

Course description

Much of the course of twentieth century politics has been shaped by developments in the former Soviet Union. As we begin a new century, Russia still figures prominently on the stage of international affairs. This course surveys the tortured and tumultuous path of Russian political, economic, and social reform, with an emphasis on the Gorbachev era onwards. We begin the course with a quick overview of the history of the USSR and a discussion of the nature of Soviet socialism. We then focus on the rise of Gorbachev, the advent of perestroika and glasnost, and the failed attempts to hold together the Soviet empire. We spend the third section of the term unraveling the paradoxes, problems, and challenges facing Russia under Yeltsin's presidency as the country struggles to establish viable political and economic institutions. Finally, we turn to Russia's current politics under the Putin administration. Is Russia heading towards Western style democratic stability or is it returning to its authoritarian roots? By looking at the case of Russia, we learn larger lessons about the breakdown of authoritarian regimes, the nature of democratic transitions, and the difficulties of achieving democratic consolidation.

Required Readings

All reading in this class is mandatory. If you merely come to class, but do not do the reading, you will not pass. Three books should be purchased, and can be found at the bookstore. One copy of each book is also on reserve at the Valley Library.

- Theodore Von Laue, *Why Lenin? Why Stalin? Why Gorbachev? The Rise and Fall of the Soviet System.*
- David Remnick, *Lenin's Tomb*, reenact.: *The Last Days of the Soviet Empire.*
- Lilia Shevtsova, *Yeltsin's Russia: Myths and Reality.*

You will also read a selection of articles and book chapters, available on reserve at the Valley Library.

If you are interested in following current events in Russia, here are a few suggested news sources:

- The Moscow Times: <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/index.php>
- The St. Petersburg Times: <http://www.sptimes.ru>
- CDI Russia Weekly: <http://www.cdi.org/russia>
- RFE/RL Newslines: <http://www.rferl.org/newslines/2-tca.html> (broken link)
- Johnson's Russia List: <http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson>

Evaluation

- Map test (5%)
 - On Wednesday, January 16, you will have short map quiz on Russia and Eurasia.
- Presentation (5%)
 - In order to encourage you to keep up with what is going on in the news, we will start each class session with a student led presentation about relevant past and current events in Russia. Students may present on something that piqued their

interest in the reading, or they may discuss a current event not covered in the reading. The informal presentation should last no longer than 10 minutes. The presenters should also prepare a short handout/overhead of crucial names and terms for the rest of the class.

- Grading standards for presentation
 - Did the student follow the directions for the assignment? (0 or 10)
 - Level of student's command of subject matter, pertinent concepts, and audience (0-10).
 - Assessment of logical flow, continuity, and organization of comments (0-10).
 - Assessment of student's bearing: hand gestures, "um, um", and posture (0-10).
 - Level of student's use and integration of media, illustrations, overheads, etc (0-5).
 - Assessment of student's eye contact and audience engagement (0-5).
- Collegiality (20%)
 - As adults, it is important that we learn the skills involved in being good colleagues to one another. This is demonstrated by your on-time arrival and attendance at class, your active participation in all class activities, and your completion of assigned readings. Attendance is mandatory for this course; you are expected to come to every class meeting and be fully prepared for each class. You may also be asked to engage in some in-class, informal writing exercises.
 - Grading standards for collegiality
 - A -- Students who earn an A in collegiality are consistently excellent colleagues. They are always present and prepared for class, and they bring interesting and relevant questions and comments to the discussion of the subject material. However, they are also excellent colleagues because they are good listeners and show a genuine interest in their fellow students' thoughts.
 - B -- A B student may have missed several classes throughout the term or may have done poorly on some of the informal writing assignments, but s/he generally has been an active and enthusiastic participant in the course. Other B students may have been in class and prepared for class every day, but will have only occasionally participated in discussion. Alternatively, they actively participated in discussions, but without listening to their colleagues' previous statements.
 - C -- A C student is very much an average student. C students will miss up to five classes throughout the term or will come to class periodically during the term without having fully read or understood the assigned material. Other C students will be prepared for class and will come to most class meetings; yet, they hold back, waiting for others to ask the tough questions or take the chance at making the mistake. Still other C students will occasionally dominate a class discussion and use rhetorical tactics that limit other students' participation.
 - Lower than a C Students who earn a D or even an F for collegiality will have missed more than 5 classes or will have come to class frequently

without being fully prepared for the class meeting. In the class discussions and activities, lower than average colleagues will avoid participating completely.

- Absences, such as family emergencies and illness, will only be excused if you inform me within 24 hours of the missed class. I reserve the right to require documentation for the absence. Leaving early for vacation is not an excused absence.
- Take home midterm essay (20%)
 - Distributed in class, Wednesday, January 16. Due by 4 PM, Friday, January 25.
- Take home midterm essay (25%)
 - Distributed in class, Wednesday, February 6. Due by 4 PM, Friday, February 15.
- Take home final essay (25%)
 - Distributed in class, Wednesday, February 27. Due by 4 PM, Friday, March 8.
 - Grading standards for formal written assignments and exams
 - A -- The student has written an ideal essay; ideal because it directly answered the question, supported its argument with accurate evidence drawn from the lectures and reading materials, and presented the argument in a well-organized, stylistically- and grammatically-correct format that followed the writing guidelines. An A essay shines with original thought and strong, relevant evidence presented in a clear, understandable format. It is obvious that the student has absorbed and thought through the material in a very sophisticated manner.
 - B -- Student has read and understood the material and has offered a direct answer to the question with accurate evidence drawn from the lectures and the reading materials. It is not an A essay because it leaves a few questions hanging unanswered or overlooks a critical element of the problem. A B essay may contain some spelling, grammatical, or stylistic errors, but generally is quite sound.
 - C -- Student appears to have read some of the materials and has attempted to address the question, but has not written an answer that clearly, fully, or accurately answers the question. Any one of several elements may have gotten in the way of a good answer, including a lack of relevant evidence, a poorly organized essay, occasional oversimplifications, spelling, grammatical, or stylistic mistakes, or factual errors.
 - D -- Student has not directly answered the question and appears to have a poor grasp of the lectures and reading materials. Often, an essay of this quality will contain a number of oversimplifications of the course material, grammatical and stylistic mistakes, and factual errors.
 - F -- Essay strays from the question and provides little accurate and relevant historical evidence. Generally, an F paper will have poor organization, several spelling, grammatical, and stylistic mistakes, and fail to demonstrate an understanding of the course material.
 - Grading standards for formal written assignments and exams
 - All writing assignments must be
 - typed
 - double spaced

- 12 inch font
- paginated
- with left and right margins set at 1.25" and top and bottom margins set at 1"
- proofread and spell checked
- Extra credit film series

This film series is optional. You may watch one movie for each era and write up a two-paragraph essay (one paragraph summarizing the movie, the other paragraph discussing what you thought of the movie). You are responsible for renting the movie at your local video store. I do not accept late write-ups.

- Tsarist Russia: Onegin (due by January 16)
- Revolutionary Russia: Reds or Doctor Zhivago (due by January 23)
- Stalinism: East West or Burnt by the Sun (due by January 30)
- Glasnost-era films: Little Vera or Repentance (due by February 13)
- Current films: Prisoner of the Mountain or Brother (due by March 6)

Class policy

- In general, I can be helpful if I know of a problem beforehand; if you let me know after the fact, there is little I can do.
- You must complete all assignments in order to pass the course.
- Late papers (even an hour late) are penalized a grade a day. This includes weekends. I do not accept papers that are more than three days late; you will receive a zero. If you are sick, you need a notice from a doctor explaining your illness (the fact that you were at the student health center is not sufficient) or you need to contact me before the assignment is due if there is a problem.
- There will be NO make-up exams unless there is a note from a doctor or a funeral notice. If I do not hear from you the day you miss the exam, you will not be allowed to make it up, and will receive a zero. All other excuses (a cold, travel arrangements, family illness) are unacceptable. There will be no make-up for the final exam. If missed, you will receive a zero.
- I do not give extensions.
- I do not give incompletes.
- Plagiarism, or representing and using another person's ideas, writings, and work as one's own, will not be tolerated. If you engage in such behavior, I will fail you in this class and pursue the matter through the appropriate school channels.
- Please notify me within the first week of class if you have any alternative needs as a result of a learning disability. This must be accomplished by medical documentation.
- I have office hours because I am here to help you learn and improve your academic skills, to mentor you through your undergraduate career, and to provide guidance in laying out potential career options after your college career ends. Please stop by my office and introduce yourselves; I want to get to know you!

LECTURE TOPICS AND READINGS:

- Part 1: Overview of the Soviet System
 - January 7: Course Overview
 - January 9: Tsarist Russia
 - Theodore H. Von Laue, Why Lenin? Why Stalin? Why Gorbachev? Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4
 - January 14: Russian Revolutionaries
 - Von Laue, Chapters 5, 6
 - Vladimir Ilich Lenin, "[What is to be Done?](#)" (broken link) Available online or on reserve.
 - January 16: Building Communism
 - Von Laue, Chapters 7, 8, 9
 - Ekaterina Olitskaia, "My Reminiscences (1)," in Sheila Fitzpatrick and Yuri Sleznike, eds., In the Shadow of Revolution. On reserve.
 - January 21: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
 - No class
 - January 23: Stalinism
 - Von Laue, Chapters 10, 11.
 - Pasha Angelina, "The Most Important Thing," in Sheila Fitzpatrick and Yuri Sleznike, eds., In the Shadow of Revolution. On reserve.
 - Ekaterina Olitskaia, "My Reminiscences (2) and (3)," in Sheila Fitzpatrick and Yuri Sleznike, eds., In the Shadow of Revolution. On reserve.
- Part II: Gorbachev and the Disintegration of the Soviet Union
 - WARNING! Lenin's Tomb is a quick read, but it is long. Please pace yourself accordingly!
 - January 28
 - David Remnick, Lenin's Tomb, start Part I.
 - January 30
 - Remnick, finish Part I.
 - February 4
 - Remnick, start Part II.
 - February 6
 - Remnick, finish Part II.
 - February 11
 - Remnick, Part III.
 - February 13
 - Remnick, Parts IV and V.
- Part III: The Yeltsin Era
 - February 18
 - Lilia Shevtsova, Yeltsin's Russia: Myths and Reality, Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2.
 - February 20
 - Shevtsova, Chapters 3 and 4.
 - February 26
 - Shevtsova, Chapters 5 and 6.
 - February 27
 - Shevtsova, Chapters 7 and 8.

- March 4
 - Shevtsova, Chapters 9 and 10.
- March 6
 - Shevtsova, Chapters 11 and 12.
- Part IV: Putin and the Future of Russia
 - March 11
 - Stephen Holmes, "Simulations of Power in Putin's Russia," in *Current History*, October 2001. On reserve.
 - Michael McFaul, "Realistic Engagement: A New Approach to American-Russian Relations," in *Current History*, October 2001. On reserve.
 - March 13
 - Stephen E. Hanson, "The Dilemmas of Russia's Anti-Revolutionary Revolution," in *Current History*, October 2001. On reserve.