

Political Science 377/477: Politics of Russia

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Since independence in 1991 Russia has faced three challenges: the creation of a sovereign state, the development of a new political system, and the restructuring of its economy. In this course we will assess the extent to which these transformations have resulted in a strong, democratic, capitalist country, as many Russians and foreigners hoped in the 1990s. We will evaluate whether independent Russia has been a strong or weak state, specifically considering its civil war, devolution of power to its provinces, and foreign campaigns. Furthermore, have “superpresidentialism,” an immature party system, and government economic monopolies stalled the country’s democratization? Finally, do organized crime, double bookkeeping, and barter 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 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: Two works are available for purchase at the bookstore: the edited volume *Developments in Russian Politics* (seventh edition) and Alena Ledeneva’s *How Russia Really Works*. The books are also on reserve at Kelvin Smith Library. Other course materials are available on Blackboard except for the first set, which will be distributed in class.

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 reports.
- Johnson’s Russia List, www.cdi.org/russia/johnson, offers summaries of media articles about Russia and some original content through an e-newsletter and web archives.
- The Russian Analytical Digest, www.res.ethz.ch/analysis/rad, publishes themed reports.
- *The New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com/>, provides a limited number of online news articles for free each month, and a print copy is available in the KSL café.
- *The Economist* is available for free online through EuclidPLUS and in print at the law library. Also see the website for details about a student subscription discount.
- 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.

Blackboard: Students will post questions on Blackboard, as later described. To post, select Blackboard on Case’s home page, login, select POSC 377, choose Discussion Board, click on the appropriate date, click on my Instructions message, select Reply, write your questions, and click Submit. Additional assistance is available through Blackboard FAQ on the Blackboard home page.

Course Requirements

Participation: The focus of each class will be on discussion. Students should craft two analytical questions based on each week's readings and post them on the course Blackboard site by 8:00 pm Sunday prior to class meetings during Parts I, II, and III of the course. Students should read their classmates' questions before the start of class. For most of these class meetings the instructor will select questions from Blackboard for discussion, and students are always welcome to raise questions in class. Students are strongly encouraged to take notes on the readings in order to be prepared to integrate and critique the materials in class. Students should also bring a copy of the day's reading to class. Students are expected to actively participate in class discussion. Because participation is critical to understanding the material, students should attend all classes. Except under extraordinary circumstances, absenteeism will negatively affect students' final grades. As indicated below, some class meetings will be held at the library.

Short Essay: In addition to reading course materials and participating in class, students will write a short essay for four of the weeks. Students should write papers for one week in Part I, two weeks in Part II, and one week in Part III of the course. No short essays will be accepted for weeks when no reading is assigned or for Part IV. The purpose of the short essays is to help students understand, critique, and integrate the readings and prepare to pose questions for discussion in class. Students should develop an argument related to an analytical question, such as to what extent Russia has a market economy. Students should incorporate concepts and arguments in readings from the week they are writing, and the quality of the short essays should improve throughout the semester. For the short essays informal citations—phrases like “as Fainsod argues” or “as Hale notes”—are acceptable. Short essays should be between two and two and a half pages double-spaced. They must be submitted at the beginning of the class meeting for which the analyzed materials are assigned. Grading of the short essays will take into account the degree of independent thinking, use of assigned materials, and quality of writing.

Video Project: Teams of two to four students will each create a 3-5 minute video of a single or series of mock Russian political productions, such as media interviews, public service announcements, or electoral advertisements. For the content of the videos, students should draw on course materials and gather and analyze additional research materials as needed. Students may also find it helpful to view actual Russian video productions on the web or cable television. To facilitate the completion of the videos, the creative director of Case's Freedman Center will lead three sessions on video production; each student will email the course instructor a two-sentence description of an idea for a video by 8:00 pm Tuesday, March 6; and teams will work during and outside of class, as needed. Videos are due at the beginning of class April 16. The instructor's evaluation will be based on the degree to which the video demonstrates an understanding of Russian politics, the extent of research, and the quality of the production. Each student will receive an individual grade.

Final Paper: Students will write a final essay examining how the three transitions—state-building, democratization, and marketization—interact in the context of Russia. Students are expected to analyze a specific question 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 can rely exclusively on course materials, and informal citations are appropriate. *Undergraduates'* final essays should be 4-5 pages long. *Graduate students'* essays should be 8-10 pages long. Students should bring to class April 23 two copies of a one-page outline of their final paper argument, subpoints, and evidence to. Papers are due at the beginning of class April 30. Grading of the final paper will take into account the degree to which the argument examines the interaction of the three transitions, the use of evidence to support the argument, and the quality of writing.

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.

Blackboard discussion questions, class participation, and class attendance will constitute 15 percent of the course grade, each of the four short essays will count for 10 percent, the video for 25 percent, and the final paper for the remaining 20 percent. Students will lose a half a grade on an assignment for each day it is late.

Course Schedule and Readings

I. January 18: Introduction to Russia and the Course

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

II. January 23, 25: 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. Distributed in class January 18.

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. Distributed in class January 18.

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. Distributed in class January 18.

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. Distributed in class January 18.

III. January 30, February 1: Center-Periphery Relations—Eroding Federalism

Cameron Ross. “Reforming the Federation.” In *Developments in Russian Politics 7*, edited by Stephen White, Richard Sakwa, and Henry E. Hale, 152-170. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.

Darrell Slider. “Politics in the Regions.” In *Developments in Russian Politics 7*, 171-187.

Chechnya. *The New York Times*, Updated: Oct. 6, 2011, www.nyt.com.

IV. February 6, 8: Foreign Relations—Influence in the Near Abroad

Margot Light. “Russian Foreign Policy.” In *Developments in Russian Politics 7*, edited by Stephen White, Richard Sakwa, and Henry E. Hale, 225-244. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.

Jakob Hedenskog and Robert L. Larsson. *Russian Leverage on the CIS and the Baltic States*. Stockholm: FOI Swedish Defense Research Agency, June 2007. Read “Introduction,” 15-18 and four of the following chapters: “Political Levers,” “Human-Based Levers,” “Energy Levers,” “Economic and Trade Levers,” “Military Levers.” Available at <http://www2.foi.se/rapp/foir2280.pdf>

V. February 13, 15—Video Production Sessions 1 and 2

Class meetings will be in our classroom February 13 and in Room 215 of Kelvin Smith Library February 15. The creative director of the Freedman Center will lead video production sessions. There is no reading for this week, discussion questions need not be posted, and commentaries will not be accepted. Students are encouraged to begin the reading for next week.

PART II. POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION: FROM POST-TOTALITARIANISM TO HYBRID REGIME

VI. February 20, 22: 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], 209-220, 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 Union Functioned and How It Collapsed*. Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 2001. "Consequences," 201-215.

Richard Sakwa. "Politics in Russia." In *Developments in Russian Politics 7*, edited by Stephen White, Richard Sakwa, and Henry E. Hale, 1-19. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.

VII. February 27—Video Production Session 3

The class meeting will be in Room 215 of Kelvin Smith Library. The creative director of the Freedman Center will lead a video production session. There is no reading for this week, discussion questions need not be posted, and commentaries will not be accepted. Students are encouraged to begin the reading for next week.

February 29—A Night at the Russian Cinema

The class meeting will be held 6:30-9:00 pm, instead of 9:00-10:15 am. We will watch the film *Burnt by the Sun*.

VIII. March 5, 7: Government Institutions—Hegemonic Presidency

John P. Willerton. "Semi-presidentialism and the Evolving Executive." In *Developments in Russian Politics 7*, edited by Stephen White, Richard Sakwa, and Henry E. Hale, 20-42, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.

Thomas F. Remington. "Parliamentary Politics in Russia." In *Developments in Russian Politics 7*, edited by Stephen White, Richard Sakwa, and Henry E. Hale, 43-61.

Michael McFaul and Kathryn Stoner-Weiss. "Elections and Voters" In *Developments in Russian Politics 7*, edited by Stephen White, Richard Sakwa, and Henry E. Hale, 62-80.

Henry E. Hale. "Russia's Political Parties and Their Substitutes." In *Developments in Russian Politics 7*, edited by Stephen White, Richard Sakwa, and Henry E. Hale, 81-98.

DUE: Video Idea Description—Tuesday, March 6, 8:00 pm by email

NO CLASS March 12, 14

**PART II. POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION:
FROM POST-TOTALITARIANISM TO HYBRID REGIME**

(continued)

IX. March 19, 21: Opposition—Politics Returns to Russia

Kelly M. McMann. *Economic Autonomy and Democracy: Hybrid Regimes in Russia and Kyrgyzstan*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Read “Capitalism, Democracy, and Economic Autonomy” and “Activism under the State’s Thumb, 1-27, 69-137. The information throughout about the Kyrgyzstani provinces Osh and Naryn can be skimmed.

Graeme B. Robertson. “Managing Society: Protest, Civil Society, and Regime in Putin’s Russia.” *Slavic Review*, 68, 3 (Fall 2009), 528-547.

Henry E. Hale. “The Putin Machine Sputters: First Impressions of the 2011 Duma Election Campaign.” *Russian Analytical Digest*, 106 (December 21, 2011), 2-5.

“Documentation: The Result of the Duma Elections.” *Russian Analytical Digest*, 106 (December 21, 2011), 5-7.

Ellen Barry. “Rally Defying Putin’s Party Draws Tens of Thousands.” *The New York Times*, December 10, 2011, www.nyt.com.

Andrew E. Kramer and David M. Herszenhorn. “Boosted by Putin, Russia’s Middle Class Turns on Him.” *The New York Times*, December 11, 2011, www.nyt.com.

Ellen Barry and Michael Schwartz. “At Presidency’s 11th Hour, Medvedev Proposes Systemic Change.” *The New York Times*, December 22, 2011., www.nyt.com.

Ellen Barry and Michael Schwartz. “Vast Rally in Moscow Is a Challenge to Putin’s Power.” *The New York Times*, December 24, 2011, www.nyt.com.

PART III. ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION: FROM SOVIET SOCIALISM TO CRONY CAPITALISM

X. March 26: 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], 503-525, 530-547, 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.

NO CLASS March 28

XI. April 2, 4: Managed Economy—"Building a Market Economy to Building a Business"

Philip Hanson. "Managing the Economy." In *Developments in Russian Politics 7*, edited by Stephen White, Richard Sakwa, and Henry E. Hale, 188-205. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.

Nick Manning. "Social Policy." In *Developments in Russian Politics 7*, edited by Stephen White, Richard Sakwa, and Henry E. Hale, 206-224. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.

Alena V. Ledeneva. *How Russia Really Works : The Informal Practices That Shaped Post-Soviet Politics and Business, Culture and Society after Socialism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006. Read "Why are Informal Practices Still Prevalent in Russia," 10-27 and two of the following three chapters: "Tenevoi Barter: Shadow Barter, Barter Chains, and Nonmonetary Markets," 115-141; "Dvoinaia Bukhgalteriia: Double Accountancy and Financial Scheming," 142-163; "Post-Soviet *Tolkachi*: Alternative Enforcement and the Use of Law," 164-188.

PART IV. INTERACTIONS AMONG THE THREE TRANSFORMATIONS

XII. April 9, 11—Video Final Preparation

Students will have the class periods to work on their videos. There is no reading for this week, discussion questions need not be posted, and commentaries will not be accepted. Students should use time they would normally prepare for class discussion to work on their videos.

XIII. April 16—Video Viewing

For these class meetings students are expected to have completed their videos and reviewed their notes in preparation for watching the videos and preparing to write the final paper. There is no reading for this week, discussion questions need not be posted, and commentaries will not be accepted.

DUE: Videos—beginning of class April 16

April 18: Triple Transformation—A Russian, Democrat, and “Novyi Russkii”

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

Joel S. Hellman. “Winners Take All: The Politics of Partial Reform in Postcommunist Transitions.” *World Politics*, 50, 2 (1998), 203-234.

V. Bunce. “Democratization and Economic Reform.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 4 (2001), 43-65.

For this week students are expected to review their notes and be prepared to offer their own analysis of the interactions among the three transformations in Russia. Discussion questions need not be posted, and no commentaries will be accepted for this week.

XIV. April 23—Final Paper Workshop

For this week students are expected to review their notes and be prepared to offer their own analysis of the interactions among the three transformations in Russia. Discussion questions need not be posted, and no commentaries will be accepted for this week.

DUE: Outline of Final Paper Argument and Evidence—beginning of class

April 25—Individual Meetings about Final Papers

Students will meet individually with the instructor during this class period or during office hours this week to discuss their final papers. The class as a whole will not meet.

XV. April 30—Conclusion

DUE: Final Paper—beginning of class