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. Details about the requirements for the film essay and research paper are on the course web page. Under either option, the paper must be submitted in class on Tuesday, December 8, 2015. 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 15, 2015, 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 has been prepared and is posted on the course website. Students interested in obtaining a hard copy of this reader should contact the Law School Copy Shop (copyshop@law.wisc.edu). The cost is $39. Students should purchase all of the following books. They are available at the University Bookstore:

Lydia Chukovskaya, Sofia Petrovna (Northwestern University Press, 1994)
Stephen Wegren, ed., Return to Putin’s Russia (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015, 6th ed.)
## PART I: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

### Sept 3
Introduction

### Sept 8
**Revolution: Lenin Comes to Power – The Creation of the USSR**

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

### Sept 15
**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]

### Sept 21
**Evening Film & Discussion — “Burnt by the Sun” (1995)**
6:30pm – room 2260 Law School
Sept 22

**Understanding Russia’s Place in the World: The Soviet Legacy**


Sept 24

**Understanding Russia’s Place in the World: The Post-Soviet Reality**


Wegren, *Putin’s Russia*, chapters 11 & 12

Estebo, “The Origins of Putin’s Foreign Policy,” *Moscow Times*, July 26, 2015


“The Fantasy Mr. Putin is Selling,” *New York Times*, June 22, 2915

Sept 29

**Contemporary Challenges**

Wegren eds., *Return to Putin’s Russia*, chapters 7 & 9


Video of Russian policemen confessing to corruption:
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R4vB2a15dOU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R4vB2a15dOU)

Oct 1

**Confronting Terrorism**

Documentary (in class): *Terror in Moscow*


**PART II: IS RUSSIA MAKING A TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY?**

Oct 6

**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)

Oct 8

**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 13  
*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 14  
Evening Film & Discussion — “Little Vera” (1989)
6:30pm – room 2260 Law School

Oct 15  
Political Parties and Elections – Part I
Moser, “The Impact of Parliamentary Electoral Systems in Russia,” in
*Contemporary Russian Politics*, pp. 195-207
Rose, “How Floating Parties Frustrate Democratic Accountability,” in
*Contemporary Russian Politics*, pp. 215-223

Oct 19  
Evening Film & Discussion — “The Brother” (1998)
6:30pm – room 2260 Law School

Oct 20  
Political Parties and Elections – Part II

Oct 22  
Reinventing Legislative and Executive Power
Election Results – President
Wegren, ed., *Putin’s Russia*, Chapter 2 (review)

Oct 26  
Evening Film & Discussion — The Tycoon (2003)
6:30pm – room 2260 Law School

Oct 27  
Federalism: The Rise and Fall of Regional Leaders
Wegren, ed., *Putin’s Russia*, Chapter 3
Oct 29 State-Society Relationship: Civil Society
Wegren, ed., Putin’s Russia, Chapters 5 & 6
Seddon, “Russia Declares Group a ‘Foreign Agent’ After its Director Spoke at Harvard,” BuzzFeed, July 13, 2015

Nov 3 MID-TERM EXAM

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

Nov 5 Starting Point: Plans and Markets in Theory
Lindblom, Politics and Markets, pp. 33-46, 78-85
Millar, The ABCs of Soviet Socialism (1981), pp. 3-33

Nov 10 The Reality of the Planned Economy
Ledeneva, Russia’s Economy of Favors, pp. 1-9, 28-52

Nov 11 Evening Film & Discussion — Leviathan (2014)
6:30pm – room 2260 Law School

Nov 12 Perestroika: Trying to Make the Planned Economy Efficient
Hewett, Reforming the Soviet Economy (1988), pp. 303-33
Smith, The New Russians, pp. 179-205

Nov 17 Privatization: The Impact of Market Reforms
Brady, Kapitalizm, pp. 7-43
Blasi, Krounova, Kruse, Kremlin Capitalism, pp. 26-47

Nov 19 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 24  “Recovery” Under Putin: Real or Illusory?
Wegren, ed., Return to Putin’s Russia, Chapter 8
“Poverty Hits ‘Critical’ Level,” Moscow Times, July 14, 2015
“IMF Says Western Sanctions Could Cut 9 Percent Off Russia’s GDP,” Moscow Times, August 3, 2015

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

Dec 1  Starting Point: Defining the Rule of Law & the Role of Law During the Soviet Era
Fuller, The Morality of Law (1969), pp. 33-41
Excerpt from 1936 (Stalin) Constitution
Excerpt from the 1977 (Brezhnev) Constitution

Dec 3  Reforms to the Legal System Under Gorbachev
Excerpt from the 1977 Constitution, as revised

Dec 8  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

PAPERS DUE IN CLASS
Dec 10  Modern-Day Show Trials: The Famous and the Ordinary
Documentaries (in class): Khodorkovsky, Pussy Riot: A Punk Prayer
Pomerantsev, Nothing is True and Everything is Possible, pp. 79-104

Dec 15  Assessing the Present-Day Role of Law
Gilbert, “Russia’s New Anti-extremism Law Targets Online Communications,” engadget.com, July 1, 2014

FINAL EXAM: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2015 7:45 – 9:45AM