“How can we be more democratic than we really are?” – Vladislav Surkov

“How both optimists and pessimists will find arguments to support their point of view on Russia. Both will be right—and wrong.” – Lilia Shevtsova

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Russia is caught between two worlds. One, oppressive and autocratic, is rooted in the country’s tsarist and Soviet pasts. The other, free and democratic, provides an alternative vision of Russia’s future, bringing with it radically different conceptions of leadership, legitimacy, and accountability. This conflict between old and new lies at the heart of contemporary Russian politics. An understanding of Russian politics today, however, requires close consideration of the country’s communist past, especially the last two decades of Soviet rule. Only after completing this survey will we turn our full attention to the politics of the post-communist era. Although some aspects of today’s Russia seem to resemble the Soviet past, much has changed in the country since the USSR’s dissolution. The ongoing battle between the old world and the new, however, means that the eventual consolidation of democracy in Russia still remains a distant prospect. Understanding the nature of this conflict between the old and the new, beginning with efforts to transform the Soviet system thirty years ago, is the primary aim of this course.

REQUIRED READINGS FOR PURCHASE


COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your grade for the course will be based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* Analysis papers</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Midterm exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Final exam</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>400</strong></td>
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ASSIGNMENTS

**Exams:** Each exam will draw upon information from the required readings, course lectures, and discussions.

The midterm will be given *in class, Wednesday, October 26.*
The final exam will be given at its scheduled time, **Wednesday, December 14, 8:30-11:00 am.** This exam is cumulative. *Please note that December 14th is the last day of exams. Make your travel plans for the holidays accordingly.*

**Analysis papers:** You will write three analysis papers during the term on topics assigned by the instructor. The purpose of these assignments is to help you gain a mastery of the readings and to get you thinking about the nature of political change in Russia. You will receive your topics about two weeks before each paper is due. Rely on the course’s readings, lectures, and documentaries in crafting your responses. Your papers should be well written and properly cited, following APSA style (see the APSA style guides on Moodle). Poorly written and/or improperly cited work will earn a lower grade on the assignment. Length: **1000 to 1200 words.**

Submit your analyses as **Word documents** via e-mail **by 11:30 p.m.** on the dates they are due (see schedule below). **Late papers will be penalized a letter grade for each day they are late.** You are responsible for making sure your papers are submitted on time. Double check to make sure you have attached the paper to your e-mail. Make sure that it can be opened and read. E-mails without your attached paper (as well as e-mails with attachments that cannot be opened and read) do not qualify as papers having been submitted on time. In such instances the late-grade penalty will apply.

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**A note on plagiarism:** When you borrow someone else’s ideas (which we all do when writing papers; this is part of the creative process), you are required to use in-text citations, giving credit where credit is due. Presenting another author’s work as your own is plagiarism. This includes paraphrasing another author’s ideas without attribution. Plagiarism is the academic equivalent of stealing and will result in severe penalties up to and including a failing grade for the course as well as university disciplinary action. If you have any doubts at any time as to when you should cite someone else’s work, please see me. See also the university’s pamphlet, “Plagiarism & Academic Integrity” ([http://www2.furman.edu/academics/academics/academic-resources/Documents/plagiarism.pdf](http://www2.furman.edu/academics/academics/academic-resources/Documents/plagiarism.pdf)). I have also included materials on Moodle that provide additional guidance on when and how to cite sources. Review these materials.

**Class attendance:** Expected. Repeated absences and/or habitually coming late to class will negatively affect your overall course grade. Furthermore, following university academic regulations, first-year students “will be withdrawn from a course if absent, for any reason, 15 percent of the class meetings. Sophomores, juniors, and seniors will be withdrawn from a course if absent 25 percent of the class meetings. In both cases, a failing (F) grade [for the course] will be recorded unless the absences were due to providential reasons, in which cases a withdrawal (W) grade [for the course] may be assigned after consultation with the Associate Academic Dean.”

**Electronic devices in class:** As a courtesy to the class, cell phones and similar devices should be turned off and put away, out of sight, in your backpack or purse as soon as you walk into the classroom. On exam days, if I see a cell phone or similar device (e.g., a smart phone) in a your hand, on your lap, on your desktop, or anywhere else other than put away and out of sight in your backpack or purse, you will fail the exam, regardless of the reason.

Laptops and other similar devices are prohibited (please see “Digital Distractions,” on Moodle). Audio and/or video recording of class lectures and discussions, without my permission, is prohibited.
Please note: Failure to complete any of the assignments in this course for reasons other than providential will result in an “F” for the course.

Accessibility Resources at Furman: Students who think they may need an academic accommodation in this course should immediately make an appointment to see Judy Bagley, the director of Furman’s Student Office for Accessibility Resources. Her office is in room 002, in the lower level of the Earle Infirmary. She may be reached at 294-2320.

A note on classroom decorum: Once class begins no one is to leave the room until class ends except for a medical emergency. This includes times when we are viewing documentaries or any other multimedia materials. Failure to abide by this standard will mean a lower grade in the course.

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COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS

Part 1—Introduction

A. Setting the Stage
   * Shaw, Denis J. B. “Geographic Preface.” [Moodle]
   * Marks, Steven G. “The Historical Context.” [Moodle]

B. Pathologies of the Soviet System (political, economic, and social)
   * Kotkin, chapter 1.
   * Millar, James R. “The Economy,” 133-144. [Moodle]

Part 2—The Soviet Experience

A. The Challenge of Change and the Challenge of Leadership
   * Kotkin, preface and introduction.
   * Breslauer, preface and chapter 1.

B. Enter Gorbachev: the socialist ideal vs. Soviet reality
   * Kotkin, chapter 2.
   * Breslauer, chapters 2-3.

C. Reform, Rebellion, and Reaction
   * Kotkin, chapters 3-4.
   * Breslauer, chapters 4-6, 13.

D. Explaining the Soviet Union’s Peaceful Demise
   * Kotkin, chapter 7.
Part 3—Post-Soviet Russia

A. High Hopes and Harsh Realities: politics and reform in the “new” Russia
* Bressler, Michael L. “Politics,” 91-105. [Moodle]
* Kotkin, chapters 5-6.
* Breslauer, chapters 7-8.

B. Yeltsin’s Conditional Democracy: struggling for power and manipulating processes
* Breslauer, chapters 9-12, and 14.
* Yeltsin’s resignation speech. [Moodle]

Part 4—Political Power and Politics Under Putin

A. Taking Control of the System: the search for stability and identity
* Putin, Vladimir. 1999. Russia at the Turn of the Millennium. 31 December. [Moodle]
* Bressler, Michael L. “Politics,” 105-127. [Moodle]
* Kotkin, epilogue (“The End of the Collapse”).

B. Russian Society and the State: attitudes, beliefs, and behavior
* Chebankova, Elena. 2015. “Competing Ideologies of Russia’s Civil Society.” Europe-Asia Studies 67(2): 244-268. [Academic Search Premier]
C. Paradoxes of Power: the Inherent Limits of the Russian System

D. A Closing Word: Russian Foreign Policy under Putin
PSC 222 (Fall 2016) Course Schedule:

**Week 1** (August 23-27)  Classes begin: Tuesday, August 23

**Week 2** (August 28-September 3)

**Week 3** (September 4-10)
   No class Monday, September 5

**Week 4** (September 11-17)
   **Analysis 1** due 11:30 p.m., Tuesday, September 13

**Week 5** (September 18-24)

**Week 6** (September 25-October 1)

**Week 7** (October 2-8)
   **Analysis 2** due 11:30 p.m., Tuesday, October 4

**Week 8** (October 9-15)

**Week 9** (October 16-22)
   No class Monday, October 17

**Week 10** (October 23-29)
   **Midterm exam**, Wednesday, October 26

**Week 11** (October 30-November 5)

**Week 12** (November 6-12)

**Week 13** (November 13-19)

**Week 14** (November 20-26)
   No class Wednesday, November 23 and Friday, November 25

**Week 15** (November 27-December 3)
   **Analysis 3** due 11:30 p.m., Tuesday, November 29

**Week 16** (December 4-10)  Classes end: Tuesday, December 6

**Final exam**:  **Wednesday, December 14, 8:30-11:00 am**