

# Political Science 3524

## Post-Communist Politics

### Fall 2012

## Course Info

**Instructor:** Steven Wilson

**Place:** Hutch 209

**Time:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30-10:45AM

**Office Hours:** 8:30-10:30 Wednesdays and Fridays in 506 Major Williams Hall

**Contact Info:** Email: slw42@vt.edu Phone: 540-231-1854

**Objectives:** This course covers the post-communist experience in Eastern Europe and Asia. We will begin with analysis of why communism failed and the Soviet Union fell, and then discuss the various experiences of transition during the 1990s, in social, political, and economic terms. We will also cover the stabilization of the post-communist states over the last decade, and discuss the long term possibilities for the region.

## Textbooks

The course has two required text books, which will be supplemented by a selection of journal articles and individual book chapters. These additional selections will be available electronically throughout the semester. The two required texts are:

Sakwa, Richard. 2008. *Russian Politics and Society*. 4th ed. Routledge.

Politkovskaya, Anna. 2007. *Putins Russia: Life in a Failing Democracy*. Holt Paperbacks.

Sakwa's text will serve as a backbone text, with short readings assigned for most class meetings.

## Assignments & Grading

Reading will be assigned for each class. Students should come to class having read the assigned material and being ready to discuss it. Lectures will be designed to supplement the material covered in the readings, and both will be reflected on the exams. Please come to office hours (or schedule a meeting with me if you have a conflict) if you have any trouble understanding the material, or if you have any questions about the course at all as the semester progresses.

The course will have two exams, a research paper, and occasional smaller assignments or quizzes (and material covered on exams and assignments will always be cumulative). Each of those four sections are equally weighted at 25% of the overall grade:

Midterm Exam (25%)

Final Exam (25%)

Research Paper (25%)

Other Assignments (25%)

The exams will be composed of short answer and essay questions.

The research paper must be a minimum of 3000 words, and cover some aspect of the post-communist experience. Students will be required to turn in a proposed topic early in the semester, a brief summary of their planned project a bit later, and the final paper the second to last week of the semester.

## Course Schedule

The schedule and reading assignments for the semester are listed below. In addition to the listed readings, selected readings from Sakwa will be assigned for most class meetings as well.

### **Week 1: Introduction**

**Tue, Aug 28 (Course Introduction)**

*Readings:* None

**Thu, Aug 30**

*Readings:* (Bassin 1991)

### **Week 2: The Fall of Communism**

**Tue, Sep 4**

*Readings:* (Verdery 1996) (pages 19-38)

**Thu, Sep 6**

*Readings:* (Bunce 1999) (pages 1-19)

### **Week 3: Historical Legacies**

**Tue, Sep 11**

*Readings:* (Darden & Grzymala-Busse 2006)

**Thu, Sep 13**

*Readings:* (Pop-Eleches 2007)

### **Week 4: Ethnicity**

**Tue, Sep 18**

*Readings:* (Beissinger 2002) (pages 1-46)

**Thu, Sep 20**

*Readings:* (Woodward 1995) (pages 1-20)

### **Week 5: Economic Transition**

**Tue, Sep 25**

*Readings:* (Herrera 2001)

**Thu, Sep 27**

*Readings:* (Shleifer & Treisman 2001)

### **Week 6: Political Transition**

**Tue, Oct 2**

*Readings:* (Elster, Offe & Preuss 1998) (pages 109-155)

**Thu, Oct 4**

*Readings:* (Treisman 2011) (pages 240-261)

### **Week 7: Elections, Parties**

**Tue, Oct 9**

*Readings:* (Wilson 2005) (pages 1-32, 73-88)

**Thu, Oct 11**

*Readings:* (Tucker 2006) (pages 1-26)

## **Week 8: Midterm**

**Tue, Oct 16 (Review, Discussion of Final Papers, Brief Film)**

*Readings:* None

**Thu, Oct 18 (Midterm Exam)**

**MIDTERM EXAM**

*Readings:* None

## **Week 9: Rule of Law**

**Tue, Oct 23**

*Readings:* Politkovskaya (*Putin's Russia*) pages 1-158

**Thu, Oct 25**

*Readings:* Politkovskaya (*Putin's Russia*) pages 159-256

## **Week 10: Civil Society**

**Tue, Oct 30**

*Readings:* (Howard 2002)

**Thu, Nov 1**

*Readings:* (Gibson 2001)

## **Week 11: The International Picture**

**Tue, Nov 6**

*Readings:* (Vachudova 2005) (pages 1-10, 63-80)

**Thu, Nov 8**

*Readings:* (Way & Levitsky 2007)

## **Week 12: Institutions & the State**

**Tue, Nov 13**

*Readings:* (Grzymala-Busse 2007) (pages 1-28)

**Thu, Nov 15**

*Readings:* (Gehlbach 2010) (pages 1-19)

## **Week 13: Break**

**Tue, Nov 20 (No class, Thanksgiving Break)**

**Thu, Nov 22 (No class, Thanksgiving Break)**

## **Week 14: Colored Revolutions**

**Tue, Nov 27**

*Readings:* (Beissinger 2007)

**Thu, Nov 29**

*Readings:* (Bunce & Wolchik 2010)

## **Week 15: The Future**

**Tue, Dec 4**

*Readings:* (Guriev & Zhuravskaya 2009)

**Thu, Dec 6**

*Readings:* (Kornai 2006)

## **Week 16: Wrapping Up**

**Tue, Dec 11 (Final Class)**

**FINAL PAPER DUE AT START OF CLASS**

*Readings:* None

**Fri, Dec 14 (Final Exam)**

**FINAL EXAM: 7:45-9:45AM**

## References

- Bassin, Mark. 1991. "Russia between Europe and Asia: The Ideological Construction of Geographical Space." *Slavic Review* 50(1):1–17.
- Beissinger, Mark R. 2002. *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*. Cambridge University Press.
- Beissinger, Mark R. 2007. "Structure and Example in Modular Political Phenomena: The Diffusion of Bulldozer/Rose/Orange/Tulip Revolutions." *Perspectives on Politics* 5(02):259–276.
- Bunce, Valerie. 1999. *Subversive Institutions: The Design and the Destruction of Socialism and the State*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bunce, Valerie J. & Sharon L. Wolchik. 2010. "Defeating Dictators: Electoral Change and Stability in Competitive Authoritarian Regimes." *World Politics* 62(01):43–86.
- Darden, Keith & Anna Grzymala-Busse. 2006. "The Great Divide: Literacy, Nationalism, and the Communist Collapse." *World Politics* 59(01):83–115.
- Elster, Jon, Claus Offe & Ulrich K. Preuss. 1998. *Institutional Design in Post-Communist Societies: Rebuilding the Ship at Sea*. Cambridge University Press.
- Gehlbach, Scott. 2010. *Representation through Taxation: Revenue, Politics, and Development in Postcommunist States*. 1 ed. Cambridge University Press.
- Gibson, James. 2001. "Social networks, Civil Society, and the Prospects for Consolidating Russia's Democratic Transition." *American Journal of Political Science* 45(1):51–66.
- Grzymala-Busse, Anna. 2007. *Rebuilding Leviathan: Party Competition and State Exploitation in Post-Communist Democracies*. Cambridge University Press.
- Guriev, Sergei & Ekaterina Zhuravskaya. 2009. "(Un)happiness in Transition." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 23(2):143–68.
- Herrera, Yoshiko M. 2001. Russian Economic Reform, 1991-1998. In *Russian Politics: Challenges of Democratization*, ed. Zoltan Barany & Robert G. Moser. 1 ed. Cambridge University Press.
- Howard, Marc Morje. 2002. "The Weakness of Postcommunist Civil Society." *Journal of Democracy* 13(1):157–169.
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- Sakwa, Richard. 2008. *Russian Politics and Society*. 4th ed. Routledge.
- Shleifer, Andrei & Daniel Treisman. 2001. *Without a Map: Political Tactics and Economic Reform in Russia*. The MIT Press.
- Treisman, Daniel. 2011. *The Return: Russia's Journey from Gorbachev to Medvedev*. Free Press.
- Tucker, Joshua A. 2006. *Regional Economic Voting: Russia, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic, 1990-1999*. 1 ed. Cambridge University Press.
- Vachudova, Milada Anna. 2005. *Europe Undivided: Democracy, Leverage, and Integration after Communism*. Oxford University Press, USA.
- Verdery, Katherine. 1996. *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* Princeton University Press.
- Way, Lucan A. & Steven Levitsky. 2007. "Linkage, Leverage, and the Post-Communist Divide." *East European Politics & Societies* 21(1):48–66.
- Wilson, Dr Andrew. 2005. *Virtual Politics: Faking Democracy in the Post-Soviet World*. Yale University Press.
- Woodward, Susan L. 1995. *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War*. Brookings Institution Press.