Russia faces three problems: the creation of a sovereign state, the development of a new political system, and the restructuring of its economy. In this course we will challenge the assumption that the outcome of these three transitions will be a strong, democratic, capitalist country. We will ask whether civil war, the devolution of power to the provinces, and organized crime signify a weakening of the state. Furthermore, do “superpresidentialism,” an immature party system, and poor social services suggest that Russia is not democratic? Finally, do nomenklatura privatization and the lack of economic laws indicate that a market has not developed in Russia? While evaluating evidence for state-building, democratization, and marketization, we will also examine how these three transitions relate to one another. Can they occur at once, or must one precede the others?

To explore these questions, we will read works by Russian and Western scholars as well as a few journalistic accounts. The course also incorporates film clips and slides of Russia in order to provide students with images of the country.

Course Materials

Books and Articles: Four works are available for purchase at the bookstore: Matthew Evangelista’s *The Chechen Wars*, David Remnick’s *Resurrection: The Struggle for a New Russia*, the edited volume *Developments in Russian Politics* (fifth edition), and a coursereader. The books are on reserve at Kelvin Smith Library, and the coursereader is on e-reserve at Kelvin.

News: These sources offer some of the best coverage of events in Russia:

- Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, [www.rferl.org](http://www.rferl.org), offers news analyses and features. (Select RFE/RL Newsline or Features from the top right corner of the homepage.)
- *The Economist* is available for free online through EuclidPLUS and in print at Kelvin Smith Periodicals. For information about a student subscription rate call 1-800-456-6086.
Course Requirements

Participation: The focus of each class will be on discussion, and students are strongly encouraged to take notes on the readings in order to be prepared to integrate and critique the materials and to pose questions for discussion. Readings should be completed by the class meeting for which they are assigned. Students should also follow events in Russia and be prepared to discuss them in class. Because participation is critical to understanding the material, students are expected to attend all classes. Except under extraordinary circumstances, absenteeism will negatively affect students’ final grades.

Commentaries: In addition to reading course materials and participating in class, students will write a weekly commentary on the readings for eight of the weeks. Students should write papers for three weeks in Part I, three weeks in Part II, and two weeks in Part III of the course. No commentaries will be accepted for Part IV. The purpose of the commentaries is to help students understand, critique, and integrate the readings and prepare to pose questions for discussion in class. Students should not summarize the readings but should instead use the course materials to answer their own questions and explore their own arguments. Students should incorporate concepts and arguments in readings from previous weeks, and the quality of the commentaries should improve throughout the semester. For the commentaries informal citations—phrases like “as Rutland argues” or “as Remnick notes”—are acceptable. Commentaries should be between one and a half to two pages double-spaced. They must be submitted at the beginning of the class meeting for which the analyzed materials are assigned.

Final Paper

Undergraduates will write a final essay examining how the three transitions—state-building, democratization, and marketization—interact. Students are expected to analyze one or more specific questions related to this larger topic. For example, can the three transitions occur at once, or must one precede the others? In completing this essay, students should draw primarily on course materials. Students may use additional materials if necessary to answer their questions and support their arguments. The final essay should include citations and a bibliography. For formatting, see The Chicago Manual of Style (under Z253.C57 at Kelvin Reference), www.dartmouth.edu/~sources/, or a similar guide. With the agreement of the instructor, undergraduates may opt to write a research paper, the graduate student requirement, instead.

Graduate students will write a research paper that further explores an idea raised in the readings or in class. Each student should meet at least once with the instructor to discuss the topic. The research paper should offer an analysis of research materials, provide evidence of assertions, be factually accurate, provide specific examples so as to avoid vague statements, and include citations and a bibliography. Students writing research papers will submit a one-page, double-spaced paper proposal at the beginning of class February 23. A 1-2 page working bibliography will be submitted at the beginning of class March 16. Final essays should be 12-15 pages long. Research papers should be 20-30 pages long. Papers are due Tuesday, April 26.

All written work should be carefully structured and grammatically correct. To avoid plagiarism, students should review “Plagiarism: What It is and How to Recognize and Avoid It,” distributed in class. Cases of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will be investigated by university judicial bodies.

Class participation and attendance will constitute 15 percent of the course grade, the eight weekly commentaries will count for 45 percent, and the final paper for the remaining 40 percent. Students will lose a half a grade on an assignment for each day it is late.
Course Schedule and Readings

I. January 12: Introduction to Russia and the Course

NO CLASS January 19

PART I. STATE-BUILDING: FROM REPUBLIC TO SOVEREIGN COUNTRY

II. January 26: Historical Background—The Soviet State and Its Demise


III. February 2: Center-Periphery Relations—“Vertical of Power”


[Read ahead for February 9.]
PART I. STATE-BUILDING [cont.]

IV. February 9: Secession—Chechnya


V. February 16: Services—The Disintegration of the “Nanny State”


VI. February 23: Historical Background—Soviet Communism and Its Demise


VII. March 2: Electoral Politics—Weak Parties


NO CLASS March 9
VIII. March 16: Nongovernmental Organizations—Obstacles to Activism

Valerie Sperling. *Organizing Women in Contemporary Russia: Engendering Transition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. Read “Introduction,” “Russian Women’s Movement Groups and Activists,” 1-14, 15-42. Also read one of the following three chapters: Chapter 3 about socio-cultural obstacles to organizing, Chapter 4 about political obstacles, and Chapter 5 about economic obstacles. (You will receive only one.) Finally, read “International Influences on the Russian Women’s Movement,” 220-256.

IX. March 23: Regime Type—Democracy or Authoritarianism?


X. March 30: Historical Background—The Command Economy


PART III. ECONOMIC TRANSITION [cont.]

XI. April 6: Stabilization and Depopulation—Oligarchs and Missing Russians


[Read ahead for April 13.]
PART III. ECONOMIC TRANSITION [cont.]

XII. April 13: Social Consequences—Coping Without the State


PART IV. INTERACTIONS AMONG THE THREE TRANSITIONS

XIII. April 20: Triple Transition—A Rossiianin, Demokrat, and “Novyi Russkii”


For this week students are expected to review their notes and be prepared to offer their own analysis of the interactions among the three transitions in Russia. No commentaries will be accepted for this week.

DUE: Tuesday, April 26 at 10 AM—Final Assignment