

30:141, RUSSIAN/POST-SOVIET POLITICS

9:30 – 10:45 Tuesdays and Thursdays, Spring 2010, 66 Schaeffer Hall

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Office Hours: Tuesday 11 am -12 pm,

Wednesday 9 am -11 am (or by appointment)

Науки юношей питают,

Отраду старым подают

[Scholarship nurtures the young, it gives joy to the old.]

–M.V. Lomonosov (1711-1765), Russian scientist and poet, founder of Moscow State University

Background Russia--also officially called the Russian Federation--is the largest state to emerge from the 1991 break-up of the Soviet Union and the most significant in world affairs, having inherited most of the Soviet Union's property, resources and international obligations. Although no longer one of the world's two superpowers, Russia remains a regional great power and a significant emerging economy in the world. It represents a major world culture, with contributions to literature, science, music, athletics and other fields rivaled by few others. Today's Russian politics was forged during struggles in the 1990s, when Russians needed to create state power, a capitalist economy, a more powerful judiciary, and constitutionally derived political institutions, including those that hold Russia's different subunits together. The current political system also reflects carry-over from the Soviet period, certain values and symbols that derive from the long sweep of Russian history, and the impact of global trends and international markets.

Умом Россию не понять,

Аршином общим не измерить:

У ней особенная стать—

В Россию можно только верить.

[You can't get your mind around Russia,

You can't use a standard yardstick:

She has a special stature--

You just have to believe in Russia.]

–F.I. Tiutchev (1803-1873), Russian philosopher and poet

My goals for your learning At the end of the course, you should have a stronger grasp of Russia's political trajectory, especially since 1991, of contemporary Russian politics and how it resembles and contrasts with politics in other countries, and of how Russians think about their political system and policies.

Assigned Readings Most class sessions have one or more assigned readings. Completing the readings prior to the assigned class session will boost your class participation score because we will use several of the readings in classroom discussions and other activities. Also, portions of both tests will ask you to show your knowledge of the readings. Note that the length of the assigned readings varies from one class session to another. Look ahead now and spread out your reading as necessary.

The following is the primary textbook for the course. It is on sale at Iowa Book.

- Danks, *Politics Russia* (New York: Pearson-Longman, 2009).

The following are available as optional purchases:

- Davis, *The Rowman & Littlefield Guide to Writing with Sources*, 3rd ed. (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007). It is inexpensive and may be useful in many classes.
- Williams, *Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace*, 3rd ed. I recommend this book's advice for improving your prose.

All assigned readings are available through the reserve room of the library, either hard copy or digitally. The course's ICON site will have links to the electronic resources.

I would like to hear from anyone in this class who has a disability which may require some modification of the seating, testing or other class requirements. Please see me after class or during my office hours.

Classroom Etiquette Try to be on time. If you can't be, come in quietly. Cell phones, iPods, and Mp3 players cannot be on during class. If you use a laptop for note taking, mute the sound and avoid using the laptop for things that will distract/annoy your neighbors or take your own attention away from the class.

ASSIGNMENTS

Important Dates:

- **Thursday, February 25th**, by 9:00 am: Preliminary bibliography for essay is due.
- **Thursday, March 9th**, during regular class session: Midterm examination.
- **Tuesday, March 30th**, by 9:00 am: First version of essay is due.
- **Thursday, April 29th**, by 9:00 am: Final version of essay is due.
- **Thursday, May 13th**, 9:45 – 11:45 am (in regular classroom): Final examination.

Components of Your Course Grade:

- 1) A preliminary bibliography for the essay assignment, due on February 25th by 9:00 am and worth 5% of the course grade. You must upload it to the ICON Dropbox in Word 2003 or 2007 format or as a pdf file. I will use this to make sure you have chosen an appropriate topic and have identified pertinent sources. I will return it to you with my comments. In ICON's Content area, I have posted two files: the Research Essay Assignment, with complete information about the requirements for this preliminary bibliography as well as of the essay itself, and a sample preliminary bibliography.
- 2) The in-class examination on March 9th, worth 15% of the course grade. This exam will be closed-book and will require you to answer objective questions and write a short essay. It will cover assigned readings and in-class presentations and discussions. I will post more details about the exam on ICON along with suggestions for preparations. Per University policy, you may take a make-up exam when illness, mandatory religious obligations, or other unavoidable circumstances or University activities cause you to miss the in-class exam. You are responsible to inform me as soon as possible about the reasons for missing the exam and to give me appropriate documentation. (Doing this before the exam—and, in the case of scheduled University activities, long before the exam--is much appreciated.)
- 3) A research essay on contemporary Russian politics, worth 35% of the course grade. The Research Essay Assignment file has more details. Two required deadlines are associated with the essay:

- A first version of the essay by March 30th. This first version must meet all the requirements of organization, style and content that the final version does. In other words, this is your real deadline to conduct research and write the essay.
 - The final version by April 29th. I will provide detailed feedback on your first version by April 13th. Based on that feedback, you can revise your essay to improve its quality.
- 4) The final examination, worth 30% of the course grade. This exam will be two hours, closed-book, non-cumulative for the objective portion and cumulative for the essay portion.
 - 5) Class participation, worth 15% of the course grade. I will base the participation score on attendance, contributions to class discussions and other in-class activities, and on occasional quizzes (announced or unannounced).

Grading Late assignments will be penalized 10% per day beginning five minutes after the time it is due. NO EMAILED ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

I will assign course grades with pluses and minuses. Each component of the course grade will receive a numerical score, on the 90-80-70 scale, and the weighted average of the component scores will determine the course grade. I will indicate the letter-grade equivalents of each component's numerical score, but you should treat those as approximations; the calculation of the course grade will be based on the numbers.

Note: I do not give incompletes for the course except when unusual and unavoidable circumstances cause you to be unable to take the final exam. Let me know about those circumstances just as soon as possible.

LECTURE TOPICS AND ASSIGNED READINGS

I. Background: The Soviet and Post-Soviet Periods

A. Pre-Gorbachev Soviet politics (January 19 - 21)

1/21: Read, *The Making and Breaking of the Soviet System* (2001), ch. 8

B. Gorbachev and the End of the USSR (January 26 - 28)

1/26: Danks, ch. 1

C. The Struggle for Power in Post-Soviet Russia (February 2- 4)

2/2: Danks, pp. 53-70

2/4: Danks, ch. 4

D. Getting Russia Right? (February 9)

Trenin, Dmitri V. 2007. *Getting Russia Right*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, ch. 1.

II. Institutions and Processes of Governing [7 class sessions]

A. The Formal Institutions of Federal Governance (February 11 - 23)

2/11: Danks, pp. 109-114 and 124-143 in ch. 5

2/16: Danks, ch. 6

2/23: Danks, ch. 9

****Preliminary Bibliography for Essay Due February 25, by 9:00 am [Submit via ICON's Dropbox]****

B. Personalities and Informal Groupings at the Federal Level (February 25 – March 2)

- 2/25: Breslauer, "Boris Yeltsin as Patriarch" in Brown, ed., *Contemporary Russian Politics* (2001), pp. 70-81.
2/25: Pravda, "Introduction: Putin in Perspective," in Pravda, ed., *Leading Russia* (2005), pp. 23-36.
3/2: Danks, pp. 115-124 in ch. 5
3/2: Medvedev, "Go Russia!" (September 10, 2009), on ICON, downloaded from http://eng.kremlin.ru/text/speeches/2009/09/10/1534_type104017_221527.shtml.

C. The Federation and Regional Governance (March 4)

- 3/4: Danks, ch. 7

>Midterm Exam, Tuesday, March 9<

III. Political Dynamics

A. The State of Russia's State (March 11)

- Colton, Timothy J. "Introduction: Governance and Postcommunist Politics," in *The State After Communism: Governance in the New Russia*, Timothy J. Colton and Stephen Holmes, eds. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 1-20.
Lynch, *How Russia is Not Ruled: Reflections on Russian Political Development* (2005), 1-10.

B. Civil Society and Social Capital (March 23 - 25)

- 3/23: Danks, ch. 10
3/25: Kordonskii, Simon G. 2001. "Everyday Life as Flight from the State: 'Housing Portfolios' and the 'Diversified Way of Life'," in *Explaining Post-Soviet Patchworks, 2: Pathways from the Past to the Global*, Klaus Segbers, ed. Burlington, VT: Ashgate: 326-32.

First Version Of Essay Due March 30

C. Economic Governance (March 30)

- Danks, ch. 14

D. Corruption and the Rule of Law (April 1)

- Danks, pp. 70-74 in ch. 3 and all of ch. 8

E. The Mass Media (April 6)

- Danks, ch. 11

F. Elections and Parties (April 8-15)

- 4/8: Danks, ch. 12
4/15: Gel'man, Vladimir. 2008. "Party Politics in Russia: From Competition to Hierarchy," *Europe-Asia Studies* 60 #6 (August), 913-930.

G. Russians' Views of Russian Politics (April 20)

- Whitefield, Stephen. 2009. "Russian Citizens and Russian Democracy: Perceptions of State Governance and Democratic Practice, 1993–2007." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 25 (2), 93-117.

H. "Machine Politics" (April 22 - 27)

- 4/22: Royko, Mike. 1971. *Boss: Richard J. Daley of Chicago*. New York: Penguin Books, ch. 1.
4/27: Lowenhardt, John. 1997. "The 1996 Presidential Elections in Tatarstan," *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 13 (1): 132-44.

I. Foreign Policy (April 29)

4/29: Danks, ch. 13.

****Final Version Of Essay Due April 29****

IV. What Does the Future Hold? (May 4 - 6)

Proletarian democracy is a million times more democratic than any bourgeois democracy.

—Vladimir Lenin, “Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky” (1918).

Democracy is not just anything goes.

—Mikhail Gorbachev, speech in Krasnoyarsk at a meeting with Party activists, September 18, 1986.

The risk is that postcommunist Russia may not succeed either in fully institutionalizing an effective, yet limited government of laws or in developing the deep moral and spiritual underpinnings for a more modern and pluralistic society. The likely result of such a failure would be yet another version of Russia’s historic hypercentralized autocracy, modernized by increased foreign trade and importation of useful technologies from Western economies. Russia will not return to the Slavophile, the Tsarist or the Soviet past. The struggle for the future of Russia is not between ‘East’ and ‘West’ in the legendary Russian soul but between two very different syntheses of Eastern and Western elements in the emerging body politic.

—Billington, James H. *Russia in Search of Itself*. (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), xv.

Authoritarianism is just as hard to consolidate as democracy.

—Stephen Holmes, “Conclusion: The State of the State in Putin’s Russia,” in *The State After Communism: Governance in the New Russia*, Timothy J. Colton and Stephen Holmes, eds. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006): 299-310, on p. 303.

5/4: Danks, pp. 74-77

5/4: Colton, “Putin and the Attenuation of Russian Democracy,” in Pravda, ed., *Leading Russia* (2005), 103-117.

5/6: Danks, ch. 16

>Final Examination, Thursday, May 13th, 9:45 – 11:45 am<

The Political Science Department, The University of Iowa, Professor Wm. Reisinger, Chair, 341 Schaeffer Hall, 335-2358

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES Website: <http://www.uiowa.edu/~sds/> Instructors will make reasonable accommodations for students with physical, mental or learning disabilities. Students with disabilities which may require some modification of seating, testing, or other class requirements are to inform the instructor (after class or during the instructor's office hours) so that appropriate arrangements may be made. It is the student's responsibility to contact Student Disability Services, 133 Burge Hall (335-1462) and obtain a Student Academic Accommodation Request form (SAAR). The form will specify what course accommodations are judged reasonable for that student. An instructor who cannot provide the accommodations specified, or has concerns about the accommodations, must contact the Student Disability Services counselor who signed the request form within 48 hours of receiving the form from the student.

DEPARTMENTAL/COLLEGIATE COMPLAINT PROCEDURES A student who has a complaint against any member of the college's teaching staff is responsible for following the procedures described in the Student Academic Handbook, which is available on the web site of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences: <http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/x/#5>. The student should attempt to resolve the issue with the faculty member or teaching assistant involved. Lacking a satisfactory outcome, the student can turn to the department chair, whose name is listed above along with contact information. (If the complaint concerns a teaching assistant, the student should contact the supervising faculty member first.) If a satisfactory outcome still is not obtained, the student can turn to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Complaints may concern inappropriate faculty conduct (including inappropriate course materials), incompetence in oral communication, inequities in assignments, scheduling of examinations at other than authorized and published times, failure to provide disability accommodations, or grading grievances. In complaints involving the assignment of grades, it is college policy that grades cannot be changed without the permission of the department concerned.

PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING You are expected to be honest and honorable in your fulfillment of assignments and in test-taking situations. Plagiarism and cheating are serious forms of academic misconduct. See Academic Fraud in the Student Academic Handbook at <http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/x/#2> for the complete policy. The Department of Political Science works with individual instructors to detect plagiarism and cheating and to ensure that appropriately serious punishments are applied. An instructor who suspects a student of plagiarism or cheating must inform the student (preferably in writing) as soon as possible after the incident has been observed or discovered. Instructors who detect cheating or plagiarism may decide, in consultation with the departmental executive officer, to reduce the student's grade on the assignment or the course, even to assign an F. The instructor writes an account of the chronology of the plagiarism or cheating incident for the departmental executive officer who sends an endorsement of the written report of the case to Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. A copy of the report will be sent to the student.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT You should familiarize yourself with the University's Policy concerning sexual harassment. It can be found at: <http://www.uiowa.edu/~our/opmanual/ii/04.htm>. Additional information is available from the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity: <http://www.uiowa.edu/~eod/policies/sexual-harassment-guide/index.html>.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES Your responsibilities to this class-and to your education as a whole-include attendance and participation. This syllabus details specific expectations the instructor may have about attendance and participation. You have a responsibility to help create a classroom environment where all may learn. At the most basic level, this means you will respect the other members of the class and the instructor and treat them with the courtesy you hope to receive in return.

ENROLLED COURSES OUTSIDE YOUR COLLEGE Taking a course outside the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences means that class policies on matters such as requirements, grading, and sanctions for academic dishonesty are governed by the College where the course resides. Students wishing to add or drop this course after the official deadline must receive the approval of the Dean of that College. Details of the University policy of cross enrollments may be found at: <http://provost.uiowa.edu/ucoll/students/registration.htm#cross>. The deadlines for course changes are listed on the Registrar's Office web site: <http://www.registrar.uiowa.edu/>

PLUS-MINUS GRADING All the department's instructors can append plus or minus grades to the letter grades they assign for the course. If the instructor does not specifically indicate in the syllabus that he or she will not assign plusses or minuses, students should assume that this form of grading will be used.

HOMEWORK EXPECTATION For each semester hour of credit that a Political Science course carries, students should expect to spend approximately two hours per week outside of class preparing for class sessions. That is, in a three-credit-hour course, instructors design course assignments on the assumption that students will spend six hours per week in out-of-class preparation.

REACTING SAFELY TO SEVERE WEATHER The University of Iowa Operations Manual section 16.14 outlines appropriate responses to a tornado (1) or to a similar crisis: <http://www.uiowa.edu/~our/opmanual/ii/22.htm>. If a tornado or other severe weather is indicated by the UI outdoor warning system, members of the class should seek shelter in rooms and corridors in the innermost part of a building at the lowest level, staying clear of windows, or large free-standing expanses such as auditoriums and cafeterias. The class will resume, if possible, after the UI outdoor warning system announces that the severe weather threat has ended.

Please visit the Political Science Department's web site: <http://www.polisci.uiowa.edu/>. It is frequently updated with new events and procedures in our department, changes in the Schedule of Courses, plus TA and faculty office hours when available. You also may find current information on pre-advising and registration. Our Vernon Van Dyke Computing Facility (Political Science ITC) is located in room 21 Schaeffer Hall. Available hours are listed at our web site and also posted outside room 21 SH.