

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 outcome of these transformations. We will evaluate whether independent Russia has a strong or weak state, specifically considering Moscow's role in the regions, insurgencies in the North Caucasus, and the country's efforts at foreign influence. Furthermore, to what extent do "Putinism," the weak rule of law, and obstacles to political opposition mean that there is no hope for democracy in Russia? Finally, do stalled economic reforms and practices like double bookkeeping 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 films, slides, and artifacts 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 *Return to Putin's Russia* (fifth 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, <http://www.russialist.org/>, 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 Assignments, Discussion Questions, click on the appropriate week, 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 11 am Thursday 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 Rutland 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 or three undergraduate 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, Case's Creative New Media Officer will lead two sessions on video production; each student will email the course instructor a two-sentence description of an idea for a video by 11 am Thursday, February 27; and teams will work during and outside of class, as needed. Videos are due at the beginning of class April 24. 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. Graduate students will not complete the video project and do not need to attend the video production sessions.

Undergraduate Final Paper: Undergraduate students will write a final essay examining how the three transitions—state-building, political transformation, 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. Undergraduates will provide a one-page outline of their final paper argument, subpoints, and evidence during an individual meeting with the instructor between April 25 and April 28. Papers are due at noon

Wednesday, April 30 in Mather House 218. 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.

Graduate Student Final Paper: Graduate students will write a final essay examining how the three transitions—state-building, political transformation, 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? Graduates students will conduct research on theories about the three transitions and Russian politics in order to write this paper. In preparation, graduate students should complete the assigned readings in advance and submit the following electronically by the start of class on each date:

- First Version of the Bibliography (February 27)—This bibliography should include all the materials that you have reviewed and expect to be useful to your paper. Grading will take into account the variety, relevance, and number of sources.
- First Version of the Argument Section (March 20)— In three double-spaced pages, the student should describe the argument and subarguments of the paper. Grading will be based on the degree to which the argument examines the interaction of the three transitions and on the soundness and clarity of the argument and subarguments.
- First Version of the Evidence Section (April 10)— In approximately 15 double-spaced pages, the student should present the evidence for the argument and each subargument. The first paragraph of this version should describe the argument and subarguments to serve as a roadmap for the reader. Grading will be based on the extent to which the evidence is shown to support the argument and subarguments and the section is well-organized and clearly written.

Graduate students' final papers should be 22-25 pages long, excluding the bibliography, and are due at noon Wednesday, April 30 in Mather House 218. 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 *undergraduate* and *graduate student* 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.

For *undergraduates*, 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. For *graduate students*, Blackboard discussion questions, class participation, and class attendance will constitute 10 percent of the course grade, each of the four short essays will count for 10 percent, the first version of the bibliography 5 percent, the first version of the argument section 10 percent, the first version of the evidence section 10 percent, and the final paper for the remaining 25 percent.

Students will lose a half a grade on an assignment for each day it is late.

Course Schedule and Readings

I. January 16: Introduction to Russia and the Course

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

II. January 23: 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 16.

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 16.

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 16.

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 16.

III. January 30: Center-Periphery Relations—Recentralization

Nikolai Petrov and Darrell Slider. "Regional Politics." In *Return to Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*, edited by Stephen K. Wegren, 63-82. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2013.

Russian Analytical Digest. No. 139. November 18, 2013. Available from <http://www.css.ethz.ch/publications/pdfs/RAD-139.pdf>. Read J. Paul Goode, "The Revival of Russia's Gubernatorial Elections: Liberalization or Potemkin Reform?" 9-11.

Judith Thornton. "Regional Challenges: The Case of Siberia," In *The Oxford Handbook of the Russian Economy*, edited by Michael Alexeev and Shlomo Weber, 661-689. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Russian Analytical Digest. No. 131. July 8, 2013. Available from <http://www.css.ethz.ch/publications/pdfs/RAD-131.pdf>. Read John-François Ratelle, "The Insurgency in the North Caucasus: Putting Religious Claims in Context," 5-8.

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

(continued)

IV. February 6: Foreign Relations—Russian Nationalism

Andrei P. Tsygankov. "Foreign Policy." In *Return to Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*, edited by Stephen K. Wegren, 235-255. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2013.

Jeffrey Mankoff. "Relations with the European Union." In *Return to Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*, edited by Stephen K. Wegren, 277-296. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2013.

Russian Analytical Digest. No. 141. December 23, 2013. Available from <http://www.css.ethz.ch/publications/pdfs/RAD-141.pdf>. Read Marlene Laruelle, "Anti-Migrant Riots in Russia: the Mobilizing Potential of Xenophobia," 2-4 and "Russian Public Opinion on Migrants, On the Birlyulyovo Riots," 8-12.

Russian Analytical Digest. No. 128. June 10, 2013. Available from <http://www.css.ethz.ch/publications/pdfs/RAD-128.pdf>. Read Philipp Casula, "Civil War, Revolution or Counter-Insurgency? The Syrian Conflict Through Russian Eyes," 4-7; "Russian Arms Deliveries to Syria," 8-9; and "Russian Attitudes Towards the Conflict in Syria," 10-11.

V. February 9, Sunday, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.—Video Production Session 1

Class will meet in Room 215 of Kelvin Smith Library. Case's Creative New Media Officer will lead a video production session.

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

VI. February 13: 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.

VII. February 20—A Night at the Russian Cinema

We will watch the film *Burnt by the Sun*. There is no reading for this week, discussion questions need not be posted, and short essays will not be accepted. Students are encouraged to begin the reading for next week.

VIII. February 27: Government Institutions—Putinism

Stephen K. Wegren. "Introduction." In *Return to Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*, edited by Stephen K. Wegren, 2-14. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2013.

Julie A. Cassiday and Emily D. Johnson. "A Personality Cult for the Postmodern Age: Reading Vladimir Putin's Public Persona." In *Putin as Celebrity and Cultural Icon*, edited by Helena Goscilo, 37-64. New York: Routledge, 2013.

Thomas F. Remington. "Parliament and the Dominant Party Regime." In *Return to Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*, edited by Stephen K. Wegren, 45-62. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2013.

Kathryn Hendley. "The Role of Law." In *Return to Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*, edited by Stephen K. Wegren, 83-102. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2013.

DUE: Video Idea Description—11 am by email to instructor

IX. March 2, Sunday, 1:30-4:30—Video Production Session 2

Class will meet in Room 215 of Kelvin Smith Library. Case's Creative New Media Officer will lead a video production session. There is no reading for this week, discussion questions need not be posted, and short essays will not be accepted.

NO CLASS March 6 and March 13

Students are encouraged to work with their groups on their video productions between March 2 and the start of spring break, March 8. There is no reading for March 6, discussion questions need not be posted, and short essays will not be accepted.

**PART II. POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION:
FROM POST-TOTALITARIAN TO HYBRID TO AUTHORITARIAN REGIME**
(continued)

X. March 20: Opposition—Politics Returns to Russia

Alfred B. Evans Jr. "Civil Society and Protest." In *Return to Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*, edited by Stephen K. Wegren, 103-124. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2013.

Maria Lipman. "The Media and Political Developments." In *Return to Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*, edited by Stephen K. Wegren, 125-145. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2013.

Russian Analytical Digest. No. 134. July 30, 2013. Available from <http://www.css.ethz.ch/publications/pdfs/RAD-134.pdf>. Read Maxine David, "@Russia.com: Online & Offline Protest," 5-8 and "Internet Use and Attitudes Towards Illegal Downloading," 9-11.

Julia Ioffe. "Online Chronicles: Net Impact. One Man's Cyber-crusade against Russian Corruption." *The New Yorker*, April 4, 2011. Available from http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2011/04/04/110404fa_fact_ioffe?currentPage=all

Russian Analytical Digest. No. 136. September 16, 2013. Available from <http://www.css.ethz.ch/publications/pdfs/RAD-136.pdf>. Read Julian G. Waller, "Resetting the Game: The Logic and Practice of Official Support for Alexei Navalny's Mayoral Run," 6-9 and "Election Results," 11.

XI. March 27: Individual Meetings

Undergraduate students will meet individually this week with the instructor to discuss the three short essays they have written, their video production progress, and interests they can explore in the final paper. Class will not meet March 27. There is no reading for this week, discussion questions need not be posted, and short essays will not be accepted. Students are encouraged to work on their videos and begin the reading for next week.

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

XII. April 3: 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.

XIII. April 10: Managed Economy—“Building a Market Economy to Building a Business”

Anders Åslund. “Russia’s Economic Transformation,” In *The Oxford Handbook of the Russian Economy*, edited by Michael Alexeev and Shlomo Weber, 86-101. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Ruslan Yemtsov and Michael Lokshin. “Poverty and Inequality in Russia [part],” In *The Oxford Handbook of the Russian Economy*, edited by Michael Alexeev and Shlomo Weber, 775-789, 793-799. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.

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; “*Dvoinaia Bukhgalterii*: Double Accountancy and Financial Scheming,” 142-163; “Post-Soviet *Tolkachi*: Alternative Enforcement and the Use of Law,” 164-188.

Russian Analytical Digest. No. 133. July 18, 2013. Available from <http://www.css.ethz.ch/publications/pdfs/RAD-133.pdf>. Read Peter Rutland, “The Political Economy of Putin 3.0,” 2-5.

PART IV. INTERACTIONS AMONG THE THREE TRANSFORMATIONS

XIV. April 17—Video Final Preparation

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

XV. April 24: Triple Transformation—A Russianin, Demokrat, 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.

DUE: Videos—beginning of class April 24

XVI. April 25 through April 28: Individual Meetings

Students will meet individually during this period with the instructor to discuss their final papers. Students should bring a one-page outline of their final paper argument, subpoints, and evidence to the meeting to facilitate discussion.

DUE: Final Paper—Wednesday, April 30, noon in Mather House 218