

**Political Science (PSCI) 3700.001**  
**Russian and East European Politics**  
**Spring 2018**

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*There is a blackboard site for this course where all copies of documents will be placed (e.g. the syllabus).*

**I. Goals and Objectives of the Course:**

This course is designed as a review of Post Communist Politics, particularly Russia and the Central and Eastern European states that emerged from communist rule. As such the focus is on assessing the political prospects for these countries. In order to evaluate their prospects this course examines the historical, economic, social and political factors which will likely affect the course of political development in the post-Communist period.

To achieve this end the course is organized as follows: we will construct a theoretical framework derived from the general literature in comparative politics which will point out the relevant factors to be considered in analyzing the prospects for democratization in the post-Communist period: The social and economic legacy of the past, economic development, type of transition and cultural conditions. Then we examine institutional developments in post communist countries, particularly the development of the executive, legislative, judicial structures as well as elections, parties and party systems. We then turn to center-periphery relations (which is particularly relevant in Russia), the reemergence of a more assertive Russia in the post communist world, and the phenomena of Vladimir Putin and "Putinism". We then conclude with asking how the communist past has served to shape current politics, and what are the prospects for the future of democracy in the region.

**II. Texts:**

There is one required text for this course:

Thomas Remington. 2011. *Politics in Russia*. New York: Routledge.

In addition there are readings that are available via JSTOR, or on the blackboard vista site, or via some other electronic media (as indicated on the syllabus).

**III. Dropping Courses:** Please link <http://registrar.unt.edu/registration/spring-registration-guide> for information concerning drops, withdrawals, and other administrative information.

**IV. Course Evaluations:** You will have an opportunity to evaluate this class at the end of the semester using SPOT. If over 80 percent of the class completes the SPOT, each student will receive one percentage point of extra credit.

**V. Americans with Disabilities Act Statement:** The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a

disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>.

**VI. Academic Misconduct:** Academic Integrity is defined in the UNT Policy on Student Standards for Academic Integrity. Any suspected case of Academic Dishonesty will be handled in accordance with the University Policy and procedures. Possible academic penalties range from a verbal or written admonition to a grade of “F” in the course. Further sanctions may apply to incidents involving major violations. For policy and procedures: <http://facultysuccess.unt.edu/academic-integrity>.

For more information on what constitutes plagiarism, please visit: <http://abacus.bates.edu/cbb/>

**VII. Emergency Notification & Procedures:** UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify you with critical information in an event of emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). The system sends voice messages (and text messages upon permission) to the phones of all active faculty staff, and students. Please make certain to update your phone numbers at my.unt.edu. Some helpful emergency preparedness actions include: 1) ensuring you know the evacuation routes and severe weather shelter areas, determining how you will contact family and friends if phones are temporarily unavailable, and identifying where you will go if you need to evacuate the Denton area suddenly. In the event of a university closure, your instructor will communicate with you through Blackboard regarding assignments, exams, field trips, and other items that may be impacted by the closure.

**VIII. Acceptable Student Behavior:** Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students’ opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student’s conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university’s expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [www.unt.edu/csrr](http://www.unt.edu/csrr). In short, please be considerate of others.

**IX. Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, & Assault:** UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

UNT’s Dean of Students’ website offers a range of on-campus and off-campus resources to help support survivors, depending on their needs: <http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/sexual-misconduct/reporting-sexual->

[misconduct#4](#). Contact via e-mail ([SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu](mailto:SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu)) or by phone 940-565-2648.

**X. Course Requirements:**

There will be two major exams scheduled for this term. The first is scheduled for March 8 and is worth 100 points. The second is the final examination (scheduled for May 8) is worth 125 points and is a comprehensive examination.

Also to ensure that you are keeping up with the material (both readings and notes) there will also be two quizzes each worth 30 points. The first is on February 15; the second is on April 19

In addition, there will be one major written paper assignments. You are to write a paper comparing one aspect of the political system (executive, legislature, judiciary, political parties, federalism/unitary system) using at least two countries in post communist region (Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia) and then provide an explanation using economic, cultural, sociological, international, historical/legacy etc to account for why systems are evolving in similar or different ways.

Finally your grade will also be based on your attendance and participation in class discussion. This component of the grade is worth 25 points.

In sum:

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|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| 1) Midterm                           | = 100 points |
| 2) Final                             | = 125 points |
| 3) Research Paper                    | = 100 points |
| 4) Two<br>quizzes@ 30 points<br>each | =60 points   |
| 5) Attendance/<br>participation      | =25 points   |

**Total points = 410 points**

**XI Schedule of lecture topics and readings:**

January 16: Introduction to the course (What is this course about and what to expect?)  
No readings

January 18- January 23: Theoretical Framework , Russian History and the Communist Ideology (What characterizes late developing states? What have been some persistent themes in Russian history? What were the ideological roots of the Communist Political System?)

Readings: John Ishiyama *Fundamentals of Comparative Politics* chp 2 (Wiley/Blackwell Publishers)

Watch: Epic History-- Russia: Rurik to Revolution  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w0Wmc8C0Eq0>

Epic History—The Russian Revolution <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cV9G1QUIm7w>

Recommended: Summary of Russian History

<http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?groupid=2366&HistoryID=ac14&gt;rack=pthc>

Karl Marx and Freidrich Engels “The Communist Manifesto”

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/>

Vladimir Ilich Lenin “State and Revolution : chapter 1”

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1917/staterev/ch01.htm>

January 25-February 1: The Soviet Period (What characterized Stalinism? What were the legacies of the “revolution from above”?)

Readings: Remington, *Politics in Russia*, chp 2

Erik P. Hoffmann (1984) “The Evolution of the Soviet Political System” *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science*, 35(3): 1-13. on JSTOR

February 6-8 Transition from Communist Rule (What caused the collapse of communism? Why did the various states develop in different ways after the collapse of communist rule?)

Readings: Remington, *Politics in Russia*, chp 1

Valerie Bunce (2003) “Rethinking Recent Democratization: Lessons from the Post Communist Experience” *World Politics* 55(2) 167-192.

February 13: Watch “Stalin:Inside the Terror” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SIzApqzIP3Q> AND

Communism: The Collapse” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZ2NiWvk3pY>

February 15 --Quiz

February 20-22- NO CLASS

February 27-March 1 Economic Conditions (How has economic reform and marketization affected post communist politics?)

Readings: Remington, *Politics in Russia*, chp 7

Ivan Katchanovski (2000) Divergence in Growth in Post-Communist Countries *Journal of Public Policy* 20(1):55-81 (jstor)

Recommended: International Monetary Fund (2014) *25 Years of Transition Post-Communist Europe and the IMF*

March 1-6 : Cultural Conditions (What are the cultural characteristics of post communist countries? How does affect the prospects for democracy?)

Readings: Remington, *Politics in Russia*, chp 5

## **MIDTERM EXAMINATION Tuesday March 8**

### **SPRING BREAK March 10-17**

March 20-22 Development of Post-Communist Institutions—Russia (How do political institutions such as electoral systems and federalism affect Russian politics?)

Readings: Readings: Remington, *Politics in Russia*, chp 3 and chp 8.

Margarita Zavadskaya et al (2017) Electoral Sources of Authoritarian Resilience in Russia: Varieties of Electoral Malpractice, 2007-2016. *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 25: 455-480

March 22-27 Development of Post communist institutions- Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (How do post communist political institutions compare with one another?)

Readings: Ishiyama and Velten, (1997) “Presidential Power and Democratic Development in Post Communist Politics” *Communist and Post Communist Studies*

Smithey and Ishiyama (2002) “Judicial Activism in Post-Communist Politics” *Law & Society Review*

Ishiyama (2004) “Neopatrimonialism and the prospects for democratization in Central Asia” In Sally Cummings ed. *Power and change in Central Asia* New York:Routledge.

March 29- April 3 Elections and Political Parties (How have political parties developed in post communist politics?)

Readings- Readings: Remington, *Politics in Russia*, chp 6

Ingrid Van Biezen (2000) “Party Organizations in New Democracies” *Party Politics* 6(4) 395-417

Brad Epperly (2011) Institutions and Legacies: Electoral Volatility in the Postcommunist World *Comparative Political Studies* 44(7) 829– 853

NO CLASS April 5 (at conference)

April 10-12 : Transformation in Russia’s Regions (How has Russian federalism developed in the post communist era? How have center-periphery relations evolved over time?)

Readings: Re read Remington *Politics in Russia* chapter 3 pp. 73-86

Jorge Martinez-Vazquez (2002) “Asymmetric Federalism in Russia: Cure or Poison”

Andreas Heinemann-Gruder (2002) “Is Russia’s Federalism Sustainable” *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*

April 17- 19 - Russian Foreign Policy (What are the new imperatives of Russian foreign policy?)

Readings: Remington *Politics in Russia* chp 9

Allen Lynch (2016) The influence of regime type on Russian foreign policy toward “the West,” 1992-2015 *Communist and Post Communist Studies* 49(1): 101-111.

April 19 Quiz

April 24-26— Putin’s Russia (Who is Vladimir Putin? How has his personality shaped post communist Russian politics?)

Readings: Remington *Politics in Russia* chp 1

M. Steven Fish (2016) “What is Putinism?” *Journal of Democracy* 28(4): 61-75.

May 1: Evaluating the legacy of the past and the prospects for the future (What portends for the future of Russia?)

**FINAL EXAMINATION: Tuesday, May 8, 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.**

**Final Papers are due Friday, May 11, NO LATER THAN 5:00 pm**