

**Instructor Andrada Costoiu**  
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**Office hours: 3.30-4.30, BSB 1170B**

**MW: 2-3.15**  
**BSB1115**

## **Political Science: Government and Politics of Russia**

### **Course overview:**

This course will focus on examining the Soviet Russian political transformations, covering government policies and the creation of new governmental institutions, attempts at economic reforms and economic crisis that Russia has faced since the end of the communist regime, the efforts and the progress towards democracy in Russia and its problems with corruption and oligarchic power.

The course will be structured in three parts.

First, we will discuss the Soviet Union and its breakdown under the Gorbachev leadership, 1985-1991. We will pay attention at the politics and society of USSR and than we will analyze competing explanations for the collapse of the Soviet state.

Second, we will study the emergence of Russian political institutions and the political and economical transformations during the presidencies of Boris Yeltsin, 1991-1999, and Vladimir Putin, 2000-2008. We will discuss Yeltsin's achievements in ushering a democratic political environment and the economic reforms that Russia underwent during his presidency and compare these with the transformation the Putin presidency's has brought for the Russian politics and economy.

Third, we will discuss Russian politics in the present. We will discuss the power struggles in Kremlin and how stable is the new regime that followed Putin. We will also discuss the politics of Russia's foreign policy (relationships with the former Soviet Union states, European Union and the world).

### **Course materials:**

The **required text books** for the class are:

- Mary McAuley, *Soviet Politics, 1917-1991*
- Boris Kagarlitsky, *Russia under Yeltsin and Putin*
- Dale R. Herspring, ed., *Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain* (available through UIC e-library)

### **Other required readings:**

- If any other additional readings will be required (e.g. journal articles) I will distribute them in class, a week in advance.
- You are also expected to keep up with events in Russia by reading Russia-related web sites, including newspapers, which can be reached [here](http://www.ithaca.edu/gagnon/russia/ruslinks.htm):  
<http://www.ithaca.edu/gagnon/russia/ruslinks.htm>.

## Film:

- In Class: *Return of the Tsar* (PBS - overview of the Yeltsin years)

## Grading

The final grade in the course will be determined by:

- **Class participation** (10 percent): This part of the final grade will be based on participation in class, which includes:
  - **Attendance.** I expect students to be present at every class.
  - **Being prepared.** I expect you to have done the assigned readings for the day and to have thought about them before class.
  - **Participation.** I expect you to provide informed comments or questions on the issues that we discuss each class.
- **Midterm exam.** (30 percent). The midterm will cover readings and class discussions for the weeks 1-8. The exam will consist of a set of 30 multiple choices and 2 short answer questions.
- **Analytical paper** (30 percent). Based on the course materials and two or three outside sources, every student is expected to write a 8-10 pages paper on one of three topics. Topics will be distributed after the midterm. All the papers must be delivered in hard copy, no e-mails will be accepted.
- **Final exam** (30 percent). The final will cover the readings in the second half of the course and will consist of multiple choices and an essay question.

## Schedule of classes:

### Week 1

#### **M: January 12th**

Class begins.

#### **W: January 14<sup>th</sup> The Russian revolution and the Soviet state in 1920**

Mary McAuley, *Soviet Politics*, Ch 1-2, pp.1 -33.

1917: Revolution; State-building: the Leninist system;

### Week 2

#### **M: January 19<sup>th</sup>**

Marthin Luther king day, no classes.

#### **W: January 21<sup>st</sup> The Stalinist state**

Mary McAuley, *Soviet Politics*, Ch 3-4, pp.34-61.

Industrialization, Collectivization and the Stalinist state.

### Week 3

**M: January 26<sup>th</sup> Khrushchev and the reform; Breznev and the era of stagnation**

Mary McAuley, *Soviet Politics*, Ch 5-6, pp.62-89.

Khrushchev and Party rule; the administrative command system under Breznev.

**W: January 28<sup>th</sup> Gorbachev and its political reforms**

Mary McAuley, *Soviet Politics*, Ch7, pp.89-106: Perestroika and the end of the party rule

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**Week 4**

**M: February 2<sup>nd</sup> Why did the USSR collapse?**

Mary McAuley, *Soviet Politics*, Ch8, pp.107-120: Dispersal of Power

Remington, "The Soviet System and Its Demise," pp. 44-51(see course reader)

**W:February 4th**

Boris Kagarlitsky, *Russia under Yeltsin and Putin*

The inevitable reaction -- The Russian intelligentsia between 'Westernism' and 'Patriotism'

**Week 5**

**M: February 9th**

Boris Kagarlitsky, *Russia under Yeltsin and Putin*

Chapters: "The rise of the Yeltsin regime" and "Word and deed"

**W:February 11<sup>th</sup>**

In Class: *Return of the Tsar* (PBS - overview of the Yeltsin years)

No readings.

**Week 6**

**M: February 16<sup>th</sup>**

Boris Kagarlitsky, *Russia under Yeltsin and Putin*

Chapters: "Word and deed" and "The corporatist model and social conflict"

**W: February 18th**

Boris Kagarlitsky, *Russia under Yeltsin and Putin*

Chapters: "The post-Soviet left" and "The road to default"

**Week 7**

**M: February 23th**

Boris Kagarlitsky, *Russia under Yeltsin and Putin*

Chapter:" The drift to the left (1998-99)"

**W: February 25<sup>th</sup>**

Boris Kagarlitsky, *Russia under Yeltsin and Putin*

Chapter:" The war of the Kremlin succession"

**Week 8**

**M: March 2<sup>nd</sup>** Midterm preparation: Class discussion on the topics we have covered until now.

**W: March 4<sup>th</sup>** Midterm

**Week 9**

**March 9<sup>th</sup>**

Boris Kagarlitsky, *Russia under Yeltsin and Putin*

Chapter: "The Putin regime"

**March 11<sup>th</sup>**

Dale R. Herspring, ed., *Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*

Chapter: "Putin and democratization"

**Week 10**

**March 16<sup>th</sup>**

Dale R. Herspring, ed., *Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*

Chapter: "Putin, the Duma, and political parties"

**March 18<sup>th</sup>**

Dale R. Herspring, ed., *Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*

Chapter: "Putin and the media"

**Week 11**

Spring break. No classes.

**Week 12**

**March 30<sup>th</sup>**

Dale R. Herspring, ed., *Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*

Chapter: "Putin and culture"

**April 1st** Dale R. Herspring, ed., *Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*

Chapter: "Putin, demography, health, and the environment"

**Week 13**

**April 6<sup>th</sup>**

Dale R. Herspring, ed., *Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*

Chapter: "Putin and the economy"

**April 8<sup>th</sup>**

Dale R. Herspring, ed., *Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*

Chapter: "Putin and agriculture"

**Week 14**

**April 13<sup>th</sup>**

Dale R. Herspring, ed., *Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*

Chapter: "Putin and the oligarchs"

**April 15<sup>th</sup>**

Dale R. Herspring, ed., *Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*

Chapter: "Putin and military reform"

**Week 16**

**April 20<sup>th</sup>** Dale R. Herspring, ed., *Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*  
Chapter: "Putin and Russia's wars in Chechnya"

**April 22<sup>nd</sup>** Dale R. Herspring, ed., *Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*  
Chapter: "Putin and the regions"

**Week 17**

**April 27<sup>th</sup>** Dale R. Herspring, ed., *Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*  
Chapter: "Putin and Russian foreign policy"

**April 29<sup>th</sup>** Final exam preparation: Class discussion on the topics we have covered until now.

**Week 18<sup>th</sup>**

**May 4<sup>th</sup>**

Final examination