PSC 269 Russian Politics

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This course will focus on the politics of the Russian Federation in the post-Soviet period. After a brief review of the decline and fall of the USSR, it will concentrate on Russian political development under the presidencies of Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin, especially on the power politics of elections, parties, struggles between center and periphery, the increasing dominance of the executive branch and the decline of competitive politics. In mapping the emergence of Russia's political terrain, it will address some of the forces that have contributed to shaping it, including the results of economic transition, and the interplay of domestic politics and Russia's changing geo-political status, including the Chechen wars and Russia's interests in other former Soviet republics such as Georgia and Ukraine.

The first half of the course will focus on the fall of the Soviet Union and the Yeltsin Era, and the second half will focus on the Putin era. Although this will be a lecture course, there will be a participation component, as well, and students will be expected to answer questions with both facts and analysis. Please try to do most of the readings every week, but make use of your capacity to skim for weeks with a heavy reading load.

Grading will be as follows:
10% Participation
15% Map Quiz (geography is important!)
10% each for two reaction/analysis papers of 4-5 pages each. They may be written on any of the 16 topics, beginning in week two (that is, topics 2 – 14, including 9a – 9d). There will be no set questions. The goal of the papers will be to note what you think is an important theme, point, or question from the readings, and analyze it briefly using multiple readings to address it. The papers are due at the beginning of the class when the topic is first taken up (no exceptions—hard copy, please). One of the two papers should be written before the midterm, and one after.
25% Midterm Exam
30% Final Exam

Readings

- Five books should be available for purchase at the bookstore:

  Michael McFaul, *Russia's unfinished Revolution: political change from Gorbachev to Putin* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001)
  Thane Gustafson, *Capitalism Russian Style* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

Copies should be available on reserve at the library (the Remington and Gustafson are networked resources through the library).
• One book could not be acquired by the bookstore in time for the class (it's used in the first few weeks), so the relevant sections will be scanned and put on the course web-site:


• The remainder of the readings are articles that are available on-line through the library's electronic journals. There are a couple of exceptions (*), and they will be made available on the course web-site as well.

1. **Introduction—The Russian Empire, October Revolution, Lenin, Stalin. (Jan 15)**

2. **Twilight of the Soviet Union—Stagnation, Gorbachev, and the Road to Breakup (Jan 20 & 22)**
   Malia (1994), pp 351-444
   A. S. Zaychenko, "United States--USSR: Individual Consumption (Some Comparisons)" in *World Affairs* v. 152, no. 1 (June, 1989), pp. 8-12

   Malia (1994), 445-490
   McFaul (2001), pp 48-60, 70-140

4. **A Rocky Start—Economic Tailspin, Institutional Conflict, and Yeltsin's heavy hand prevails (Feb 3 & 5)**
   B. Rakitskii, "The Condition of the Population of Russia: Social Breakdown during the 'Leap to the Market'" in *Problems of Economic Transition* v. 36, no. 10 (Feb, 1994), pp 32-43
   Remington (2001), pp 84-113
   McFaul (2001), pp 140-227
   Shevtsova (1999), 22-106

5. **Independence for whom in Post-Soviet Space?—Settlements, Conflict and Stalemates (Feb 10 & 12, ***Map Quiz***)**
   Svante E. Cornell, “Autonomy as a Source of Conflict: Caucasian Conflicts in Theoretical Perspective” in *World Politics* v. 54, no. 2 (Jan, 2001), pp 245-276
   Pal Kolsto, Andrei Edemsky, and Natalya Kalashnikova, “The Dniester Conflict: Between Irredentism and Separatism” in *Europe-Asia Studies* v. 46, no. 6 (1993), pp 973-993
Shevtsova (1999), pp 107-130

Shevtsova (1999), pp 131-194
McFaul (2001), pp 265-306 (skim)

7. Russia's Economy in the 1990s—Constant Crisis, Partial Reform, Privatization, and Collapse (Feb 19 & 24)
Thane Gustafson, Capitalism Russian Style (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp 1-107, 120-122, 134-150, 170-234
Debra Javeline, “Work without Wages: Russia's Nonpayment Crisis” in Political Science Quarterly v. 116, no. 3 (Fall 2001), pp 467-489

8. Power Plays and Managed Succession—the 1999 Duma Elections and 2000 Presidential Elections (Feb 26 & Mar 3)
Richard Sakwa, Putin: Russia's Choice, 2nd ed (New York, NY: Routledge, 2008), pp 17-37 (pp 1-16 recommended, as well)

Midterm Exam (Mar 5)

Spring Break

9. Centralization of Power Under Putin
9a. Reining in Democracy and the Media (Mar 17)
M. Steven Fish, “Putin's Path” in Journal of Democracy v. 12, no. 4 (Oct, 2001), pp 71-78
Sakwa (2008), pp 95-100, 135-141, 150-161, 167-173
Stephen White and Sarah Oates, “Politics and the Media in Postcommunist Russia” in Politics v. 23, no. 1 (Feb 2003), pp 31-37
Sarah Oates, “The neo-Soviet model of the media” in Europe-Asia Studies v. 59, no. 8 (Dec 2007), pp 1279-1297
9b. Reining in Regions (Mar 19)
Sakwa (2008), pp 186-213
C. Ross, “Putin's Federal Reforms and the Consolidation of Federalism in Russia: One Step Forward, Two Steps Back!” in Communist and Post-Communist Studies v. 36, no. 1 (Mar 2003), pp 29-47
Matthew Hyde, “Putin's Federal Reforms and Their Implications for Presidential Power in Russia” in Europe-Asia Studies v. 53, no. 7 (July, 2001), pp 719-743

9c. Reining in Oligarchs (Mar 24)
Lee Wolonsky, “Putin's Plutocrat Problem” in Foreign Affairs v. 79, no. 2 (Mar-Apr, 2000), pp 18-32
Sakwa (2008), pp 70-83, 143-150, 249-259

9d. Oil & the Economy (Mar 26)
Philip Hanson, “The Russian Economic Recovery: Do Four Years of Growth Tell Us That the Fundamentals Have Changed?” in Europe-Asia Studies v. 55, no. 3 (May 2003), pp 365-382
*Peter Rutland, “Putin's Economic Record: Is the Oil Boom Sustainable?” in Europe-Asia Studies v. 60, no. 6 (Aug 2008), pp 1051-1072
Sakwa (2008), pp 240-249, 259-266

10. Managing Democracy and Cutting down on Competition—the 2003 Duma Elections and 2004 Presidential Elections (Mar 31 & Apr 2)
Regina Smyth, “Building State Capacity from the Inside Out: Parties of Power and the Success of the President's Reform Agenda in Russia” in Politics and Society v. 30, no. 4 (Dec 2002), pp 555-578
Sakwa (2008), pp 101-117
Vladimir Gel'man, “From 'Feckless Pluralism' to 'Dominant Power Politics'? The Transformation of Russia's Party System” in Democratization v. 13, no. 4 (Aug 2006), pp 545-561

11. Governance under Putin—Reforms, Crises, and the Power Vertical (Apr 7 & 9)
Sakwa (2008), pp 88-95, 141-143, 162-167, 227-239
Daniel Treisman, “Putin's Silovarchs” in Orbis no. 51 (Jan 2007), pp 141-153
Pauline Jones Luong and Erika Weinthal, “Contra Coercion: Russian Tax Reform, Exogenous Shocks, and Negotiated Institutional Change” in American Journal of Political Science v. 98, no. 1 (Feb 2004), pp 139-152
Vladimir Gel'man, “The Unrule of Law in the Making: The Politics of Informal Institution Building in Russia” in Europe-Asia Studies v. 56, no. 7 (Nov 2004), pp 1021-1040
12. Russian Foreign Policy under Putin—Gas and Guns in the Near Abroad (Apr 14 & 16)
Sakwa (2008), pp 267-298
Dov Lynch, “Separatist States and Post-Soviet Conflicts” in International Affairs v. 78, no. 4 (Oct, 2002), pp 831-848
Dov Lynch, “‘Walking the Tightrope': The Kosovo Conflict and Russia in European Security, 1998-August 1999” in European Security v. 8, no. 4 (Winter, 1999), pp 57-83
Bertil Nygren, “Putin's Use of Natural Gas to Reintegrate the CIS Region” in Problems of Post-Communism v. 55, no. 4 (July-Aug, 2008), pp 3-15
New York Times and Washington Post (Assorted, Aug 2008-Nov 2008, links will be placed on course web-site)

13. Dangers of Dissent—Loyal Opposition vs. The Other Russia and Dissent Hazardous to your Health (Apr 21 & 23)
Sakwa (2008), pp 123-129, 173-185
Greg Simons and Dmitry Strovsky, “Censorship in Contemporary Russian Journalism in the Age of the War against Terrorism” in European Journal of Communication v. 21, no. 2 (June 2006), pp 189-211

14. No Competition, but Succession or Puppetry?—the 2007 Duma Elections and 2008 Presidential Elections (Apr 28)
Stephen K. Wegren and Andrew Konitzer, “Prospects for Managed Democracy in Russia” in Europe-Asia Studies v. 59, no. 6 (Sept 2007), pp 1025-1047
Sakwa (2008), pp 117-123, 129-134 (pp 299-316 are recommended)

Final Exam (May 8)