Course Overview

When communism ended peacefully in Eastern Europe in 1989, the future suddenly looked hopeful again in a region that had gotten quite accustomed to perpetual economic and political stagnation. Propelled by a weakened and inward looking Russia to the east, and a European Union willing to provide not only advice and assistance but eventually full membership to the west, the region was embarking on the road to democracy in the most favorable of environments. What could possibly go wrong? A lot apparently, considering that today even some of the East European countries that once appeared best positioned to create well-functioning democracies are sliding back.

But it is not just East European democracies that are facing new challenges. Liberal democracy itself, whose triumph seemed so reassuringly certain with the end of the
Cold War, today appears in a much more precarious position. Have we learned the wrong lessons from what in 1989 seemed easy and unquestionable wins for democracy and market capitalism? What new lessons can we draw from taking a closer look at East European communism and the way it fell apart? What does the East European experience teach us about how we think about democracy and about creating and sustaining accountable governments? How do the East European transitions from a state-run to a market economy shine light on competing notions of equality, justice, and fairness? What do post-communist nostalgia and the ways the past is remembered tell us about the future of the democratic project in Eastern Europe and about the rise of populism in the region and beyond? How did the prospect and realities of European Union membership affect the transformation of East European societies and the challenge of crafting new political identities? These are some of the questions that we will be addressing by looking at a variety of sources including memoirs, ethnography, and film.

Course Objectives
By the end of the class students should be able to:
• Explain the significance of the key events, processes, and concepts covered in the course;
• Analyze (in written and verbal form) the different argument discussed in the readings or lectures;
• Participate in class discussion, listening carefully to their peers as well as volunteering their own opinions;
• Show that they can recognize, critique, and construct their own arguments on the topics covered in the class.

Course Requirements
Readings and Film Comments – 10%
Preparation and participation in class discussion – 15%
In class presentation – 15%
Midterm 1 – 20%
Midterm 2 – 20%
Final – 20%

Course Expectations
This course meets as a group for two 75-minute sessions per week and carries the expectation that you will spend an average of three hours outside of class for each class period. As such, you should plan to allot an average of 6 hours per week for reading, writing, preparing for discussions, and other class demands in addition to class time.

Brief Comments on Course Readings
In order to facilitate in-class discussion, prior to each class, you should post a brief comment on the day’s readings in the dropbox available on the course website at the Learn@UW site. You can find the dropbox under Assignments. In your comments you should highlight what struck you most about the assigned readings or point to
an argument you find compelling or faulty. To receive credit, comments must be around 200 words long. **Your comments are due by 8 am each Tuesday and Thursday.** The comments themselves are not graded – you get 10% of your grade just for writing them. Your grade will depend on the number of comments you sent. At the end of this syllabus, you will find the grading criteria for participation in class discussion.

**Film Comments**
There are several films that you will watch for the class through digital streaming. They will be marked with L@UW on the syllabus. You can find the films under Modules. The dropbox for film comments can be found under Assignments. You should try to watch the films before coming to class on the day they were assigned and post your comments **by 5 pm on the following Sunday.** To receive credit, comments must be around 100 words long and should highlight what struck you most about the film. The film comments themselves will not be graded. Your grade will be affected by how many comments you sent.

**Adopt a Country**
After the second week of classes I will ask you each to choose an East European country. Your goal throughout the semester will be to become an “expert” on this country by following current event articles about it. This will also serve as a preparation for your in-class presentation. There is a “Current Event Articles” folder on the course web site where throughout the semester you can post articles about your country or about the region more generally and read what others have posted. This is an opportunity to share with your peers articles that you find compelling, surprising, or simply relevant to topics we are covering in class. I expect all of you will post at least once and read what others have posted.

**In-class Presentations Connecting Countries and Concepts to a Current Event:**
At the end of the semester we will devote two classes to in-class presentations. You will each prepare a 10-15 minutes (group) slide presentation on a topic or country of your choice connecting a central concept from the readings to a current event article.

- Current events articles can be chosen from any major English language newspaper or magazine in any country (e.g. *New York Times*, *Politico.eu*, *The Economist*, *The Guardian*, *The Wall St. Journal*, *The Financial Times*).
- You should decide on the topic of your presentation no later than the week before you present and email me a link to the article(s) you have selected with a short description of how it connects to the topic(s) covered in the readings.
- The current events article(s) used in the presentation should be posted by the day before at noon on Learn@UW. You will find a dropbox with the date of your presentation under the Discussions tab.
- All students should read the current events article before class.

Slides:
There should be at least 4 slides (you may add one additional slide):
1. Title and name of student
2. Discussion points from the course readings in which the main arguments in the readings and how they connect to the article(s) you have chosen should be highlighted;
3. Discussion points from the article;
4. 2-3 discussion questions; these questions should be orally posed to the class at some point during the presentation, and can also be included at the end of the earlier slides.

• Slides are due at least one hour before class (by 8:30 am), posted also on Learn@UW in the same dropbox as your current events article.

Grading scheme for presentations:
A = Current event discussion was well integrated with course material and audience was engaged in discussion of the presentation material.
B = Presentation demonstrated good command of course material and article.
C = Presentation included a current events article and topic from course material and consisted of 3-5 slides.
F = Did not attend or participate in a presentation.

• Presentations will be marked down one grade if the article is not posted by noon the day before class; 2 grades down if not posted before class.
• Presentations will be marked down one grade if the presentation slides are not posted by 8:30 am on class day.

**Exams**
All three exams will be take-home. You will receive the questions via email at 8 am on the day of the exam and will email back your answers by 6 pm on the same day. You will be given a number of essay questions to choose from and will have to answer one or two questions. I will provide clear grading criteria before each exam, which will also be explained in class. Exams emailed after 6 pm will be marked down.

**Readings**
Book chapters and articles that are available for electronic download on the Learn@UW course website (under Modules) are marked with (&).

There are also six books, which should be purchased and one, which is available online. All books will also be on reserve at the library. When chapters of these books are assigned they are marked with (#).


http://digital.library.upenn.edu/ebooks-public/pdfs/0195119924.pdf


**Streaming Digital Films**

Links to the films will be posted on the course website under the Modules tab. Use your NetID for the login/password. You can view the films anytime, anywhere, on any device.

**Class Schedule and Readings**

**Jan 22: Introduction to the Class**

**Part I. Communist Eastern Europe**

**Jan 24: State and Economy under Communism I**

Film: Man of Marble  (Poland, 1976), dir. Andrzej Wajda L@UW

**Jan 29: State and Economy under Communism II**
& Katherine Verdery, "What Was Socialism and Why Did it Fall?" pp. 19-30.

Film: “Man of Iron” (Poland, 1981), dir. Andrzej Wajda L@UW
Jan 31: The Return of Civil Society

In class movie: “Oratorio for Prague” (Czechoslovakia, 1968), dir. Jan Nemec

Film: “Cry Hungary: A Revolution Remembered” BBC documentary about the 1956 revolution in Hungary
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8FckhPmtE1A

Feb 5: Everyday Life under Communism
# Slavenka Drakulic: How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed
BOOK DISCUSSION

Feb 7: The 1989 Revolutions: Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany

Feb 12: The Fall of the Berlin Wall and the Emergence of the Post-Cold War World
#Mary Elise Sarotte: 1989 The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe
BOOK DISCUSSION

Feb 14: Why Communism Failed
&Valerie Bunce, “The Empire Strikes Back: The Evolution of the Eastern Bloc from a Soviet Asset to a Soviet Liability.”
& Katherine Verdery, "What Was Socialism and Why Did it Fall?" pp. 33 – 38.
Film: "Walesa" (Poland, 2013) dir. Andrzej Wajda L@UW

Feb 19: Take Home Exam 1

Part II. Living in Post-Communism, Making and Keeping Democracy

Feb 21: Democracy and Democratic Transitions
& Thomas Carothers: “The End of the Transition Paradigm.”
& Nancy Bermeo: “Democratic Backsliding.”
Feb 26: Regime Diversity: Why Some Succeed, Others Fail, and Yet Others Backslide

& Ekiert and Ziblatt: “Democracy in Eastern and Central Europe One Hundred Years On.”

& Henry Hale: “25 Years After the USSR- What's Gone Wrong?”

Feb 28: Hungary and Poland, a Closer Look at Two Democracies in Trouble
& Janos Kornai: “Hungary U-turn: Retreating from Democracy.”
& Joanna Fomina and Jacek Kucharczyk: “Populism and Protest in Poland.”

March 5: Post-Communism: an East German Perspective
# Jana Hensel: After the Wall: Confessions from an East German Childhood and the Life that Came Next. BOOK DISCUSSION
Film: “Goodbye Lenin” (Germany, 2003), dir. Wolfgang Becker L@UW

March 7: The Political Economy of Reform
& Hilary Appel and Mitchell A. Orenstein “Why did Neoliberalism Triumph and Endure in the Post-Communist World?”

March 12: Transitional Justice
# Tina Rosenberg, Haunted Land, Part I: Czechoslovakia, pp. 3-125.
Film: “The Lives of Others” (Germany, 2006), dir. Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck L@UW

Recommended: Tina Rosenberg: Haunted Land, Part II Poland, Part III Germany.

March 14: Party Politics
& Grigore Pop-Eleches, “Throwing Out the Bums: Protest Voting and Unorthodox Parties after Communism.”

Spring Break March 16-24

March 26: Populism
Watch: Andras Bozoki on populism
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFVE5tKu6Lw

March 28: Take Home Exam II
April 2: Post-Communist Nostalgia

April 4: Democratization and Nationalism
& Geneviève Zubrzycki: "We, the Polish Nation": Ethnic and Civic Visions of Nationhood in Post-Communist Constitutional Debates,” pp. 629-668

April 9: Religion and Politics

Part III. The EU Context of East European Transformations

April 11: EU Accession

April 16: EU Integration and the Quality of East European Democracies
Christopher Lord: “The Quality of Democracy” in Gora and Zielinska eds. *Democracy, State and Society: European Integration in Central and Eastern Europe* (available as ebook at UW library).

Grzegorz Ekiert: “Dilemmas of Europeanisation: Eastern and Central Europe after the EU Enlargement” in Gora and Zielinska eds. *Democracy, State and Society: European Integration in Central and Eastern Europe* (available as ebook at UW library).

April 18: After Europe
# Ivan Krastev: *After Europe*
BOOK DISCUSSION

April 23: Presentations

April 25: Presentations

April 30: The Future of Democracy in Eastern Europe
& Ivan Krastev: “Liberalism’s Failure to Deliver.”
& Ivan Krastev and Stephen Holmes: “Imitation and its Discontents.”

May 2: Final Exam
APPENDIX: Class Policies and Further Resources

Class Etiquette
There is no laptop use in class and you must make sure that all devices with a screen are switched off or put on silent for the duration of the lecture. Come and speak with me if you are concerned about this policy.

We will begin lectures on time, so please make sure that you arrive a few minutes early. Persistent tardiness or missing class will lead to a lower participation grade.

Participation Grading Scale

A: You participate enthusiastically and regularly in classroom discussions listening to your peers and articulating your own ideas as clearly as possible. Your comments demonstrate that you have done the reading carefully, considered your own approach, and/or articulated how it fits with the general themes of the class.

B: Your contributions show that you have done the reading, but they show a less thoughtful response than that of a student achieving an “A” grade. You have thought about how the reading fits into wider themes that we have been discussing, but on a more superficial level. You participate in classroom discussions, listening to your peers and articulating your own ideas, although not with the regularity or depth of a student achieving an “A.”

C: Your comments in class do not show that you have done the reading in any depth and/or are poorly or vaguely articulated. You include your own thoughts, but do not raise relevant questions or link the materials to the themes of the class. You contribute only rarely to class discussions and/or make comments that do not demonstrate that you have completed the readings or are engaged fully with your classmates.

D: Your comments in class are very irregular, you show no evidence that you have completed and understood the reading.

F: You do not attend lectures or discussions regularly.

Writing Resources
The University’s Writing Center is a wonderful resource that allows you to work with a consultant to improve your written work. Take a look at their website (http://www.writing.wisc.edu/index.html) for more information.