

# Global Society • Global Populisms after 2008

SOC 344 • Fall 2018 • Tu/Th 3:30-4:45 • Graham 209

Professor Levenson • Office 327 • zachary.levenson@uncg.edu

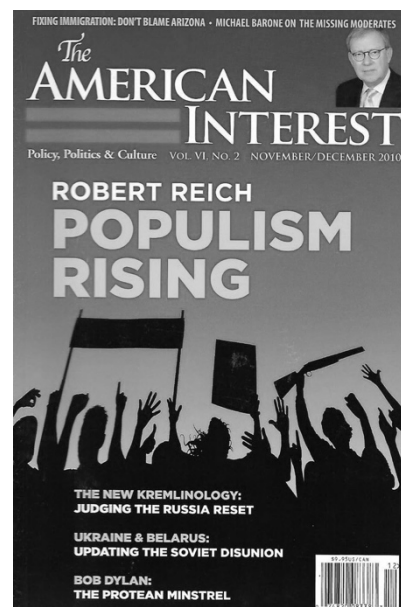
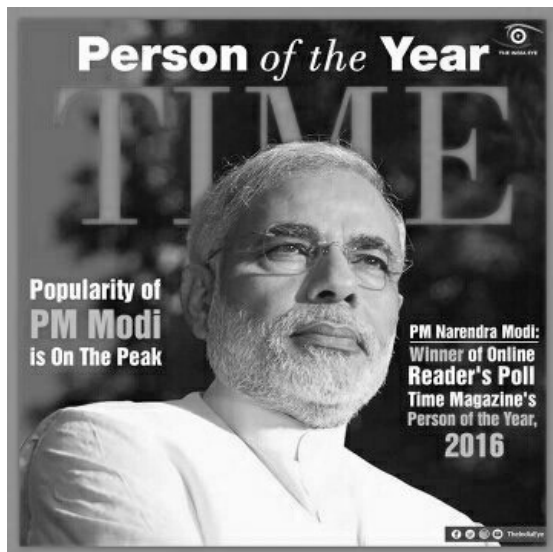
Office hours Th 10-12 (<https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/xpakt>)

“Their world is collapsing. Ours is being built.”

—Florian Philippot, senior adviser to French National Front leader Marine Le Pen

“Believe me, this is Brexit times five. You watch what’s going to happen.”

—Donald Trump, less than a month before he was elected



The United States is hardly exceptional in the election victory of Donald Trump. On every continent, populist politicians have gained ground in seemingly unprecedented ways. Of course, populism itself is nothing new. We need only think back to our own country in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the aftermath of the Great Depression in the US and Europe, or postwar Latin America. But when is the last time populists were being elected on every single continent in the same period?

In this course, we will examine the global wave of populism that has emerged over the decade following the 2008 recession. We will begin with an analysis of the term itself: how do we know a populist when we see one? In Part I of this class, we will think about populism in relation to a number of related concepts, above all, nationalism and fascism. We will attempt to understand both what populism is and why it tends to emerge. This, after all, is the sociologist's task: identify the phenomenon and explain its emergence.

In Parts II and III, we will turn to a series of case studies of populists in action, beginning with countries in the South before turning to cases from Europe and North America. As we will see, in both Southern Europe and Latin America, populism was not the exclusive territory of conservatives. Indeed, explicitly leftist populist projects emerged in Brazil, Greece, Spain, and elsewhere. In Part IV then, we will conclude by grappling with what this means for our understanding of populism. We will read some authors who advocate this sort of left populism as a solution to the growth of right populism, as well others who see left and right populisms as equally problematic. By the time we have made it through the syllabus, you will be equipped to understand cases not covered in this class, as well as the populisms yet to come as the global crisis continues.

**A note on reading.** Reading is a central component of this class. As such, it is imperative that you complete your biweekly assignments. Because you are likely unfamiliar with most national contexts we will cover, this reading can be daunting. It is *very* important that you make time for it. These are not texts that you can simply skim.

You do not need to buy any book for this class. I will make every reading available on Canvas free of charge. (You may, however, decide to order Benjamin Moffitt's book *The Global Rise of Populism* since we'll be reading most of it.) However, I do recommend marking up the text while reading. For me, this means printing it out, underlining important sections, and writing notes in the margins. If you want to do this on your computer or tablet instead, fine. But please do learn to mark up the text. It's central to learning how to read in an academic context, which is very different from reading for pleasure. Of course, these readings are immensely pleasurable. But you should also be able to extract their central arguments, and this means marking them up.

***Requirements for the class are the following:***

1. **Attendance and participation (25 %):** Yes, this is a lecture class, but you'll quickly learn that my style is fairly Socratic. I don't want to hear the same half dozen people in every meeting. If you're shy or reluctant to speak for other reasons, please come see me in office hours. I'm happy to make accommodations as needed. In addition to coming to class and actually participating, you are required to submit a discussion question on

Canvas for every set of readings by 10 pm the night before we meet. While I'll only grade these as Pass/Not Pass, the very fact of doing it doesn't guarantee you a Pass. I want to see *deep engagement* with the readings. If you're unsure what that means, come see me in office hours. That's what they're there for!

2. **Reading responses (20 %):** You are required to submit a short writing assignment (one page, double-spaced, 12-point font, 1" margins) for each thematic section of the class, totaling four. All should be submitted via Canvas.

- Part I: How would you explain the emergence of global populism after 2008? (*due September 11*)
- Part II: Choose Modi, Erdogan, Duterte, or Lula. Is your chosen leader a populist? Why or why not? (*due October 2*)
- Part III: Choose Brexit, Trump, Orbán, Syriza, or Podemos. Is your chosen leader/movement populist? Why or why not? (*due November 1*)
- Part IV: Do you think populism is a desirable strategy? Why or why not? (*due November 20*)

No late papers will be accepted under any circumstances, though I will accept early papers. These will each be graded on a scale of 1-5. Serious engagement with course material will receive 4 or 5 depending upon quality. Flawed engagement will receive a 3, and demonstrable lack of effort will earn you a 1 or 2. Late or non-existence assignments will of course receive a 0.

3. **Midterm (25 %):** There will be an in-class midterm on October 4. If you require special accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible. The content of the midterm will not be a surprise and will draw on Parts I and II of the course material. There will be nothing unexpected, and the entire thing will be short answers. Note that I reward clear, concise writing. If that means writing a longer version of the answer on scrap paper and then editing it down to fit the space allotted, great. Whatever gets you to your goal is a worthy strategy.
4. **Final (30 %):** As with the midterm, this will be in-class during our final meeting. Again, there won't be any surprises. It will be very similar to the midterm and focus on Parts III and IV. But unlike the midterm, it will also be cumulative. I may have you compare Parts II and III of the class, for example, or think about Part IV in relation to Part I. But don't worry; we'll go over this in some detail before it's time to begin studying. If you've done the course readings, attended lectures, participated in discussion, and turned in the writing assignments along the way, you'll be very well prepared.

### ***Course Schedule:***

#### **August 14:**

- Introductory remarks

## **I. Why Global Populism? Why Now?**

### **August 16:**

- Rogers Brubaker. 2017. "Populism's Perfect Storm." *Boston Review*, July 11.
- Rogers Brubaker. 2017. "Why Populism?" *Theory and Society* 46(5):357-85.

### **August 21:**

- François Cusset. 2018. *How the World Swung to the Right: Fifty Years of Counterrevolutions*. South Pasadena, CA: Semiotext(e), 7-37.
  - Optional: Lisa Duggan. 2003. *The Twilight of Equality? Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy*. Boston: Beacon, ix-xxii.

### **August 23:**

- François Cusset. 2018. *How the World Swung to the Right: Fifty Years of Counterrevolutions*. South Pasadena, CA: Semiotext(e), 37-64.
  - Optional: Ray Kiely. 2005. *The Clash of Globalizations: Neo-liberalism, the Third Way, and Anti-Globalization*. Leiden: Brill, 81-7.

### **August 28:**

- Benjamin Moffitt. 2016. *The Global Rise of Populism: Performance, Political Style, and Representation*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1-27.

### **August 30:**

- Benjamin Moffitt. 2016. *The Global Rise of Populism: Performance, Political Style, and Representation*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 28-50.

### **September 4:**

- Benjamin Moffitt. 2016. *The Global Rise of Populism: Performance, Political Style, and Representation*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 95-112.

### **September 6:**

- Benjamin Moffitt. 2016. *The Global Rise of Populism: Performance, Political Style, and Representation*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 113-32.

### **September 11:**

- Federico Finchelstein. 2017. *From Fascism to Populism in History*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 1-30.

## **II. Southern Populisms**

### **September 13:**

- Aijaz Ahmad. 2000 "Fascism and National Culture: Reading Gramsci in the Days of *Hindutva*." Pp. 129-66 in *Lineages of the Present: Ideology and Politics in Contemporary South Asia*. New York: Verso.
- Film: "Is Modi's India Flirting with Fascism?"

#### **September 18:**

- Nitasha Kaul. 2017. "Rise of the Political Right in India: Hindutva-Development Mix, Modi Myth, and Dualities." *Journal of Labor and Society* 20(4):523-48.
- Achin Vanaik. 2017. *The Rise of Hindu Authoritarianism: Secular Claims, Communal Realities*. New York: Verso.

#### **September 20:**

- Ümit Akçay. 2018. "The Turkish Quagmire." *Catalyst* 1(4):179-208.

#### **September 25:**

- Nicole Curato. 2016. "Flirting with Authoritarian Fantasies? Rodrigo Duterte and the New Terms of Philippine Populism." *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 47(1):142-53.
- Alfred W. McCoy. 2017. "Philippine Populism: Local Violence and Global Context in the Rise of a Filipino Strongman." *Surveillance & Society* 15(3/4):514-22.

#### **September 27:**

- Perry Anderson. 2011. "Lula's Brazil." *London Review of Books* 38(8).
- Francisco de Oliveira. 2006. "Lula in the Labyrinth." *New Left Review* 42:5-22.

#### **October 2:**

- Gillian Hart. 2013. *Rethinking the South African Crisis: Nationalism, Populism, Hegemony*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 189-218.
- Review

#### **October 4:**

- In-class midterm

#### **October 9:**

- Fall Break NO CLASS

### **III. Northern Populisms**

#### **October 11:**

- Craig Calhoun. 2017. "Populism, Nationalism, and Brexit." Pp. 57-76 in *Brexit: Sociological Responses*, edited by William Outhwaite. London: Anthem.
- John Clarke and Janet Newman. 2017. "'People in This Country Have Had Enough of Experts': Brexit and the Paradoxes of Populism." *Critical Policy Studies* 11(1):101-16.

#### **October 16:**

- G. M. Tamás, 2018. "Viktor Orbán Versus the Enlightenment." *Jacobin*, April 24.

- G. M. Tamás. 2016. "Ethnicism after Nationalism: The Roots of the European Far Right." *Socialist Register* 52:118-35.

#### **October 18:**

- Dylan Riley. 2017. "American Brumaire?" *New Left Review* 103, 21-32.
- Christian Parenti. 2016. "Listening to Trump." *Nonsite*, November 17.
- Paul Krugman. 2018. "Stop Calling Trump a Populist." *New York Times*, August 2, A23.

#### **October 23:**

- Yannis Stavrakakis. 2015. "Populism in Power: Syriza's Challenge to Europe." *Juncture* 21(4):273-80.
- Yannis Stavrakakis and Giorgos Katsambekis. 2015. "Left-Wing Populism in the European Periphery: The Case of Syriza." *Journal of Political Ideologies* 19(2):119-42.

#### **October 25:**

- Helena Sheehan. 2017. *The Syriza Wave: Surging and Crashing with the Greek Left*. New York: Monthly Pevue Press. Selections TBD.
- Nantina Vgontzas. 2015. "Beyond Reform vs. Rupture." *New Politics*, September 25.

#### **October 30:**

- Pablo Iglesias. 2015. *Politics in a Time of Crisis: Podemos and the Future of Democracy*. New York: Verso. Selections TBD.

#### **November 1:**

- Íñigo Errejón and Chantal Mouffe. 2016. *Podemos: In the Name of the People*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 70-9.
- Alberto Garzón. 2015. "The Problem with Podemos." *Jacobin*, March 13.

### **IV. Resisting Populism...by Means of Populism?**

#### **November 6:**

- Éric Fassin. 2018. "Left-Wing Populism: A Legacy of Defeat." *Radical Philosophy* 202:79-92.
- Jacob Hamburger. 2018. "Can There Be a Left Populism?" *Jacobin*, March 29.

#### **November 8:**

- Chantal Mouffe. 2018. *For a Left Populism*. New York: Verso. Selections TBD.

#### **November 13:**

- Chantal Mouffe. 2018. *For a Left Populism*. New York: Verso. Selections TBD.

#### **November 15:**

- Robert Jansen. 2011. "Populist Mobilization: A New Theoretical Approach to Populism." *Sociological Theory* 29(2):75-96.

**November 20:**

- Michael Bray. 2015. "Rearticulating Contemporary Populism." *Historical Materialism* 23(3):1-38.

**November 22:**

- Thanksgiving NO CLASS

**November 27:**

- Review

**Date, time, and location of final exam to TBD.**