

# Political Science 3626

## Russian Foreign Policy

### Spring 2015

## Course Info

**Instructor:** Steven Wilson

**Place:** McBryde 218

**Time:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:00AM - 9:15AM

**Office Hours:** 1:00PM-2:00PM Mondays and Wednesdays in 527 Major Williams Hall

**Contact Info:** Email: slw42@vt.edu Phone: 540-231-6425

## Course Objectives

This course explores Russian foreign policy in the contemporary world, with an eye on the deep historical context that informs the relationships between Russia and the rest of the world, and the unique Russian position as a bridge between the West and the East.

We begin with an introduction to why Russia and its foreign policy are highly relevant in the contemporary world, along with a discussion of Russia's major foreign policy concerns. Throughout the course, close attention will be paid to how historical and contemporary themes and events drive Russia towards certain perspectives in foreign policy that may seem strange to the Western world. The course concludes with a look at the future of Russian foreign policy, and its prospects for democratization.

Major topics covered include Russia's history and relationships with the Muslim world, America and the West, China and East Asia, and the developing world. Particular attention is paid to Russia's relationship with the former Soviet Empire since the fall of communism, and the effect of Color Revolutions and the Arab Spring upon the Putin regime's efforts in international relations. In addition, we discuss various environmental issues' effects on Russia's relations with its neighbors, security issues such as terrorism and nuclear proliferation, and how Russia's concern with spheres of influence interacts with an often post-geopolitical west.

## Textbooks

The course has two required text books:

Robert Donaldson, Joseph Noguee, & Vidya Nadkarni. *The Foreign Policy of Russia*

Nicholas Riasanovsky & Mark Steinberg. *A History of Russia*

## 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. 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.

Students will be evaluated on the basis of three small papers (called “intelligence estimates”), a research paper that will be completed in stages (called “research briefings”) through the semester, and periodic quizzes. The proportion each of these is worth to the final grade is listed below:

Quizzes (25%) (In class, throughout semester)  
Intelligence Estimates (25%) (Three, due 2/17, 3/3, and 3/31)  
Research Briefs (25%) (throughout semester)  
Final Paper (25%) (due Friday, 5/8, by 5pm)

## Quizzes

Quizzes will be given at least once per week on the assigned readings. They will generally be multiple choice, with the exception being the map quiz of the former Soviet world that will be taken in class on Tuesday, 1/27.

## Intelligence Estimates

These short papers (750 words each) will be on current events topics assigned over the course of the semester. Students will be responsible for succinctly but comprehensively presenting the background and policy implications of a current issue in Russian foreign policy.

## Final Papers and Research Briefs

The final papers will be written in stages over the course of the semester. In the first two weeks of the semester, students will identify a research question they want to answer appro-

appropriate to the course's subject matter, turn in a summary of the question and their approach to it, and generate a reading list for the semester. Over the course of the semester, students will write a single page on each of their sources, summarizing the arguments of each and how they help answer the student's research question (these assignments are labeled "research briefs"). This work will be used as the body of evidence for the final paper, which will be 2500 words in length and due by 5pm on Friday, 5/8.

When grading the final paper, if a student writes less than the minimum length, the paper will be graded out of the percent of the assignment that was written. For example, a 2000 word paper will be graded you out of 80%.

## Course Schedule

The schedule for the semester is listed below, along with the assigned readings for that week.

### Part 1: Themes and History

#### **Tue, Jan 20**

*Readings:* None

*Assignments:* None

#### **Thu, Jan 22**

*Readings:* Donaldson Chapters 1, 2

*Assignments:* None

#### **Tue, Jan 27**

*Readings:* Riasanovsky Chapters 1, 2

*Assignments:* Map Quiz

#### **Thu, Jan 29**

*Readings:* Riasanovsky Chapters 3, 4, 7, 8

*Assignments:* Research Topic

#### **Tue, Feb 3**

*Readings:* Riasanovsky Chapters 11, 15, 16

*Assignments:* None

## **Part 2: The Former Empire**

### **Thu, Feb 5**

*Readings:* Riasanovsky Chapter 42

*Assignments:* Research Plan

### **Tue, Feb 10**

*Readings:* Donaldson Pages 158-172; Riasanovsky Chapter 14

*Assignments:* None

### **Thu, Feb 12**

*Readings:* Donaldson Pages 217-224; Riasanovsky Chapter 17

*Assignments:* Research Bibliography

### **Tue, Feb 17**

*Readings:* Riasanovsky Chapter 20

*Assignments:* Intelligence Estimate #1

### **Thu, Feb 19**

*Readings:* Donaldson Pages 191-200; Riasanovsky Chapter 21

*Assignments:* Research Brief #1

### **Tue, Feb 24**

*Readings:* Donaldson Pages 172-191; Riasanovsky Chapter 22

*Assignments:* None

## **Part 3: Russia and the West**

### **Thu, Feb 26**

*Readings:* Donaldson Chapter 3; Riasanovsky Chapters 25, 38

*Assignments:* Research Brief #2

### **Tue, Mar 3**

*Readings:* Donaldson Chapter 4; Riasanovsky Chapters 39, 40

*Assignments:* Intelligence Estimate #2

### **Thu, Mar 5**

*Readings:* Donaldson Chapter 7

*Assignments:* Research Brief #3

**Tue, Mar 17**

*Readings:* Riasanovsky Chapter 26

*Assignments:* None

## **Part 4: Latin America and Africa**

**Thu, Mar 19**

*Readings:* Riasanovsky Chapter 29

*Assignments:* Research Brief #4

**Tue, Mar 24**

*Readings:* Donaldson Pages 343-352

*Assignments:* None

## **Part 5: Russia and Asia**

**Thu, Mar 26**

*Readings:* Riasanovsky Chapter 30

*Assignments:* Research Brief #5

**Tue, Mar 31**

*Readings:* Donaldson Pages 282-305

*Assignments:* Intelligence Estimate #3

**Thu, Apr 2**

*Readings:* Donaldson Pages 333-342

*Assignments:* Research Brief #6

**Tue, Apr 7**

*Readings:* Riasanovsky Chapter 31

*Assignments:* None

## **Part 6: The Muslim World**

**Thu, Apr 9**

*Readings:* Riasanovsky Chapter 34

*Assignments:* Research Brief #7

**Tue, Apr 14**

*Readings:* Riasanovsky Chapter 35  
*Assignments:* None

**Thu, Apr 16**

*Readings:* Donaldson Pages 204-217  
*Assignments:* Research Brief #8

**Tue, Apr 21**

*Readings:* Donaldson Pages 200-204  
*Assignments:* None

**Thu, Apr 23**

*Readings:* Donaldson Pages 305-333  
*Assignments:* Research Brief #9

**Tue, Apr 28**

*Readings:* None  
*Assignments:* None

**Thu, Apr 30**

*Readings:* None  
*Assignments:* None

**Part 7: The Future**

**Tue, May 5**

*Readings:* Donaldson Chapter 9; Riasanovsky Chapter 43  
*Assignments:* None

**Fri, May 8**

*Final Paper due by 5:00pm on Fri, May 8*