IR 281: Business and Politics in Eastern and Central Europe
Monday and Wednesday, 12:30-1:45PM
Instructor: Olesya Tkacheva
Office Hours: Monday, 2:00-3:00PM and by appointment
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Course description: This course examines patterns of state-economy interaction in Russian and Eastern Europe under three different regimes: the socialist system, the transition period, and the new global order. Although the geographic scope is limited to Eastern Europe, the course lays out the foundations for analyzing politico-economic challenges brought about by rapid economic and political transformation in other regions as well. We will study how economic actors impacted the formation of political institutions in Eastern Europe and then will illustrate how these institutions have structured the relationships between the state and business groups.

Evaluation:

- Mid-term exam (March 3, 2010): 25%
- Final exam (May 4, 2010 @ 8:30AM): 30%
- A case-study paper and in-class presentation: 25%
  Students will be required to write and present a case-study paper (8-10 pages double-spaced). Suggested paper topics are listed in the syllabi below. The paper is due 24 hours before the corresponding lecture and must be posted on the Blackboard.
- Motivated Questions and Attendance: 20%
  Students are expected to attend all classes. Missing more than two weeks of classes without a documented and valid reason will result in the failure to receive the grade. Students must write 10 discussion questions about assigned readings of their choice. Discussion questions are due at least 5 hours before the class and must be posted on the Blackboard.

A student cannot receive a grade for the course unless he/she completes all writing assignments.

Recommended Book(s):


All other readings are available through the Blackboard under “Course Materials.”

Week 1: January 13: Introduction

No readings assigned

January 18: No class (Martin Luther King, Jr. Day)
Part I: Building Blocks
Week 2 (January 20): Classifying Business-Government Relations in Europe and Beyond


Week 3 (January 25-27): States and Markets


Part II: State-Economy Relations under the Socialist System

Week 4 (February 1-3): Incumbent Incentive Structure under the Socialist System


Week 5 (February 8-10): State-Economy Relations under the Socialist System


**Part III: Political Economy of Transition**

**Week 6** (February 15-17): Challenges of Transition


*Suggested Topic for Student Presentation: Evaluating the Success of Reforms*

**Week 7** (February 22-24): Rebuilding the State in Eastern Europe


Kathryn Stoner-Weiss, *Resisting the State: Reform and Retrenchment in Post-Soviet Russia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), Chapters 1, 3 & 5.


Week 8 (March 1-3): Feeding the Post-Communist State


*Suggested Topic for Student Presentation: “Tax System Reforms in Eastern Europe”*

Suggested:


March 3: Midterm Exam (in-class)

March 8-10: No Classes (Spring Break)

Weeks 9-10 (March 17-25): Protecting Property Rights and Enforcing the Rule of Law


Suggested Topic for Student Presentation: “A Case Study of the Yukos Affair”


Week 11 (March 29-31): Post-Communist Corruption and Informal Practices


Suggested Topic for Student Presentation: “Fighting Corruption in Eastern Europe: What Works and What does not?”


Part III: Business-Government Interaction in Post-Transition Period

Week 12: (April 5-7): Business Political Activism


**Week 13 (April 12-14): Shaping Political Processes**


Suggested:

**Week 14 (April 19-21): Energy Policy and Big Business**


*Suggested Topic for Student Presentation: Gazprom and Russia-Ukraine Gas Dispute*

**Week 15 (April 26-28): International Actors in Domestic Politics**


**May 4: Final Exam @ 8:30AM**