The Forms of Authoritarianism
One-Day Conference

Thursday, SEPTEMBER 20
UConn Harford, Hartford Club
46 Prospect St, Hartford

Conference Overview

In 1993, Oxford historian Roger Griffin wrote, “...as a political ideology capable of spawning new movements [fascism] should be treated as a permanent feature of modern political culture.” Whether we want to call it fascism, white nationalism, or simply dictatorship, it is clear that various forms of right-wing authoritarianism are on the rise in the world today, and that Roger Griffin’s claim, issued at the very onset of the post-Cold War world, has never rung more true.

This one-day conference brings together scholars and journalists at the University of Connecticut and across the region to discuss the various forms that authoritarianism is taking in the world today, from the Philippines to Turkey, to Argentina and Venezuela, to Europe and the United States. It also aims to place this authoritarianism in historical perspective, comparing it to the anti-democratic currents of yesterday, whether in fascist Europe or in the Cold War dictatorships of Latin America.

Panelists will address: what are the dynamics of authoritarianism in the site they study? What forms does its policies and political rhetoric take? What is the relationship between economic insecurity and anti-democratic currents? What politics and institutional structures of the old regime fuel the rise of authoritarianism? It is genuinely populist, facilitated by elites, or both?

We look forward to engaged discussion on a troubled time in global history.

Schedule of Events

9:00 – 9:30am Breakfast / Reception (for conference presenters / chairs)
9:30 – 10:00 Welcome / Opening Remarks (Cathy Schlund-Vials / Chris Vials)
10:00 – 11:00 Panel 1: Authoritarianism/Anti-Authoritarianism in Latin America
   ~Ariel Lambe (University of Connecticut): “Defining Cuban Antifascism”
   Moderator: Mark Overmyer-Velazquez
11:10 – 12:10  Panel 2: New Authoritarian Currents in Asia
-Nerissa Balce (SUNY Stony Brook), co-authored presentation with Gary Devilles (Ateneo de Manila University) and Ferdinand Lopez (University of Santo Tomas, Manila):
  “Duterte’s Drug War: On Photographs and Figures of History”
--Zehra Arat (University of Connecticut), “Democracy Façade, Terror, and War: Turkey in the 2010s”
Moderator: Melanie Newport

12:10 – 1:30  Lunch

1:30 – 2:30  Panel 3: Europe: Coming to Terms
-Heather Horn (Senior editor, New Republic): “Haunted by European History: The Far Right and Its #Resisters”
--Joel Blatt, Italian Fascism, the Resistance of Carlo and Nello Rosselli, and the Relevance for Us” (University of Connecticut)
Moderator: Chris Vials

2:40 – 3:40  Panel 4: It Can’t Happen Here: Anti-Democratic/Fascist Tendencies in the United States
-Chip Berlet (Journalist and Independent Scholar)
Chris Vials (UConn): “It Has Happened Here: Mainstream Fascist Movements in the United States”
Moderator: Scott Campbell

3:40 – 5:15  Break