Fascism and authoritarianism

- what is authoritarianism?
- what is its relationship to Fascism?
- Fascism and conservatism
- Fascism and authoritarianism in practice: Spain; Austria; Hungary; Romania

Authoritarianism: a definition
- the ‘belief in, or practice of, government ‘from above’, in which authority is exercised regardless of popular consent’ (Heywood)
- ‘a style of government in which the rulers demand unquestioning obedience from the ruled. Traditionally, ‘authoritarians’ have argued for a high degree of determination by governments of belief and behaviour and a correspondingly smaller significance for individual choice. But it is possible to be authoritarian in some spheres while being more liberal in others’ (Oxford)

Fascism and conservatism
- Kevin Passmore: conservatives differed from fascists in that they ‘defended the primacy of conservative ‘interests’: property, church, family, the military, the administration. They were highly nationalist, but believed that the elites, not the people, spoke for the nation, and their nationalism was moderated by the need to preserve the autonomy of conservative interests’
- Martin Blinkhorn: Conservatives are those who sought the following goals: ‘the defence of established social and economic interests, hierarchies etc.’; ‘the pursuit of modernising, developmental policies within a ‘system of order’ in which their own control could be guaranteed and perpetuated.’

Spain
- at the beginning of the 20th century Spain was still a largely agrarian society
- officially a constitutional monarchy, but politics dominated by small oligarchy of professional politicians
- 1898: Spanish-American War: Spain lost most of what remained of her Empire and was deeply humiliated
- neutral during WW1 so avoided some of the worst effects, but still struck by widespread labour unrest, dissatisfaction in the Army and separatism in Catalonia and the Basque region
- 1923-30: military dictatorship under General Miguel Primo de Rivera
- 1931: the monarchy replaced by a left-leaning republic which took on the vested interests of the Church, large landowners, industrialists etc.

The Far Right in Spain
- Alfonisist monarchists: wanted the restoration of Alfonso XIII, mainstream conservatives
- Carlists: traditionalist monarchists who supported the claim to the throne of a different branch of the Bourbon monarchy; strong paramilitary force the Requette which was 6,000 strong in 1936
- Confederacion Espanola de Derechas Autonomas (Spanish Confederation of Autonomous Right-wing Groups, CEDA): main Catholic conservative party during