

## Russian and Post-Soviet Politics

POL SCI 310  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee  
Spring 2014  
Time: MW 12:30-1:45  
Room: B40

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Office Hours: W 2:00-4:00pm  
Mode of Delivery: In-person

**Prerequisites:** Comparative politics course, jr standing.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Comparative politics uses the general to explain the specific and the specific to illuminate the general. This course uses Russia and other countries in the post-Soviet world to illuminate general themes, topics, and questions in the study of comparative politics.

The collapse of the Soviet Union left in its wake fifteen sovereign states-- Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan. Nearly twenty years later, each continues to bear the traces of its Soviet past, but they have also diverged in important ways. This is a course on the politics of the states of the former Soviet Union. It stresses both similarities in their political processes and areas of divergence. As the largest, most important, and most studied post-Soviet country, Russia will receive special attention in our course.

The countries in this region are bound together by two things. First, to varying degrees, they are bound by the cultural, political, linguistic, ethnic, and economic ties that were cultivated by geographic proximity and empire. Second, they are bound together by their shared experiences as constituent parts of the Soviet Union. Thus, this course begins with a brief examination of politics, economics, and society in the Soviet Union. In this section of the course, we will consider how the legacies of communism affect politics in contemporary post-Soviet states. The course then moves to consider the collapse of the Soviet Union and the new political institutions that took its place. The middle part of the course undertakes a thematic examination of regime change in the post-Soviet space. Here we will focus on the causes of regime divergence across the post-Soviet space. The course concludes by considering issues related to nationalism and ethnicity in the region.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

In this course you will:

- 1) become familiar with the Soviet Union as a political and economic system
- 2) learn about the political institutions and processes of Russia and the countries of the former Soviet Union
- 3) gain appreciation for the effects of the transition from communism on political development

- 4) use the analytic toolkit of social science to examine why we observe certain political outcomes in the countries of the former Soviet Union
- 5) learn more about the logic social scientific inquiry through the application of its methods in this world region
- 6) gain factual and useful real-world knowledge about political developments in Russia and the post-Soviet periphery

## **REQUIREMENTS:**

### 1) Attend class sessions and participate

The format of this class will be discussion. Your participation includes both attendance and engagement in class discussion.

I will lecture at times, but most of our class time will be spent discussing the themes and arguments presented in our readings. Everyone should be ready to contribute something in every class. Your comments need not dazzle every time. Often times, the most productive contributions to class discussions are questions. If you don't understand something in the readings, say so. The authors we read are not perfect; their prose may not always be clear and their arguments will never be bulletproof. Speak up and air your grievances if you are confused. We will all be better for it and you will be rewarded come evaluation time.

Attendance is mandatory. Our class is small, and therefore, you cannot free ride on your fellow classmates. Your absences will be noticed by all and have a palpable impact on our sessions. Each unexcused absence will result in the reduction of your participation grade by 1/3 of a letter grade. Absences will be excused for documented illness, family crises, religious observances etc.

Your class participation grade will be based upon three components: 1) reading journals (see below), 2) participation in class, 3) participation in our class debate (see below), and 4) attendance.

### 2) Complete assigned readings before the date indicated on the syllabus

In order to participate effectively in discussion, you will need to have done the required readings for that day. Much is expected in terms of reading, but you are up to the task.

After completing the readings and before each class, you should write a half-page journal entry on the reading or readings. This journal entry should be on paper and ready to hand in at the beginning of each class (Alternatively, you have the option of putting a typed journal entry in the dropbox folder labeled "JournalEntries") This journal need not be typed. It may be handwritten on a piece of notebook paper. (I suggest that you use a three ring binder filled with loose-leaf pages, so that when I collect the journal you can turn in a single sheet of paper without turning in the entire journal) The purpose of the journal entry is to demonstrate that you have completed the assigned reading. It is also a chance for you to formulate some ideas. The entry should contain a few sentence summary of the main point in the reading. It may conclude with some questions about the reading.

At various points, I will randomly collect these journals at the beginning of class. These journal entries are graded on a pass/fail basis. If you have not completed the journal entry or it is obvious from the journal entry that you did not complete the readings, then you will receive a participation grade of F for that day.

3) One geography and history quiz

Situating the countries we study on a map and in time will help you access the readings more readily. This quiz will cover the geography, demographics, and barebones history of Russia and the former Soviet Union.

4) One 3-4 page reaction paper/presentation

You will write one reaction paper on one of the “starred” readings on the syllabus.

These papers should have three components:

1) The paper should briefly (one paragraph) sum up the main argument made by the author and the evidence provided.

2) It should contain an evaluation and critique of the author’s argument and evidence. Does the author’s argument make sense? Why or why not? Does his evidence (if any) comport with his/her argument? Why or why not? Do you know of other evidence that undermines (or supports) the author’s argument? Does one of the other readings for that day offer a perspective that is discordant with the perspective offered by the author? This section should constitute the lion’s share of the paper.

3) The paper should conclude with some questions for the class that flow from your evaluation/critique.

You will give a short 5-minute presentation on your paper to kick off our discussion of that reading. Your questions should help us in our discussion.

Each week we will determine who will write reaction papers for the following week. I will ask for volunteers.

All papers are due on the day that we cover the reading in class. Late assignments are NOT accepted.

5) One Midterm Quiz—March 12

6) Prepare and participate in our in-class debate--The tentative topic is “Whither democracy in Russia?” but this topic is not set in stone at this point.

7) One Final Paper

In this analytic practicum, you will either a) identify two different political outcomes in two post-Soviet countries and explain that cross-country variation or b) identify two different political outcomes in one post-Soviet country at two different points in time and explain that cross-temporal variation. In making your argument, you should draw on both scholarly and news sources. Early in the

course, I will distribute more detailed information on the research paper, including a list of sample topics. You will be required to write a one paragraph statement of your topic and bring it to an in person meeting with me before February 26. Sign up sheets will be distributed in class. A bibliography of not-less than 10 sources and a two page outline of your paper is due on March 26. The final paper is due on the last day of class, May 7. The paper should be no less than 2800 words.

The outline will constitute 5% of your final course grade and the final paper will constitute 20% of your final grade. Together, the final paper accounts for 25% of your course grade.

8) One Final Exam –May 15

**EVALUATION:**

Class Attendance, Reading Journals and Participation:	20%
Geography Quiz:	5%
Response Paper:	5%
Midterm Exam:	20%
Final Paper:	25%
Final Exam:	25%

**REQUIRED BOOKS FOR PURCHASE:**

McAuley, Mary. (1992). *Soviet Politics: 1917-1991*. New York: Oxford.

Remington, Thomas. (2010). *Politics in Russia 7<sup>th</sup> Edition*. New York: Longman [PIR]

White, Stephen, Henry Hale, and Richard Sakwa (eds). (2009). *Developments in Russian Politics 7<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Durham, NC: Duke UP. [DIRP]

All other readings listed on the syllabus be made available on D2L or are available at the weblink provided on the syllabus.

**Late Assignment Policy**

All assignments are due on the assigned date. Response papers are due on the day that a reading is covered in class. I do not accept late assignments. Exceptions are made only in the most severe and extraordinary circumstances.

**Expected Time Commitment:**

This is a three-credit course, so the expected time commitment from students is approximately 144 hours. Students will spend 40 hours in class over the course of the semester. Approximately 50% of the remaining time will be spent preparing for class by doing assigned readings and reviewing previous lecture notes. A further 25% will be spent preparing for quizzes and exams. Students should expect to allocate the final 25% to writing the final paper.

### **Academic Honesty:**

All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's academic misconduct policy. Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course and any plagiarism on any assignment will result in a failing grade for the course. *When in doubt, cite.* If you have questions about attribution, please see me. I am here to help! More information is available at [http://www.uwm.edu/acad\\_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm](http://www.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm)

**University Policies** (<http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/SyllabusLinks.pdf>)

**[NOTE: ALL READINGS ON THIS SYLLABUS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. I WILL NOTIFY YOU IN ADVANCE BY EMAIL AND/OR IN CLASS IF A CHANGE IS MADE PLEASE CONSULT THE D2L VERSION OF THE SYLLABUS BEFORE DOING YOUR READINGS. ]**

### **COURSE SCHEDULE:**

#### **PART I: THE SOVIET UNION AND ITS COLLAPSE**

**January 22-Course Introduction and Primer on the Region**

**January 27-Geography and Pre-Soviet Legacies**

Braudel, Fernand.. 1993. A History of Civilizations. Pp527-546

Hill, Fiona and Clifford Gaddy. 2003. *The Siberian Curse: How Communist Planners Left Russia out in the Cold.* Chapter 3\*

PIR 32-33.

**January 29-The Russian Revolution and the Origins of the Soviet Union**

McAuley, 11-33

PIR 34-47

Richard Pipes. 2004. "Flight From Freedom: What Russians Think and Want." *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2004. 9-15.\*

### **February 3-The Soviet System in Equilibrium**

McAuley 62-88

Darden, Keith and Anna Grzymala-Busse. 2006. "The Great Divide: Literacy, Nationalism, and the Communist Collapse." *World Politics* 59: 83-115\*

### **February 5-The Collapse of the Soviet Union**

McAuley 89-123

Pop-Eleches, Grigore and Joshua Tucker. 2013. "Communist Legacies and the Democratic Support Deficit" [https://files.nyu.edu/jat7/public/Pop-Eleches\\_Tucker\\_PC%20legacies%20democ%20support\\_CES%202013.pdf](https://files.nyu.edu/jat7/public/Pop-Eleches_Tucker_PC%20legacies%20democ%20support_CES%202013.pdf) \*

*Where in the world is Dushanbe!? (Geography, History, and Demographics quiz [in class])*

### **February 10-In Class Film: *My Perestroika***

### **February 12-Political Transition**

PIR 49-60

Michael McFaul. 2002. "The Fourth Wave of Democracy and Dictatorship: Noncooperative Transitions in the Post-Communist World," *World Politics*, 54(2). pp. 212-244. [33]\*

### **February 17-Debating Regime Type in Russia: 1990-2013**

DIRP Chapter 15

Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way. 2002. "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy*, 13(2): 51-65.\*

Colton, Timothy and Henry Hale. 2009. "The Putin Vote: Presidential Electorates in a Hybrid Regime" *Slavic Review* 68(3)\*

## **February 19-Institutional Choice: Executives and Legislatures**

PIR 56-73

Frye, Timothy. 1997. "A Politics of Institutional Choice: Post-Communist Presidencies" *Comparative Political Studies* 30(5)\*

## **February 24-Legislatures, Elections, and Parties**

DIRP Chapter 4

DIRP Chapter 5

## **February 26-An Authoritarian Party System**

Reuter, Ora John and Thomas F. Remington. 2009. "Dominant Party Regimes and the Commitment Problem: the Case of United Russia." *Comparative Political Studies* 42(4).\*

March, Luke. 2009. "Managing Opposition in a Hybrid Regime: Just Russia and Parastatal Opposition" *Slavic Review*. 69(3)\*

## **March 3-Electoral Authoritarianism in the Former Soviet Union: Electoral Fraud**

White, Stephen. 2011. "Elections: Russian Style" *Europe-Asia Studies*. 63(4).\*

Enikolopov, Ruben, Vasily Korovkin, Maria Petrova, Konstantin Sonin, and Alexei Zakharov. 2013 "Field Experiment Estimate of Electoral Fraud in Russian Parliamentary Elections" *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 110(2)\*

## **March 5- Electoral Authoritarianism in the Former Soviet Union: Administrative Resource and Political Machines**

Frye, Timothy, Ora John Reuter, and David Szakonyi. 2012. "Political Machines at Work: Voter Mobilization and Electoral Subversion in the Workplace" Manuscript.\*

Allina-Pisano, Jessica. 2010. "Social contracts and authoritarian projects in the post-Soviet space: the use of administrative resource." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*. 43: 373-382\*

We may also watch the film “Complete Collapse: How Krasnoturinsk Elected a Mayor for Itself” in class.

### **March 10- Electoral Authoritarianism in the Former Soviet Union: The Media**

Gehlbach, Scott. 2010. “Reflections on Putin and the Media” *Post-Soviet Affairs*. 26(1): 77-87\*

Guest Presentation by Christine Evans, Assistant Professor of History, on the Soviet media model.

### **March 12—Mid Term Quiz**

### **March 24—What undermines democracy in the former Soviet Union? Natural Resources**

Fish, Steven. 2005. *Democracy Derailed in Russia: The Failure of Open Politics*. New York: Cambridge. Chapter 5\*

### **March 26— What undermines democracy in the former Soviet Union? Political Economy**

PIR 191-208

Fish, Steven. 2005. *Democracy Derailed in Russia: The Failure of Open Politics*. New York: Cambridge. Chapter 6\*

### **March 31— What undermines democracy in the former Soviet Union? Institutions and Civil Society**

Fish, Steven. 2005. *Democracy Derailed in Russia: The Failure of Open Politics*. New York: Cambridge. Chapter 7\*

Robertson, Graeme. 2009. “Managing Society, Civil Society, and Regime in Putin’s Russia” *Slavic Review*. 68(3).

### **April 2—In class debate. Whither Russian Democracy?**

### **April 7 Electoral Revolutions and Political Change: The Orange Revolution**

Katarnycky, Adrian. 2005. “Ukraine’s Orange Revolution” *Foreign Affairs* 84(2).

Beissinger, Mark. 2013. “The Semblance of Democratic Revolution: Coalitions in Ukraine’s Orange Revolution. *American Political Science Review*.\*

Film Showing CBC Newsworld "Anatomy of a Revolution"

#### **April 9 Electoral Revolutions and Political Change: Causes Part 1**

Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way. 2010. *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*. New York: Cambridge Chapters 2 and 5\*

#### **April 14 Electoral Revolutions and Political Change: Causes Part 2**

Bunce, Valerie and Sharon Wolchik. 2010. "Defeating Dictators: Electoral Change and Stability in Competitive Authoritarian Regimes" *World Politics*. 62(1).\*

#### **April 16—Protest: Theoretical Perspectives**

Timur Kuran, "Now Out of Never: The Element of Surprise in the East European Revolution of 1989," *World Politics* 44(1): 7-48\*

Joshua A. Tucker, 2007. "Enough! Electoral Fraud Collective Action Problems and Post-Communist Colored Revolutions," *Perspectives on Politics* 5(3): 535-551.\*

#### **April 21—Protest: Social Media and the Russian Case**

Reuter, Ora John and David Szakonyi. 2014. "Online Social Media and Political Awareness in Authoritarian Regimes" *British Journal of Political Science*.\*

Smyth, Regina, Anton Sobolev, and Irina Soboleva, "A Well-Organized Play." *Problems of Post-Communism* 60, no. 2 (2013): 24-39.\*

#### **April 23—The Rule of Law and Corruption**

PIR 219-245

Alena V. Ledeneva, "Telephone Justice in Russia," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 24:4 (2008): 324-350.\*

#### **April 28—Nationalism and the Collapse of the Soviet Union**

Philip Roeder, "The Triumph of Nation-States: Lessons from the Collapse of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia," in Michael McFaul & Kathryn Stoner-Weiss, *After the Collapse of Communism*, ch. 1, pp. 21-57\*

Hale, Henry. 2004. [Divided We Stand: Institutional Sources of Ethnofederal State](#)

Survival and Collapse,” *World Politics*, v.56, no.2\*

**April 30—Ethnicity and Kinship in Ukraine and Central Asia**

D’Anieri, Paul, Robert Kravchuk, and Taras Kuzio. (1999). *Politics and Society in Ukraine*  
Boulder, CO: Westview Press, Chapter 2\*

Collins, Kathleen. (2002). “Clans, Pacts, and Politics in Central Asia” *Journal of Democracy*.  
13(2) pp137-152\*

**May 5—Centre Periphery Relations in Russia**

PIR 73-4, 77-82

Hale, Henry. 2003. “Explaining Machine Politics in Russia’s Regions: Economy, Ethnicity,  
and Legacy.” *Post-Soviet Affairs*. 19(3).\*

**May 7—Ethnicity and Separatism in Russia**

Dmitry Gorenburg, “Regional Separatism in Russia: Ethnic Mobilisation or Power Grab?”  
*Europe-Asia Studies*, 51:2 (1999), pp. 245-274\*

Treisman, Daniel. 2011. *The Return: Russia’s Journey from Gorbachev to Medvedev*. Chapter 8.\*