23. Extended office hours during class time.**

**Section 3: Populism and the era of globalization.** By the late 1990s, populism seemed to have reached a global plateau, and had even receded entirely in some places (namely the US). However, after a brief interregnum, the 2008 financial crisis gave new life to populist movements across the globe. In this section, we analyze how the rise of globalization, including intergovernmental organizations (such as the EU) and the dominance of neoclassical economics, enforced by global economic institutions (such as the IMF) created a new wave of populism that is only now beginning to crest. The wave begins in Latin America, with a new group of leftist populists led by Hugo Chávez of Venezuela. This wave hits the developed world after the devastation caused by the Great Recession. The return of left-wing variants of populism in both the developed and developing world, and the failure of liberal democratic institutions to contain populist movements, are the core features of this contemporary populist trend. We will examine why left-wing ideologies began to embrace populism again, and why institutions which had previously excluded populists from power (and their policies from being enacted) are currently failing to do so.

**NOTE:** This section of the course is fairly contemporary. As such, readings may become available as the semester goes on. Due to this, some readings may not be listed on the syllabus. All readings will be available the Sunday the week **before** the first lecture on that subject. Make sure to check the readings folder for each week in Blackboard at that time. All readings are required unless otherwise noted, even if not listed on the syllabus.

Week 12 (Apr 3 – Apr 7): “Neopopulism” and neoliberalism: antecedents of the contemporary populist wave

* Weyland, *Neopopulism and Neoliberalism in Latin America\**
* Additional readings posted on Blackboard\*

Week 13 (Apr 10 – Apr 14): Chávez, Morales, and the third-wave populists of Latin America

* Roberts in Mudde and Kaltwasser, Ch. 7
* De la Torre, Ch. 12
* Lopez-Maya in de la Torre, Ch. 13
* Rhodes-Purdy, “Participatory Populism”\*

Week 14 (Apr 17 – Apr 21): The Housing crisis and populism: Part 1: the Tea Party

* Michael in de la Torre, Ch. 9
* “The Giant Pool of Money.” This American Life and Planet Money\* Note: this is an episode of a podcast. A link to the audio of the podcast will be posted on Blackboard, along with a transcript. You are not required to listen to the podcast, but it is highly recommended, but if you do not you **must** read the transcript.
* Williamson, Skocpol & Coggin, “The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism”\*
* Additional readings posted on Blackboard\*

**Research paper due Friday, April 21st, at 5:00 PM, via Blackboard.**

Week 15 (Apr 24 – Apr 28): The current wave of populism: The anti-austerity left (Sanders) and Nationalism ascendant (Brexit, Trump)

* Altemeyer, “The other authoritarian personality”\*
* Cas Mudde, “A pathological normalcy”\*
* Additional readings posted on Blackboard\*

Finals week (May 1 – May 5)

* + **Final paper prompts available on Blackboard March 1st**
  + **Final paper due by Friday, May 5, at 5:00 PM, via Blackboard.**