

Political Science 377/477: Politics of Russia

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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 courser reader. The books are on reserve at Kelvin Smith Library, and the courser reader 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, offers news analyses and features. (Select RFE/RL Newline or Features from the top right corner of the homepage.)
- *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com/>, provides daily news for free on its website, once you register. Also see the website for details about a student subscription discount.
- *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.
- National Public Radio (WCPN 90.3 FM) broadcasts brief news updates at the top of the hour and news analyses throughout the day on programs like Morning Edition, Talk of the Nation, All Things Considered, and Marketplace. See <http://www.wcpn.org/schedule/> for the schedule.

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

Geoffrey A. Hosking. *The First Socialist Society: A History of the Soviet Union from Within*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990. “The Making of the Soviet Union,” 93-118.

Terry Martin. *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001. “The Soviet Affirmative Action Empire” [part], 1-15.

Mark R. Beissinger. *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. “From the Impossible to the Inevitable” [part], 1-8, 36-37.

David Remnick. *Resurrection: The Struggle for a New Russia*. New York: Vintage Books, 1998. “The Lost Empire,” 3-36.

Ilya Prizel. *National Identity and Foreign Policy: Nationalism and Leadership in Poland, Russia, and Ukraine*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. “Russian Identity and the Soviet Period” [part], 180-181, 189-196.

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

James Hughes. “From Federalisation to Recentralisation.” In *Developments in Russian Politics 5*, edited by Stephen White, et al., 128-146. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.

Darrell Slider. “Politics in the Regions.” In *Developments in Russian Politics 5*, edited by Stephen White, et al., 147-168. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.

Matthew Evangelista. *The Chechen Wars: Will Russia Go the Way of the Soviet Union?* Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2002. “Regions at Risk?” “Dictatorship of Law,” 86-138.

Steven Lee Myers. “From Those Putin Would Weaken, Praise.” *The New York Times*, 15 September 2004: A1, A8.

[Read ahead for February 9.]

PART I. STATE-BUILDING [cont.]

IV. February 9: Secession—Chechnya

Matthew Evangelista. *The Chechen Wars: Will Russia Go the Way of the Soviet Union?* Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2002. "Introduction," "Yeltsin's War," 1-45.

David Remnick. *Resurrection: The Struggle for a New Russia*. New York: Vintage Books, 1998. "Yeltsin's Vietnam," 260-291.

Matthew Evangelista. *The Chechen Wars: Will Russia Go the Way of the Soviet Union?* Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2002. "No War, No Peace," "Yeltsin's War," "War Crimes and Russia's International Standing," "Russia and the West after September 11," "Conclusion," 46-85, 138-198.

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

Andrea Stevenson Sanjian. "State-Society Relations and the Evolution of Social Policy in Russia." In *State-Building in Russia: The Yeltsin Legacy and the Challenge of the Future*, edited by Gordon B. Smith, 177-199. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1999.

Timo Piirainen. *Towards a New Social Order in Russia: Transforming Structures and Everyday Life*. Brookfield, Vt.: Dartmouth, 1997. "Households and Public Power" [part], 206-217.

Louise Shelley. "Crime and Corruption." In *Developments in Russian Politics 5*, edited by Stephen White, et al., 239-253. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.

Virginie Coulloudon. "Crime and Corruption after Communism: The Criminalization of Russia's Political Elite." *East European Constitutional Review* 6, no. 4 (1997).

Stephen Handelman. "Inside Russia's Gangster Economy: Why Capitalism and the Mafiya Mean Business." *The New York Times Magazine*, 24 January 1993: 12, 14-15, 30, 31, 34, 40, 50.

Vadim Volkov. "Violent Entrepreneurship in Post-Communist Russia." *Europe-Asia Studies* 51, no. 5 (1999), 741-754.

PART II. POLITICAL TRANSITION: FROM POST-TOTALITARIANISM TO MANAGED COMPETITION

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

Merle Fainsod. *How Russia Is Ruled*. revised ed. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965. "Party Organization, Activities, and Problems" [part], 208-220, 222-245.

Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski. "The General Characteristics of Totalitarian Dictatorship." In *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy*, edited by Zbigniew Brzezinski, 3-13. New York: Praeger, 1956.

Vladimir Shlapentokh. *A Normal Totalitarian Society: How the Soviet Functioned and How It Collapsed*. Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 2001. "Consequences," 201-215.

Stephen White. "From Communism to Democracy?" In *Developments in Russian Politics 5*, edited by Stephen White, et al., 1-17. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001. Read 1-10.

VII. March 2: Electoral Politics—Weak Parties

Thomas F. Remington. "Parliamentary Politics in Russia." In *Developments in Russian Politics 5*, edited by Stephen White, et al., 42-61. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.

Matthew Wyman. "Elections and Voters." In *Developments in Russian Politics 5*, edited by Stephen White, et al., 62-83. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.

Richard Sakwa. "Parties and Organised Interests." In *Developments in Russian Politics 5*, edited by Stephen White, et al., 84-107. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.

Peter Rutland. "The Sorry State of Russian Democracy." *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 15 December 2003: selected sections.

C. J Chivers. "Communists' Slide Weakens Checks on Putin's Power." *The New York Times*, 5 July 2004: A3.

"Who Needs Democracy? Having It Both Ways: A Survey of Russia." *The Economist*, 22 May 2004: 12-14.

NO CLASS March 9

PART II. POLITICAL TRANSITION [cont.]

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?

Zvi Gitelman. “Russian Democratisation in Comparative Perspective.” In *Developments in Russian Politics 5*, edited by Stephen White, et al., 289-302. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.

John P. Willerton. “The Presidency: From Yeltsin to Putin.” In *Developments in Russian Politics 5*, edited by Stephen White, et al., 21-41. Durham: Duke University Press, 2001.

David Remnick. *Resurrection: The Struggle for a New Russia*. New York: Vintage Books, 1998. “The October Revolution,” “The Black Box,” 37-83, 241-259.

David Remnick. “Letter from Moscow: Post-Imperial Blues.” *The New Yorker* (October 13, 2003), 78-89.

Peter Rutland. “Collapse and Recovery: Russian Politics from Gorbachev to Putin.” *21st Century*, draft version (October 2004). Read selections “What Changes with Putin” and “Future Implications,” 11-17.

**PART III. ECONOMIC TRANSITION:
FROM SOVIET SOCIALISM TO BURGEONING CAPITALISM**

X. March 30: Historical Background—The Command Economy

Merle Fainsod. *How Russia Is Ruled*. revised ed. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965. “Management and Labor in Soviet Industry,” “Controls and Tensions in Soviet Agriculture [part], 503-547, 569-575.

Alena V. Ledeneva. *Russia's Economy of Favours: Blat, Networking, and Informal Exchange*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. “Blat: The Unknown Commonplace,” 11-38.

Katherine Verdery. “What Was Socialism, and Why Did It Fall?” In *Beyond Soviet Studies*, edited by Daniel T. Orlovsky, 27-46. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.

PART III. ECONOMIC TRANSITION [cont.]

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

Peter Rutland. "Putin's Economic Record." In *Developments in Russian Politics VI*, edited by Stephen White, et al., draft. Durham: Duke University Press, forthcoming in 2005.

"Taming the Robber Barons. Having It Both Ways: A Survey of Russia." *The Economist*, 22 May 2004: 5-6.

"Too Much Oil in the Works. Having It Both Ways: A Survey of Russia." *The Economist*, 22 May 2004: 8-10.

Erin E. Arvedlund and Simon Romero. "Kremlin Reasserts Hold on Russia's Oil and Gas." *The New York Times*, 17 December 2004: A1, C2.

"Watch Your Back. Having It Both Ways: A Survey of Russia." *The Economist*, 22 May 2004: 11-12.

Kirill Gorelov. "Building Houses for the Newly Affluent near Moscow: An Entrepreneur's Perspective." In *Russia's Fate through Russian Eyes: Voices of the New Generation*, edited by Natan M. Shklyar, 99-106. Boulder: Westview Press, 2001.

Arkadii Zlochevskii. "A Pioneer in Russia's First Open Grain Market." In *Russia's Fate through Russian Eyes: Voices of the New Generation*, edited by Natan M. Shklyar, 107-113. Boulder: Westview Press, 2001.

Aleksandr Sergeev. "Fighting for Labor Rights in a Transitional Economy." In *Russia's Fate through Russian Eyes: Voices of the New Generation*, edited by Natan M. Shklyar, 114-125. Boulder: Westview Press, 2001.

Nicholas Eberstadt. *The Russian Federation at the Dawn of the Twenty-first Century: Trapped in a Demographic Straitjacket*. NBR Analysis, 15, 2. Seattle: The National Bureau of Asian Research, September 2004.

[Read ahead for April 13.]

PART III. ECONOMIC TRANSITION [cont.]

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

Susan Bridger, et al. *No More Heroines?: Russia, Women, and the Market*. New York: Routledge, 1996. “Living Standards: The Not So Smooth Transition to the Market,” “Survival Strategies,” 55-75, 147-164.

Timo Piirainen. *Towards a New Social Order in Russia: Transforming Structures and Everyday Life*. Brookfield, Vt.: Dartmouth, 1997. “Four Families,” 171-204.

Alena V. Ledeneva. *Russia's Economy of Favours: Blat, Networking, and Informal Exchange*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. “Networking in the Post-Soviet Period,” 175-214.

Myriam Hivon. “The Bullied Farmer: Social Pressure as a Survival Strategy.” In *Surviving Post-Socialism: Local Strategies and Regional Responses in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, edited by Sue Bridger Frances Pine, 33-51. New York: Routledge, 1998.

PART IV. INTERACTIONS AMONG THE THREE TRANSITIONS

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

Stephen Holmes. “What Russia Teaches Us Now.” *The American Prospect* 33 (1997), 30-39.

Barbara Geddes. “Challenging the Conventional Wisdom.” In *Economic Reform and Democracy*, edited by Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, 59-73. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.

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