I. ABOUT THE COURSE

The course provides an introduction to the government and politics of Russia from the Gorbachev period to the present. We will cover the Soviet collapse, the problems of Russia’s transition, and Russia’s many political and economic challenges. We will also discuss Russia’s party system and the relationship between the legislature, the executive branch, and the presidency, as well as Russia’s rule of law challenges and its nascent civil society. We will ask whether Russia is a federal or a unitary state and talk about ethnicity, religion, and the national unity questions it faces. And lastly, we will assess the progress the country has made so far and try to determine what the future holds for Russia.

II. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Comments and discussion questions</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparation and participation in class discussion</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>In class presentation (2 times 15%)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>20%</td>
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Even though this is a large class, I intend class discussion to be a big part of it. This means that you must attend class regularly and be ready to take part in the discussion. Active participation requires coming to class prepared by having done the readings and having thought about the questions they raise.

Participation in Class Discussion
With so many people in the class, it probably won’t be possible for everyone to take part in the discussion during every single class, so this grading scheme for discussion participation applies to your overall class participation.
A = Attended and actively participated
B = Attended and spoke, but without evidence of preparation
C = Attended for the full period but did not speak
F = Did not attend

**Brief Comment and Discussion Questions**
In order to facilitate discussion, prior to each class, you should post a brief comment on the day’s readings in the Dropbox (Comments and Discussion Questions) on the course website at [http://learnuw.wisc.edu](http://learnuw.wisc.edu). In your comments you should highlight a positive or a negative aspect of the assigned readings or point to an argument which you find particularly compelling or faulty. You should also provide **two questions** which you believe we should address during the class discussion. To receive credit, comments must be a minimum of 200 words long, not counting the two discussion questions. **Your comments are due by 8am each Tuesday and Thursday**, and late comments will not be accepted under any circumstances. The comments themselves are not graded – you get 15% of your grade just for writing them. There will be 25 opportunities to submit comments (each Thursday and Thursday except of the days on which we will have the midterm and final exams and the 2 days when you are a discussion leader). Your grade will depend on the number of comments you send. Each acceptable comment will count equally towards the 15% you get for this portion of the class.

**Presentations and serving as Discussion leader:**
Each class (starting next Tuesday) students will work in groups of 3 to prepare a 10-15 minute presentation based on the readings. The goal of the presentations is to highlight interesting aspects of the readings and to provide points for further discussion.
• Presentations must include all readings. Students should work together to develop an integrated presentation. Each students should be able to discuss all readings, and the division of the presentation should be based on substantive themes rather than different works. You can in your presentation refer to earlier readings that are pertinent to the themes you are covering.
• Four discussion questions should be posted to (Discussion Leader Questions Forum under Communications/Discussion) on the course website at Learn@UW by **8:30 am on the day of the presentations**. All students should look at the questions the Discussion Leaders have posted before coming to class.
• Discussion leader dates will be set at the first class meeting. Students should choose two days on which to be a discussion leader.

**Midterm and Final:**
The midterm and final exams will take place in class. You will be given three essay questions to answer.
III. READINGS

Book chapters and articles that are available for electronic download from the UW libraries are marked with (*). They will be available through library e-reserve, accessible via the course website at [http://learnuw.wisc.edu](http://learnuw.wisc.edu).

There are also three books which are assigned in their entirety that should be purchased. These books will also be on reserve at the library. When chapters of these books are assigned they are marked with (#)


Michael McFaul: *Russia's Unfinished Revolution: Political Change From Gorbachev to Putin* (Cornell University Press, 2001)

In addition, you are strongly encouraged to gain more familiarity with Russian politics and current events by regularly browsing *The Moscow Times*. If you come across an article that you find relevant to the topic we are covering on a particular day, feel free to bring it to our attention during class discussion.

[http://www.themoscowtimes.com](http://www.themoscowtimes.com)

IV. CLASS SCHEDULE

Jan 22 Introduction

Jan 24 Soviet Communism and Its Collapse


Jan 29 Russia’s Political Regime in Comparative Perspective


*Alina Pippidi: “The Other Transition” *Journal of Democracy* Volume 21, Number 1, January 2010, pp. 120-127

Jan 31 **Challenges of Regime Change**


*Michael McFaul & Elina Treyger: “Civil Society” in *Between Dictatorship and Democracy* p.135-174

Feb 5 **The Gorbachev Era**

# McFaul: Chapters 2,3.

Feb 7 **The Gorbachev Era II**


The book is available online at [http://search.library.wisc.edu/catalog/WU7884661](http://search.library.wisc.edu/catalog/WU7884661)

In the upper right corner there is link that allows you to sign up for online access.

Feb 12 **The Soviet Collapse**


Feb 14 **The Soviet Collapse II**

# Stephen Kotkin: *Armageddon Averted*, pp 1-112

Feb 19 **The First Russian Republic**

# McFaul: *Russia's Unfinished Revolution*, chapters 4,5

Feb 21 **The Political System under Yeltsin**

# McFaul: *Russia's Unfinished Revolution*, Chapters 6,7,8

Feb 26 **The Political System under Yeltsin II**

# McFaul: *Russia's Unfinished Revolution*, Chapters 9,10

Feb 28 **Economic Trends and the Rise of the Oligarchs**


March 5 **Economic Trends and the Rise of the Oligarchs II**


March 7 The Political System Under Putin and Medvediev

# Wergen and Herspring: *After Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*. Introduction, chapters 1,2.

March 12 The Political System Under Putin and Medvediev II


March 14 Midterm

March 19 Political Parties and Elections

*Ledeneva, How Russia Really Works, chapter 2, pp. 28-58.


*Grigore Pop-Eleches and Joshua A. Tucker, “Communism’s Shadow: Postcommunist Legacies, Values, and Behavior,” *Comparative Politics* 43 (July 2011), 379–408. (29pp)


March 21 The Russian Economy


*Padma Desai: Response to “Myth”, *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2008

*Joel Hellman, “Russia’s Transition to a Market Economy: A Permanent Redistribution?” in

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Recommended:

**Spring Break – March 23-31**

April 2 **Stateness, Constitution, and Rule of Law**

*Ledeneva, *How Russia Really Works*, Chapters 1,7


April 4: **Legislature, Executive Branch and Presidency**


*Gerald Easter, “Preference for Presidentialism: Postcommunist Regime Change and the NIS,” *World Politics* 49 (January 1997), 184–211. (17pp)

April 9 **Federation or Unitary State?**

#Wergen and Herspring: chapter 3 (pp59-83)


April 11 **Ethnicity, Religion, and National Unity**


April 16 Ethnicity, Religion, and National Unity II

*Cameron Ross, “Reforming the Federation,” chap. 9 in White, Sakwa, and Hale: Developments in Russian Politics 7 (18p) (Duke University Press, 2010)


April 18 Ethnicity, Religion, and National Unity III


*Charles King and Rajan Menon, “Prisoners of the Caucasus: Russia’s Invisible Civil War,” *Foreign Affairs* 89 (July–August 2010), 20–34.


April 23 Civil Society and Public Opinion


April 25 Civil Society and Public Opinion II

*Julie Hemment, “Nashi, Youth Voluntarism, and Potemkin NGOs: Making Sense of Civil Society in Post-Soviet Russia,” *Slavic Review* 71 (Summer 2012), 234–60


*Thomas Remington: “Political Culture and Public Opinion” in *Politics in Russia*, (pp. 121-134).

April 30 Russian Foreign Policy

#Wergen and Herspring: chapters 10,11, 12

*Dmitri Trenin: “Russia Leaves the West,” *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2006,


May 2 Rethinking Russian Exceptionalism


*Gorbachev, “Perestroika Lost,” *New York Times*, March 14, 2010
*Russian Analytical Digest, October 2012 (pp 1-11)


May 7 Reflections on Russia’s Transition

#Wergen and Herspring: Conclusion (pp. 291-303)

*Leon Aron: “Making Sense of a Revolution.”


May 9 In Class Final