

**PSc 3683: The Politics of Russia**  
**Dr. Paul Goode**  
**University of Oklahoma**  
**Fall 2009**

Adams Hall Rm. 304  
TR 12:00-1:15 pm

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Russia has long confounded Western observers with its distinctively paradoxical brand of politics, best expressed in Winston Churchill's famous observation that, "Russia is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma." From the Tsarist era to the present day, Russians have endured the most brutal forms of government and repression, interrupted by periods of total breakdown and radical political experimentation. Only a decade ago, Yeltsin's Russia was considered a faltering democracy and an economic basket case. By the end of the Putin presidency, Russia appeared more confident and powerful than at any time since the Cold War. The economy was no longer a shambles, but the government was no longer democratic. In the brief year since Putin left the presidency, Russia has gone to war with Georgia and watched domestic protest rise as the economy slid once more into crisis. This course surveys Russia's political lineage through the Soviet era, then examines in detail how democracy was lost in post-Soviet Russia.

**REQUIRED READINGS**

Marshall I. Goldman. *Petrostate: Putin, Power, and the New Russia*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Stephen Kotkin. *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970-2000*. Updated Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Joel M. Ostrow, Georgiy A. Satarov, and Irina M. Khakamada. *The Consolidation of Dictatorship in Russia: An Inside View of the Demise of Democracy*. Westport: Praeger Security International, 2007.

Stephen K. Wegren and Dale R. Herspring, eds. *After Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*. Fourth ed. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009.

Additional readings listed on the syllabus will be posted online (<http://learn.ou.edu>).

## ONLINE RESOURCES

For those of you interested in following current developments in Russian politics immediately, I recommend the following online resources:

- **Johnson's Russia List** (<http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/>): the daily email version is very comprehensive and time consuming, but also the most useful in providing translated articles from Russian newspapers and interviews with Russian officials.
- **Moscow Times** (<http://www.moscowtimes.ru>): very good for keeping up with day-to-day politics in the capital. Daily articles are free but archived articles are not.
- **Russia Profile** (<http://www.russiaprofile.org>): free online journal with good articles written by solid experts on Russian politics.
- **Russian Analytical Digest** (<http://www.res.ethz.ch/analysis/rad/>): a free, bi-monthly analytical publication. Issues are thematically focused.
- **Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty** (<http://www.rferl.org>): provides news and analysis of Russian and post-Soviet politics.

## ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Students are expected to come to class having already read the assigned materials in preparation for class discussion. This is a reading intensive class and we will continually revisit topics and themes as the course progresses, so plan ahead to ensure that you do not fall behind in the readings.

**Midterm Exam (20%):** The exam will cover about a month's worth of readings and lectures. Be sure to bring a blue book! *There will be no make-ups for exams.*

**The Kremlin Wing (20%):** This will be a group assignment. Each group will be given a critical event in post-Soviet politics to research. You will use your research to write an episode of the Russian version of *The West Wing* that focuses on your event.

**Final Exam (30%):** The final exam will cover all material from the semester. This will be a blue book exam in roughly the same format as the midterm exam.

**Research Paper (30%):** A 12-15 page substantive research paper on a topic related to Russian politics. Paper guidelines will be distributed in class. It is highly recommended that you discuss your paper topic with the professor prior to beginning research. *No late papers will be accepted.*

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

While academic honesty is presumed and required on the part of students in this course, you are encouraged to read and familiarize yourself with the university's guide to academic integrity (<http://www.ou.edu/provost/integrity/>). *I have zero tolerance for academic dishonesty.* In this class, any act of plagiarism or other form of academic misconduct will result in an automatic F for the course grade.

## ACCOMMODATION POLICY

Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me personally at the beginning of the semester so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities. **The university requires students with disabilities to register with the Office of Disability Services (located in Goddard Health Center, Suite 166, phone 325-3852 or TDD only 325-4173) prior to receiving accommodations in this course.**

It is the policy of the University to excuse absences of students that result from religious observances and to provide without penalty for the rescheduling of examinations and additional required classwork that may fall on religious holidays. Students who plan to observe a holiday should notify me immediately in order to make appropriate arrangements.

## IMPORTANT DATES

Final day to register or add a class: Friday, Aug 28  
Final day to drop a course with an automatic W: Friday, Oct 2  
Midterm Exam: Thursday, Oct 1  
The Kremlin Wing due: Tuesday, Nov 10  
Research Paper due: Tuesday, Nov 24  
Thanksgiving holiday: Nov 25-29  
Final Exam: Monday, Dec 14, 1:30-3:30 pm

## COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

NOTE: Readings with a \* are located on D2L (<http://learn.ou.edu>). Any changes to online readings will be announced in class.

### PART I. POLITICS IN SOVIET RUSSIA

#### Tues, Aug 25: Introduction

#### Thur, Aug 27: The Revolutions of 1917

- \* Astolphe de Custine, *Letters from Russia* (pp.92-102, 296-300)
- \* Suny, *The Soviet Experiment*, Ch. 2 (pp.35-55)
- \* Marx & Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*
- \* Lenin, *What is to be done?*

#### Tues, Sep 1: War Communism & NEP

- \* Suny, *The Soviet Experiment*, Ch.s 3, 5 (pp.56-72, 82-94, 123-139)
- \* Lenin, *State and Revolution*

**Thurs, Sep 3: Begin *Pokayanie* (“Repentance”)**

**Tues, Sep 8: Finish *Pokayanie***

**Thurs, Sep 10: Stalin & Stalinism (I)**

- \* Lenin’s “Testament”
- \* Stalin, “Dizzy with Success”
- \* Service, *A History of Modern Russia*, Ch.s 8-9 (pp.150-189)

**Tues, Sep 15: Stalin & Stalinism (II)**

- \* Service, *A History of Modern Russia*, Ch.s 11-12 (pp.210-253)
- \* “Stalin to the Secretaries of Obkoms...”
- \* “Nikolai Bukharin’s Letter to Stalin”

**Thurs, Sep 17: Khrushchev & Brezhnev**

- Kotkin, Ch.s 1-2 (pp.10-57)
- \* Khrushchev’s “Secret Speech”
- \* Burlatskii, “Brezhnev and the End of the Thaw”
- Goldman, Ch. 2 (pp.33-54)

**Tues, Sep 22: Gorbachev & the Politics of Reform**

- Kotkin, Ch. 3 (pp.58-85)
- \* Gorbachev, *Perestroika* (pp.17-25, 55-59)

**Thurs, Sep 24: The Soviet Union’s Collapse**

- Kotkin, Ch. 4 (pp.86-112)
- \* Dallin, “Causes of the Collapse of the USSR”

**Tues, Sep 29: Catch up & Review**

**Thurs, Oct 1: MIDTERM EXAM**

## **PART II. POST-SOVIET RUSSIA: DEMOCRACY LOST**

**Tues, Oct 6: The New Constitutional Order**

- Ostrow, Ch.s 1 (skim), 2-3 (pp.15-52)
- \* Remington, *Politics in Russia*, Ch. 3 (pp.53-71)
- Kotkin, Ch. 6 (pp.141-168)

**Thurs, Oct 8: Putinism**

- Ostrow, Ch. 6 (pp.100-124)
- Sakwa, “Political Leadership” (in *After Putin’s Russia*)
- Remington, “Parliament and the Dominant Party Regime” (*APR*)
- Kotkin, Epilogue (pp.193-220)

**Tues, Oct 13: In-class Library Training**

**Thurs, Oct 15: Federalism, Regionalism and Centralization**

\* DeBardleben, "The Development of Federalism in Russia"

Petrov & Slider, "The Regions under Putin and After" (APR)

\* Kipp, "Putin and Russia's Wars in Chechnya"

**Tues, Oct 20: Begin *Spinning Boris***

**Thurs, Oct 22: Finish *Spinning Boris***

**Tues, Oct 27: Electoral Politics, 1993-1999**

Ostrow, Ch.s 4-5 (pp.53-99)

\*McFaul & Petrov, "Elections"

**Thurs, Oct 29: Electoral Politics, 2000-2008**

\* Sakwa, "The 2003-2004 Russian Elections"

\* McAllister & White, "It's the Economy, Comrade!"

\* "Medvedev votes were rigged, says computer boffin"

**Tues, Nov 3: Russia's Market Transition**

Kotkin, Ch. 5 (pp.113-141)

Rutland, "The Oligarchs and Economic Development" (APR)

Goldman, Ch.s 3-4 (pp.55-92)

**Thurs, Nov 5: Putin's Petrostate**

Goldman, Ch.s 5-6 (pp.93-169)

**Tues, Nov 10: "THE KREMLIN WING" DUE**

(submit electronically to the dropbox on D2L by 12:00 pm)

**Thurs, Nov 12: TBA**

### **PART III. DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN CHALLENGES**

**Tues, Nov 17: Begin 12**

**Thurs, Nov 19: Finish 12**

**Tues, Nov 24: RESEARCH PAPERS DUE**

(submit electronically to the dropbox on D2L by 12:00 pm)

**Thurs, Nov 26: Thanksgiving Holiday**

**Tues, Dec 1: (Un)Civil Society & the Media**

\* Evans, "Vladimir Putin's Design for Civil Society"

Lipman & McFaul, "The Media and Political Developments" (*APR*)

Shelley, "Crime, Organized Crime, and Corruption" (*APR*)

**Thurs, Dec 3: Russia in World Politics**

Tsygankov, "Russia's Foreign Policy" (*APR*)

Gleason, "Russia and Central Asia's Multivector Foreign Policies" (*APR*)

Goldman, Ch. 7 (pp.170-209)

**Tues, Dec. 8: The Future Prospects for Putinism**

Ostrow, Ch. 7 (pp.125-134)

Wegren, "Conclusion: Whither Putinism?" (*APR*)

\* TBA

**Thurs, Dec 10: Catch up & Review**

**FINAL EXAM: Monday, Dec 14, 1:30-3:30 pm**