RUSSIAN POLITICS

Course Description: A historic transition is underway in Russia. Breaking with its authoritarian past, Russia is making an effort to become a market democracy. During the upcoming semester, we will assess the progress to date and try to determine what the future holds for Russia. We will focus primarily on three key goals which Russia has set for itself: democracy, the market, and the rule of law. In each case, we begin by defining the concept and then turn to its applicability in the Soviet and post-Soviet context. In an effort to understand the legacy with which Russia was confronted when the Soviet Union collapsed in December 1991, we begin with a brief survey of the Soviet era.

Course Requirements: Students are expected to attend class regularly and to take part in class discussion. There will be mid-term and final examinations. There are two writing assignments. For the first, students have the option of either (a) attending 3 evening screenings of course-related films, participating in post-screening discussions, and writing a short paper (6-7 pages) comparing any 2 of the films; or (b) writing a research paper (15-17 pages) on a topic that is mutually acceptable to the student and instructor. All participants in the First-Year Interest Group (FIG) must write the film essay. Details about the requirements for the research paper are on the course web page. Under either option, the paper must be submitted in class on Tuesday, December 3, 2013. For the second assignment, students will be required to write a short essay (4-5 pages) reflecting on the readings for one class meeting. A schedule for this assignment will be posted on the course website. Two cautionary notes: (1) these essays must be turned in during the class period for which the readings being discussed are assigned, and (2) students will be expected to participate actively in the class discussion on the day the essay is due. The grade for participation (10%) will be determined largely based on performance on this day. Students interested in receiving honors credit for the course must consult with the instructor by September 19, 2013, to set up additional assignment(s). Graduate students should consult with the instructor for the supplemental reading list and paper assignments.

Grades: Final grades will be calculated on the following basis: final exam (30%), mid-term exam (25%), research/film paper (20%), in-class quiz on Sofia Petrovna and The Whisperers (5%), participation paper (10%), and class participation (10%).

Readings: A reading packet is available for purchase at the Law School Duplication Center (located on the ground floor of the Law Building) under the course number. The cost is $26.00. Students should purchase all of the following books at the University Bookstore:

Lydia Chukovskaya, Sofia Petrovna (Northwestern University Press, 1994)
Stephen Wegren, ed., Return to Putin’s Russia (Rowman & Littlefield, 2013, 5th ed.)
A.D. Miller, Snowdrops (Anchor, 2012)
PART I: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Sept 3  Introduction

Sept 5  Revolution: Lenin Comes to Power – The Creation of the USSR
Litveiko, “In 1917,” *In the Shadow of the Revolution*, pp. 49-65

Sept 10 Becoming a World Power: The Soviet Union Under Stalin
McAuley, *Soviet Politics*, ch. 3-4

Sept 12 Muddling Through: The Soviet Union Under Khrushchev and Brezhnev
McAuley, *Soviet Politics*, ch. 5-6
Young, *Growing Up in Moscow: Memories of a Soviet Girlhood*, pp. 116-42

Sept 17 The Unraveling of the Soviet’s Union Under Gorbachev & the Revival of Russia Under Yeltsin
McAuley, *Soviet Politics*, ch. 7-8
Yablokova, “15 Years On, Coup Is a Dim Memory,” *Moscow Times*, Aug. 18, 2006
Applebaum, “Russia’s Agent of Change; For All His Flaws, Boris Yeltsin Started Something Big,” *Washington Post*, April 24, 2007, p. A21 [Western perspective on Yeltsin at the time of his death]

Evening Film & Discussion — “Burnt by the Sun” (1995)
6:30pm in room 2211 of the Law School
Sept 19 Understanding Russia’s Place in the World: Past and Present
Wegren, ed, Return to Putin’s Russia, chapter 11
Bohm, “5 Reasons Why Russia Will Never Join NATO,” Moscow Times, November 19, 2010
Kramarenko, “5 Reasons Why Russia Could Join NATO,” Moscow Times, December 9, 2010
Chaffin, “Europe Cools on Russia’s WTO Accession,” Financial Times, December 5, 2012
Russians’ attitudes regarding foreign policy (results from Levada Center polls)

Sept 24 Contemporary Challenges
Wegren eds., Return to Putin’s Russia, chapters 7 & 9
Herszenhorn, “Retribution, Corruption or Both in Russia Mayor’s Bribery Case,” New York Times, July 12, 2013
Video of Russian policemen confessing to corruption: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R4vB2a15dOU

PART II: IS RUSSIA MAKING A TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY?

Sept 26 Defining Democracy & Applying it to the Soviet Reality
Schmitter & Karl, “What Democracy is ... and is Not,” in The Global Resurgence of Democracy (1996), pp. 49-62
McAuley, Soviet Politics, chs. 1-3 (review)

Evening Film & Discussion — “Moscow Does Not Believe In Tears” (1979)
6:30pm in room 2211 at the Law School

3
Oct 1  
**Stalinist Terror: Authoritarianism in Action**  
Chukhovskaya, *Sofia Petrovna*  
Excerpt from Stalinist criminal code (Article 58)  
Solzhenitsyn, *Gulag Archipelago*, pp. 60-68  
Figes, *The Whisperers*, pp. 300-315, 552-566  

**In-Class Quiz on Sofia Petrovna, Gulag Archipelago, and The Whisperers**

Oct 3  
**Demokratizatsiya: Institutional Innovations During the Gorbachev Era**  
White, *Russia’s New Politics*, pp. 1-33  
Brown, “Did Gorbachev as General Secretary Become a Social Democrat?” *Europe-Asia Studies*, 65:2, pp. 198-99, 202-8

Oct 8  
**Political Parties and Elections – Part I**  

**Evening Film & Discussion — “Little Vera” (1989)**  
6:30pm in room 2211 at the Law School

Oct 10  
**Political Parties and Elections – Part II**  

Oct 15  
**Reinventing Legislative and Executive Power**  
Election Results – President  
Wegren, ed., *Return to Putin’s Russia*, Chapter 2  

**Evening Film & Discussion — “The Brother” (1998)**  
6:30pm in room 2211 at the Law School
Oct 17  **Federalism: The Rise and Fall of Regional Leaders**
Wegren, ed., *Return to Putin’s Russia*, Chapter 3

Oct 22  **State-Society Relationship: Civil Society**
Wegren, ed., *Return to Putin’s Russia*, ch. 5
Robertson, “Protesting Putinism,” *Problems of Post-Communism*, 60:2, pp. 11-22, 2013

Oct 24  **MID-TERM EXAM**

**PART III: IS RUSSIA MAKING A TRANSITION TO A MARKET ECONOMY?**

Oct 29  **Starting Point: Plans and Markets in Theory**
Millar, *The ABCs of Soviet Socialism* (1981), pp. 3-33

**Evening Film & Discussion – “The Tycoon” (2003)**
6:30pm in room 2211 at the Law School

Oct 31  **The Reality of the Planned Economy**
Ledeneva, *Russia’s Economy of Favors*, pp. 1-9, 28-52

Nov 5  **Perestroika: Trying to Make the Planned Economy Efficient**

Nov 7  **Privatization: The Impact of Market Reforms**
Brady, *Kapitalizm*, pp. 7-43
Nov 12  
**Post-Privatization Reality**  
Brady, *Kapitalizm*, pp. 135-42, 206-7  
Ledeneva, *Russia’s Economy of Favors*, pp. 175-92  
Desai & Idson, *Work Without Wages*, pp. 48-59

Nov 14  
**“Recovery” Under Putin: Real or Illusory?**  
Wegren, ed., *Return to Putin’s Russia*, Chapter 8  

**PART IV: IS RUSSIA MAKING A TRANSITION TO THE RULE OF LAW?**

Nov 19  
**Starting Point: Defining the Rule of Law & the Role of Law During the Soviet Era**  
Excerpt from 1936 (Stalin) Constitution  
Excerpt from the 1977 (Brezhnev) Constitution  

Nov 21  
**Reforms to the Legal System Under Gorbachev**  
Excerpt from the 1977 Constitution, as revised  

Nov 26  
**Reforms to the Legal System in Post-Soviet Russia**  
Wegren, ed., *Return to Putin’s Russia*, Chapter 4  
Baker & Glasser, *Kremlin Rising*, pp. 231-50  
Excerpt from the 1993 (Yeltsin) Constitution
Dec 3 **Modern-Day Show Trials: Yukos & Pussy Riot**
Documentary (in class): *Khodorkovsky*
Khodorkovsky, “The Fate of Every Citizen is Being Decided,” November 2, 2010

**PAPERS DUE IN CLASS**

Dec 5 **Assessing the Present-Day Role of Law**

**PART V: SUMMING UP – WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR RUSSIA?**

Dec 10 **A Snapshot of Real Life?**
Miller, *Snowdrops*

Dec 12 **Rethinking Russian Exceptionalism**
Gorbachev, “Perestroika Lost,” *New York Times*, March 14, 2010

**FINAL EXAM: MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2013  10:05AM – 12:05pm**