Post-communist democracies and Russia

Instructor: Ion Marandici
Course: Political Science 01:790:381, Fall 2013
Location: ARH-100 on Cook/Douglass
Time: MW 5:35-6:55 PM
Office hours: Monday 7:00-8:00 pm, Hickman Hall 402 or by appointment at the Center for European Studies (Douglass Campus), office 303.
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Course overview:

This course will focus on a group of countries, which for the most part of the 20th century have been under the Communist rule. This group of countries can be further subdivided into four categories. After 1989, some of the former Communist countries initiated a successful double transition (both political and economic) that ended with their membership in the European Union (Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, the Baltic Republics). Some of the less successful countries from the region are E.U. candidates (Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro), while others are potential candidates (Albania, Kosova, Bosnia and Herzegovina). However, democracy and market economies did not emerge in all of the former communist countries. The second group of countries ended up developing hybrid political regimes with unclear prospects in terms of democracy and market reforms (Moldova, Ukraine, Russia). The third group of countries includes authoritarian states like Belarus, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tadjikistan. Ironically, the United States of America depend on some of these countries for the successful completion of the operations in Afghanistan, while Europeans try to diminish their dependence on Russia, by building new pipelines throughout the region. Hence, we will explore whether there is a link between the richness in resources and the prospects for democratization. The fourth group of countries includes those states still dominated by the Communist ideology with no political pluralism. China, Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam and Laos can be counted as the last bastions of Communism in the world. Although, we will deal mainly with transformations in Central and Eastern Europe and Russian politics, we will discuss the possible trajectories for the present Communist states. At the end of the class, the students should be equipped with concepts, information, and analytical skills necessary to understand the regional developments.

The course consists of the following four broad sections: 1) the rise and fall of the Communist states and ideology, 2) theories about transitions to democracy, 3) the transition to a market economy and 4) Russian politics and society. Additionally, we will have sessions on the politics of memory, nationalism and ethnic conflict, the E.U. accession of CEE states.

The ultimate question we will try to answer is why certain transitions failed, while others
were successful. However, we will also address questions such as: why was it difficult to challenge the totalitarian Communist regimes? Why didn’t Russia democratize? Will the 2018 Russian presidential elections bring an end to Putin’s rule in Russia? Is it accurate to call Russia’s economic system - “state capitalism”?

II. Course Requirements:
a) Map quiz on September 25 (10%).
b) Midterm exam on October 14 (30%).
c) Final paper. The 10-page final paper should be written respecting the Rutgers rules of academic writing (guidelines will be posted online); due on December 22, noon. Students should submit a brief outline of the final paper by November 15. The paper is worth 30% of your grade.
d) Two reaction essays due on November 4 and November 20 (20%).
e) Group presentation on Russia (in December), regular attendance and involvement in class discussions (10%).

III. Recommended books:
* Most of the readings will be on Sakai, but it is the student’s responsibility to print and read them.

Historical perspectives

Political Science Approaches

Transition to capitalism

Russian politics
Joel Ostrow (ed.), *Politics in Russia: A Reader*, 2012.

IV. Recommended journals:

V. Recommended sites covering post-Communist and Russian affairs:
VI. Think tanks
Russian and Eurasian Security Network:  http://www.res.ethz.ch
Council of Foreign Relations (sections on Russia):  www.cfr.org
European Council of Foreign Relations:  http://ecfr.eu/
Carnegie Moscow Center:  www.carnegie.ru

Course schedule:
Session 1: Introduction (September 4th)
No readings

Session 2: The ideological underpinnings of the Communist regimes. (Sept 9)
* Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: The Communist Manifesto:
http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Manifesto.pdf

* Archie Brown, Ch. 6: What do we mean by a Communist system?

Session 3: The Red Army and the transition to Communism. (Sept 11)
* Archie Brown, Ch.2 – 4,

Session 4: The Communist specter is haunting Europe and Asia. (Sept 16)
* Archie Brown, Ch. 9-11, Ch. 16.

* Vaclav Havel, Stories and totalitarianism:
* Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, The Gulag Archipelago 1918-1956, Ch. 1-3, p. 3-143.

Vaclav Havel, Open Letter to the Secretary General of the Czech Communist Party:

Session 6: Movie/guest speaker (Sept 23)
**Session 7: Conceptualizing transitions to democracy I. MAP QUIZ !!! (Sept 25)**

* Stepan and Linz, Chapters 1-5.

**Session 8: Conceptualizing transitions to democracy II. (Sept 30)**

* Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave*, Ch. 1&2.

* Lucan Way and Steven Levitsky, *Competitive authoritarianism: hybrid regimes after the Cold War*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, Ch. 2 (theory), Ch. 3 (theory applied to Eastern Europe) and Ch. 6 (theory applied to former Soviet Union).

**Session 9: 1989 - violent and peaceful transitions. (Oct 2)**

* Video: Timothy Garton Ash: [http://iis.berkeley.edu/speakers/elberg/tash](http://iis.berkeley.edu/speakers/elberg/tash)

**Session 10: Why did the kremlinologists fail? The collapse of the Soviet Union: structural, actor-centered and cultural-ideatic explanations. (Oct 7)**


**Session 11: Review for the midterm exam!!! (Oct 9)**

**Session 12: Midterm exam. (Oct 14)**

**Session 13: The European Union and democratization in Central and Eastern Europe. (Oct 16)**

* Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier, *The Europeanization of Central and Eastern*
Session 14. Escaping the valley of death: economic reforms and their consequences. (Oct 21)
* Anders Aslund, Ch. 4 & Ch. 6.


* Vadim Volkov, *Violent Entrepreneurs*, Ch. 1 and Ch. 2.

Session 15: Movie/Documentary

Session 16: The politics of memory: WWII or the Great Patriotic War? Liberation or occupation? (Oct 28)


Session 17: Communist countries today. China in the world (Oct 30)
* Archie Brown, *The Rise and Fall of Communism*, Ch. 30 (What’s left of Communism?) and Ch. 18.


* The West and China: [http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,781597,00.html](http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,781597,00.html)

REACTION ESSAY 1 DUE: November 4

**Russian politics**

Session 18: Presidential government: Putin forever? (Nov 4)
* Ten Myths about Russia: Understanding and Dealing with Russia’s Complexity and Ambiguity (Foglesong and Hahn, 2012)


Session 19: Russian political elites and political parties. (Nov 6)


**Session 20: The Russian resistance to democratization. The colored revolutions: Rose, Orange, Tulip and Twitter revolutions. (Nov 11)**
* Corry Welt, “Georgia’s Rose Revolution: From regime weakness to regime collapse”, pp. 155-188.
* Ambrosio, Ch. 4 (p. 45-68), Ch. 5: Redefine

**Session 21: The Russian oligarchs. The resource curse. (Nov 13)**
* Anders Aslund, Ch. 10.

**Session 22: The Putin doctrine: Cold War continued? (Nov 18)**

**Session 23: The December 4th Duma elections and the 2012 presidential elections. (November 20)**
* Paul Saunder, “Russia’s curious campaign” in *National Interest:*
* Stephen White, “What kind of system?”, Ch. 8 from Understanding Russian Politics.

**Reaction Essay 2**

**Session 24: GROUP PRESENTATIONS ON RUSSIAN POLITICAL PARTIES (Nov 25)**

**Session 25: Movie 3 (December 2)**

**Session 26: Twenty years after the end of the Cold War (December 4)**

**Session 27: Concluding remarks (December 9)**

**FINAL PAPER DEADLINE: December 16**