

PS 156A: Government and Politics of Russia

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Office Hours: Thurs 1-3 pm.

Winter 2018
M, W 9:30-10:45
Perloff 1102

I. ABOUT THE COURSE

The course provides an introduction to the government and politics of Russia since the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991. Following a brief review of the country's history under tsarist and then Soviet rule, it focuses on the dramatic changes of the last 27 years and on how the political system and the economy have evolved. It provides background into the major events of recent years—the Soviet collapse, economic reforms, parliamentary and presidential elections, the wars in Chechnya, and the rise of authoritarianism under Putin. It also analyzes the problems of Russia's political and economic development, using concepts and techniques from comparative politics and political economy.

II. READINGS

You will probably need to buy the following book (often available at discount from the online sellers):

Daniel Treisman, *The Return: Russia's Journey from Gorbachev to Medvedev*, The Free Press, 2011.

All other readings will be available either on the course website (after logging in as a member of the class) or online, as indicated below.

In addition, you are strongly encouraged to gain more familiarity with Russian politics and current events by regularly browsing the following internet sources:

- The Moscow Times, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com>
- Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, <https://www.rferl.org/p/5547.html>
- Russia Political Insight, <http://www.russiapoliticalinsight.com/>

III. REQUIREMENTS

Attendance at lectures and discussion sections is mandatory. The lectures will present new material, as well as providing context for the readings. You should read the readings listed before the associated lecture. There will be a take-home midterm and a take-home final exam. Both will require both knowledge of the material presented in readings and lectures and the ability to identify theories, assess evidence, and present convincing arguments. The midterm will count for 30% and the final exam for 40% of the course grade. Participation in discussion sections will count for 30%.

12/31/17

IV. COURSE MEETINGS

1. Introduction (Jan 8)

-Richard Layard and John Parker, *The Coming Russian Boom*, 1996, ch.2, "Is Russia Different?", pp.7-43.

2. Russia—geography, history, culture (Jan 10)

-Fernand Braudel, *A History of Civilizations*, Penguin, 1993, pp.527-73.

NO CLASS JAN 15—MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

3. Russia Under Soviet Rule (Jan 17)

-Geoffrey Hosking, *The First Socialist Society*, ch.7, Harvard University Press, 1985, pp.183-204.

-Lionel Kochan, *The Making of Modern Russia*, Penguin, 1962, chs.15-20, pp.240-98.

4. The Soviet System (Jan 22)

-Mary McAuley, *Soviet Politics, 1917-1991*, Oxford University Press, pp.62-88.

-Anders Aslund, *Building Capitalism*, ch. 1, Cambridge University Press, pp.20-38.

5. The Gorbachev Era (Jan 24)

-Treisman, Chapter 1 "The Captain," from *The Return: Russia's Journey from Gorbachev to Medvedev*.

-Mary McAuley, *Soviet Politics, 1917-1991*, pp.89-119, OUP.

6. August Coup and Collapse of the USSR (Jan 29)

-Treisman, Chapter 5 "The Unraveling," from *The Return: Russia's Journey from Gorbachev to Medvedev*.

-Roman Laba, "Ethno-Nationalism: How to Bring Down an Empire," *Transition* 12 January 1996.

Recommended:

Boris Yeltsin, *The Struggle for Russia*, Times Books, 1994, on the coup and Soviet collapse, 26-7, 36-9, 105-116.

Leon Aron, "The 'Mystery' of the Soviet Collapse."

7. The Yeltsin Era (Jan 31)

-Treisman, Chapter 2 "The Natural," from *The Return: Russia's Journey from Gorbachev to Medvedev*.

-David Remnick, "How Russia is Ruled," *The New York Review of Books*, April 9, 1998.

8. Russia under Putin and Medvedev (Feb 5)

-Treisman, Chapter 3 "Unreasonable Doubt," and Chapter 4 "The Understudy" from *The Return: Russia's Journey from Gorbachev to Medvedev*.

-Gleb Pavlovsky, "Russian Politics Under Putin," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2016.

Recommended:

David Remnick, "Post-Imperial Blues," *The New Yorker*, Oct 13, 2003.

Excerpts from Putin's book at

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/yeltsin/putin/chapter9.html>

NO CLASS FEBRUARY 7

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9. Economic Reform 1: How it happened (Feb 12)

-Peter Boone and Boris Fyodorov, "The Ups and Downs of Russian Economic Reforms," in Wing Thye Woo, Stephen Parker, and Jeffrey Sachs, eds., *Economies in Transition: Comparing Asia and Europe*, MIT Press, pp.161-88.

-Treisman, Chapter 6 "The Transformation," from *The Return: Russia's Journey from Gorbachev to Medvedev*.

Recommended:

Adam Przeworski, "The Neoliberal Fallacy," *Journal of Democracy*, July 1992, pp.45-59.

10. Economic Reform 2: Explanations and evaluations (Feb 14)

-Joseph Stiglitz, "The Ruin of Russia," *The Guardian*, April 9, 2003.

-Anders Aslund, "Russia: The Arduous Transition to a Market Economy," in Aslund, Anders, and Simeon Djankov, eds. *The Great Rebirth: Lessons from the Victory of Capitalism over Communism*. Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2014.

-Joel Hellman, "Russia's Transition to a Market Economy: A Permanent Redistribution?" in Andrew Kuchins, ed., *Russia After the Fall*, Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment, pp.93-109.

**MIDTERM WILL BE POSTED ON THE CLASS WEBSITE ON FEB 14 AFTER CLASS.
DUE AT START OF CLASS ON FEB 21. NO CLASS FEB 19—PRESIDENTS' DAY.**

11. Russia's Politics (Feb 21)

-Maxim Ananyev, "Inside the Kremlin: The Presidency and Executive Branch," in *The New Autocracy: Information, Politics, and Policy in Putin's Russia*, 2018.

-Thomas Remington, "Parliamentary Politics in Russia," in Stephen White, Richard Sakwa, Henry Hale, eds., *Developments in Russian Politics 8*, Duke University Press, pp.42-59.

Recommended:

Robert Moser, "Executive-Legislative Relations in Russia, 1991-1999" in Moser and Barany, eds., *Russian Politics: Challenges of Democratization*.

12. Elections in Russia (Feb 26)

-Michael McFaul and Kathryn Stoner-Weiss, "Elections and Voters," in Stephen White, Richard Sakwa, Henry Hale, eds., *Developments in Russian Politics 7*, Duke University Press, pp.62-83.

-Henry Hale "Russia's Political Parties and Their Substitutes," in Stephen White, Richard Sakwa, Henry Hale, eds., *Developments in Russian Politics 8*, Duke University Press, pp.77-96.

13. Explaining Election Results and Evaluating Russia's Regime (Feb 28)

-Stephen White, "Classifying Russia's Politics," in Stephen White, Richard Sakwa, Henry Hale, eds., *Developments in Russian Politics 7*, Duke University Press, pp.263-82.

-Timothy Colton and Michael McFaul, "Putin and Democratization," in Dale Herspring, ed., *Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*, Rowman and Littlefield, pp.13-38.

14. Multinational State and Federalism (Mar 5)

-Darrell Slider, "A Federal State?" in Stephen White, Richard Sakwa, Henry Hale, eds., *Developments in Russian Politics 8*, Duke University Press, pp.157-72.

-Ekaterina Zhuravskaya, "Federalism in Russia," in Anders Aslund, Sergei Guriev, and Andrew Kuchins, eds., *Russia After the Global Economic Crisis*.

15. Wars in Chechnya (Mar 7)

- Treisman, Chapter 8 “The Mountains,” from *The Return: Russia’s Journey from Gorbachev to Medvedev*.
- Charles King and Rajan Menon, “Prisoners of the Caucasus,” *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2010.

Recommended:

- Olga I. Vendina, Vitaliy S. Belozerov, and Andrew Gustafson, “The Wars in Chechnya and Their Effects on Neighboring Regions,” *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, 2007, 48, No. 2, pp. 178–201. On line via library.

16. Russia in World Politics (Mar 12)

- Treisman, Chapter 9 “Falling Apart,” from *The Return: Russia’s Journey from Gorbachev to Medvedev*.
- Fyodor Lukyanov, “Putin’s Foreign Policy: The Quest to Restore Russia’s Rightful Place,” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2016.
- Stephen Kotkin, “Russia’s Perpetual Geopolitics,” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2016.

Recommended:

- Dmitri Trenin, “The Revival of the Russian Military: How Moscow Reloaded,” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2016.
- Daniel Treisman, “Why Putin Took Crimea: The Gambler in the Kremlin,” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2016.

17. Conclusion: Understanding Russia in Transition (Mar 14).

- Treisman, “Introduction,” in *The New Autocracy: Information, Politics, and Policy in Putin’s Russia*.
- Leon Aron, “Making Sense of a Revolution,” online at <http://www.aei.org/article/foreign-and-defense-policy/regional/europe/making-sense-of-a-revolution/>

Recommended:

- Maria Lipman, “How Putin Silences Dissent,” *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2016.

FINAL HANDED OUT. DUE MAR 21.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN THAT PAPER

1. Be sure you understand the assignment. If you have ANY questions, do not hesitate to ASK the instructor or TA.

2. Be sure you understand the definition of PLAGIARISM:

To PLAGIARIZE is to “steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own without crediting the source; present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source,” (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, Springfield: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 1989, 898.).

Many assignments will require you to incorporate other writers' words and ideas. If given permission by the instructor or TA to consult those writers, go ahead, but be sure to cite them. If you are not sure how to use the material you have, ASK or CHECK A WRITING GUIDE (i.e. MLA, APA, Chicago, you might try the Style Sheet from the Department of English, available in the ASUCLA Book Store) before submitting the work for credit.

3. Be sure you understand the CONSEQUENCES of plagiarism:

a) When you plagiarize, you hand in work that is not your own. When you plagiarize, you sabotage the quality of your education and the learning experience.

b) When you plagiarize, you steal, just as if you took something from a store. Plagiarism is different in effect, however, because the University assumes that each grade represents that student's own work. When you plagiarize, you undermine the value of a degree from UCLA.

c) When you plagiarize, chances are good that you will be caught. If you are caught, chances are very good that you will be suspended from the University. Consider the impact on your financial aid? Your time to a degree? Your plans to attend graduate school? Your career plans? Your housing? Your family and friends?

4. If you are stuck and unable to work through the assignment, there are alternatives to plagiarizing:

a) Visit the College Tutorials, 228 Covell Commons (206-1491). There, you can get one-on-one help with writing skills, grammar, topic development -- anything involved in writing a paper.

b) Visit your instructor or teaching assistant -- make an appointment or visit them during office hours. There are no dumb questions when it comes to assuring that your work is honest.

5. If you know of someone who is plagiarizing an assignment, confront the person and/or tell the instructor. Papers that are plagiarized will impact the grading curve. It is in your best interest if everyone does his or her own work.

Be advised that instructors are required by the Academic Senate to refer cases of suspected plagiarism to the Office of the Dean of Students. Penalties for plagiarism can include Suspension or Expulsion.