

Global Society • Global Populism since 2008

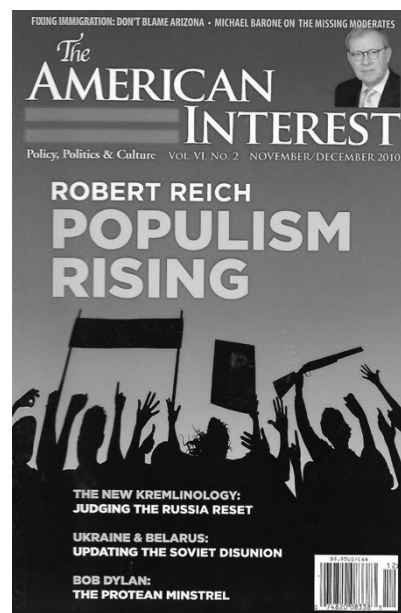
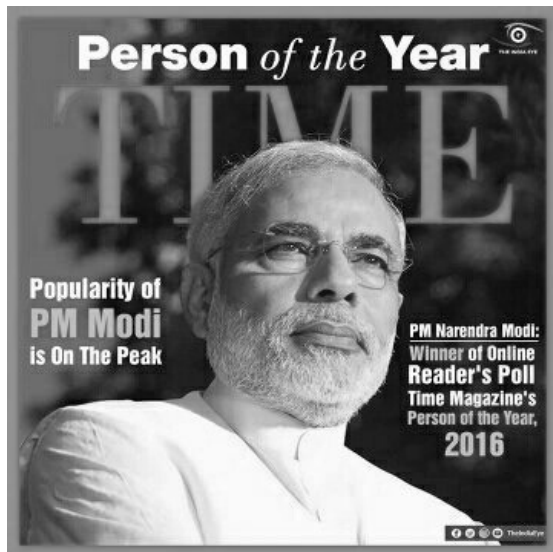
SOC 344 • Spring 2020 • Tu/Th 2:00-3:15 • Graham 423
Professor Levenson • Office 327 • zachary.levenson@uncg.edu
Office hours W 12-2 (<https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/xpakt>)

“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



When Donald Trump was elected, you probably thought to yourself, “Damn, only in America!” But as I hope to persuade you in this class, the United States is hardly exceptional in this respect. On every continent, populist politicians have gained ground in seemingly unprecedented ways over the past few years. Of course, populism itself is nothing new. We need only think back to our own country in the late 19th 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. 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 make a habit of marking 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 %):** This is a hybrid course: sometimes I’ll lecture, but as the semester progresses, I’ll do so to a decreasing extent. By the time we get to our case studies, I hope to adopt a seminar format. I don’t want to hear the same half dozen people every time we meet – I expect *everyone* to participate. Certainly we all have our off days, but most of the time, I want every single one of you engaged. 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 participation, you are required to actually attend this class. You can miss three classes without letting me know. But after that, you need a documented excuse. I don't do this in all of my classes, but in this one, attendance is crucial. If you plan on missing more than three, this probably isn't the class for you. Once you've missed six classes, you will lose your entire attendance score, or 10 percent of your final grade, and I will very likely drop you another 10 percent for lack of participation. But please don't miss class. Not only do you need to show up to comprehend the material, but it's difficult to hold discussions when people don't show up, and that's unfair to your classmates.

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 midnight 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!

In sum, these 25 points will be comprised of:

- 10 points for attendance
- 10 points for participation
- 5 points of discussion posts

2. **Reading responses (15 %):** You are required to submit a short writing assignment (one page, double-spaced, 12-point font, 1" margins) for the first three thematic section of the class. All three should be submitted via Canvas.

- Part I: How would you explain the emergence of global populism after 2008? (*due February 11*)
- Part II: Choose Modi, Erdoğan, Duterte, or Bolsonaro. Is your chosen leader a populist? Why or why not? (*due March 9*)
- Part III: Choose Johnson, Trump, Orbán, or Tsipras. Is your chosen leader a populist? Why or why not? (*due April 8*)

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-existent assignments will of course receive a 0.

3. **Presentation and leading discussion (10 %):** For the first three units of this class, I will designate certain days "discussion days." That means that rather than me lecturing, one of you will lead the class. What does this mean in practice? I expect:

- A 5-7 minute presentation going over the main points from the reading. I don't want you to just recall some interesting points at random, but to explain what was *argued* in the day's readings.
 - A series of discussion questions that you will use to lead class. Obviously I don't expect you to be perfect, and if there are awkward silences or if things go awry, fear not: I'll interject. I will likely add mini-lectures to the presentations and discussions along the way. But I want you to feel comfortable raising difficult questions to your classmates.
4. **Midterm (25 %):** There will be an in-class midterm on March 12. 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.
5. **Final (25 %):** As with the midterm, this will be in-class during our final meeting on April 29. 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:

January 14: Introductory remarks

I. Why Global Populism? Why Now?

January 16: What *is* populism anyway?

- Cas Mudde. 2019. *The Far Right Today*. New York: Polity, 1-9.
- Cas Mudde and Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser. 2017. *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1-20.

January 21: Is populism *authoritarian*?

- Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart. 2019. *Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit, and Authoritarian Populism*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 3-31.

January 23: Is it a *style* of politics?

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

January 28: We know what they *say*, but what do they *do*?

- Jan-Werner Müller. 2016. *What Is Populism?* Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 41-74.

January 30: Why now?

- Rogers Brubaker. 2017. "Why Populism?" *Theory and Society* 46(5): 357-85.

February 4: Why now? (cont'd)

- Adam Przeworski. 2019. *Crises of Democracy*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 83-122.

February 6: Why now? (cont'd)

- Barry Eichengreen. 2018. *The Populist Temptation: Economic Grievance and Political Reaction in the Modern Era*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 117-44.

February 11: Are we adequately represented? And who is this "we" anyway?

- Peter Mair. 2013. *Ruling the Void: The Hollowing-Out of Western Democracy*. New York: Verso, 1-7 (and preferably 1-16).
- Marco Revelli. 2019. *The New Populism: Democracy Stares into the Abyss*. New York: Verso, 13-37 (and preferably 197-204 too).

II. Southern Populisms

February 13: India – Hindutva and the Rise of Modi

- Dexter Filkins. 2019. "Blood and Soil in Narendra Modi's India." *New Yorker*, December 2. Available online (<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/12/09/blood-and-soil-in-narendra-modis-india>).

February 18: India – A Fascist Turn?

- 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. 2019. "Modi Might Have Finally Gone Too Far." *Jacobin*, December 22. Available online (<https://www.jacobinmag.com/2019/12/narendra-modi-india-citizenship-amendment-act-muslims-bjp>).
- Tariq Ali. 2019. "Kashmir on the Edge of the Abyss." *New York Review of Books*. Available online (<https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2019/08/13/kashmir-on-the-edge-of-the-abyss/>).

February 20: Turkey – Erdoğan's Populist Islamism

- Ümit Akçay. 2018. "The Turkish Quagmire." *Catalyst* 1(4):179-208.
- Bethan McKernan. 2019. "From Reformer to 'New Sultan': Erdoğan's Populist Evolution." *Guardian*, March 11. Available online (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/11/from-reformer-to-new-sultan-erdogans-populist-evolution#maincontent>).

February 25: Philippines – Duterte's Vigilantism

- Sheila S. Coronel. 2019. "The Vigilante President: How Duterte's Brutal Populism Conquered the Philippines." *Foreign Affairs*, September/October. Available online (<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/philippines/2019-08-12/vigilante-president>).
- Marco Garrido. 2019. "Waiting for Duterte." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. Available online (<https://www.ijurr.org/spotlight-on/political-geographies-of-right-wing-populism/waiting-for-duterte/>).
- Nicole Curato. 2016. "Flirting with Authoritarian Fantasies? Rodrigo Duterte and the New Terms of Philippine Populism." *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 47(1): 142-53.

February 27: Brazil – Lula's Fall, Bolsonaro's Rise

- Perry Anderson. 2019. "Bolsonaro's Brazil." *London Review of Books* 41(3), February 7. Available online (<https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v41/n03/perry-anderson/bolsonaro-s-brazil>).
- Benjamin Bradlow. 2019. "Brazil's Political Peripheries and the Authoritarian Style." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. Available online (<https://www.ijurr.org/spotlight-on/political-geographies-of-right-wing-populism/brazils-political-peripheries-and-the-authoritarian-style/>).
- Matthew Aaron Richmond. 2018. "Bolsonaro's Conservative Revolution." *Jacobin*, October 17. Available online (<https://www.jacobinmag.com/2018/10/brazil-election-bolsonaro-evangelicals-security>).

SPRING BREAK

March 10: Midterm review

March 12: In-class midterm

III. Northern Populisms

March 17: Britain – Falling toward Brexit

- 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.

March 19: Britain – Anti-Politics and Johnson's Base

- Kim Moody. 2019. "The UK Election: A Car Crash on the Left Side of the Road." *New Politics*, December 28. Available online (<https://newpol.org/the-uk-election-a-car-crash-on-the-left-side-of-the-road/>).
- Marco Revelli. 2019. *The New Populism: Democracy Stares into the Abyss*. New York: Verso, 81-103.
- Richard Seymour. 2019. "We Were Crushed by Disaster Nationalism." *Patreon*, December 26. Available online (<https://www.patreon.com/posts/we-were-crushed-32633194>).

- Patrick Kingsley. 2019. "Splintered Isle: A Journey through Brexit Britain." *New York Times*, December 7. Available online (<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/07/world/europe/brexit-england-scotland-wales.html>).

March 24: Hungary – Orbán's Bigotry as a Strategy of Rule

- Paul Lendvai. 2019. "The Transformer: Orbán's Evolution and Hungary's Demise." *Foreign Affairs*, September/October. Available online (<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/hungary/2019-08-12/transformer>).
- G. M. Tamás, 2018. "Viktor Orbán Versus the Enlightenment." *Jacobin*, April 24.
- Zsuzsanna Szelényi. 2019. "Victor Orbán, Fidesz, and Me." *American Interest*, September 30. Available online (<https://www.the-american-interest.com/2019/09/30/viktor-orban-fidesz-and-me/>).

March 26: United States – Trump as Just Another Case

- Dylan Riley. 2018. "What Is Trump?" *New Left Review* 114, 5-31.
- Christian Parenti. 2016. "Listening to Trump." *Nonsite*, November 17. Available online (<https://nonsite.org/editorial/listening-to-trump>).

March 31: United States – Trump's Base and the Politics of Resentment

- Marco Revelli. 2019. *The New Populism: Democracy Stares into the Abyss*. New York: Verso, 48-79.
- Mike Davis. 2017. "The Great God Trump and the White Working Class." *Catalyst* 1(1): 151-71.

April 2: Greece – Is a Left Populism Possible?

- Yannis Stavrakakis. 2015. "Populism in Power: Syriza's Challenge to Europe." *Juncture* 21(4): 273-80.
- Stathis Kouvelakis. 2016. "Syriza's Rise and Fall." *New Left Review* 97: 45-70.
- Nantina Vgontzas. 2015. "Syriza and the Radical Break." *Jacobin*. Available online (<https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/02/syriza-greece-austerity-eurogroup-deal>).

April 7: Greece – Did Syriza *Have* to Capitulate?

- Panagiotis Sotiris. 2018. "From Resistance to Hegemony: The Struggle against Austerity and the Need for a New Historical Bloc." *Crisis, Movement, Strategy: The Greek Experience*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket, 267-97.

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

April 9: A Doomed Strategy

- 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. Available online (<https://www.jacobinmag.com/2018/03/left-populism-mouffe-fassin-france-insoumise>).

- Thea Rianfrancos. 2018. "Populism without the People: On Chantal Mouffe." *n+1* , November 23. Available online (<https://nplusonemag.com/online-only/online-only/populism-without-the-people/>).

April 14: A Roadmap for Left Populism

- Chantal Mouffe. 2018. *For a Left Populism*. New York: Verso, 1-38.

April 16: From Theory to Practice?

- Chantal Mouffe. 2018. *For a Left Populism*. New York: Verso, 39-85.

April 21: Thinking Limits in Comparative Perspective

- Gillian Hart. 2019. "From Authoritarian to Left Populism? Reframing Debates." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 118(2): 307-23.

April 23: Review

April 29: In-class final