

UNDUE PROCESS

PERSECUTION AND PUNISHMENT IN AUTOCRATIC COURTS IN AFRICA



A talk with

DR. FIONA SHEN-BAYH

Assistant Professor of Government and Politics,
University of Maryland, College Park

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 3-4:30 PM

Zarrow Hall 145 and via Zoom

Please register for the Zoom at <https://bit.ly/40cw2wj>



Why do autocrats hold political trials when outcomes are presumed known from the start? Dr. Fiona Shen-Bayh's book *Undue Process* (Cambridge University Press, 2022) examines how autocrats weaponize the judiciary to stay in control. In this talk, Shen-Bayh argues that contrary to conventional wisdom that courts constrain arbitrary power, judicial processes can instead be used to legitimize dictatorship and dissuade dissent when power is contested. Focusing on sub-Saharan Africa since independence, she draws on fine-grained archival data on regime threats and state repression to explain why political trials are often political purges in disguise, providing legal cover for the persecution of regime rivals. Finally, she reveals how courts can be used to repress political challengers, institutionalize punishment, and undermine the rule of law.

For accommodation on the basis of disability contact stephaniesager@ou.edu.