



THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO

The College
Center in Paris

Theodore J. and Angèle Lowi Lecture Series

The Power of the Powerful: How Autocratic Leaders (Sometimes) Survive Poor Economic Performance and Disastrous Wars

Tuesday, May 16, 2023

7:30 p.m.

The University of Chicago

Center in Paris

6 rue Thomas Mann, 75013 Paris

Dictatorship is again on the rise around the world—a fact that cannot be attributed to better economic performance or greater success in foreign affairs. Recent work in political science and economics helps us to understand how autocratic leaders survive even in the face of bad outcomes.



Scott Gehlbach is a scholar of authoritarian and post-authoritarian regimes. Much of his research is motivated by the contemporary and historical experience of Russia and Ukraine. His early work focused on the post-communist transition in these and neighboring countries—a period of enormous political and economic change that exposed the centrality of institutions and the often divergent effects of similar reforms. More recently, Gehlbach has examined the relationship between reform and rebellion in autocracies, with an empirical focus on late imperial Russia, and the impact of political

connections on economic outcomes using large firm-level datasets from Ukraine. An early and leading practitioner of the use of game theory to model the institutions of authoritarian regimes, Gehlbach is the author of the widely used textbook *Formal Models of Domestic Politics*, now in its second edition.

Gehlbach is currently first vice president of the Society for Institutional and Organizational Economics, associate editor of the *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, and organizer of the annual Summer Workshop in the Economic History and Historical Political Economy of Eurasia. At the University of Chicago, Gehlbach co-led the process to create a new Ph.D. Program in Political Economy, a joint offering of the Department of Political Science and the Harris School of Public Policy; he now leads the program as its director.