RUSSIAN POLITICS

Course Description: A historic transition began with the collapse of the USSR in 1991. Russia proclaimed its desire to break with its authoritarian past and to become a market democracy. The rise of Putin has brought a return to authoritarianism with a veneer of democracy. During the upcoming semester, we will assess the twists and turns of post-Soviet Russia 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 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. The second writing assignment requires students to write an essay (8-9 pages) based on Putin Country by Anne Garrels (the “Garrels Paper”). Details about the requirements for the Garrels paper are on the course web page. This paper must be submitted in class on Thursday, April 12th. Students interested in receiving honors credit for the course must consult with the instructor by February 8th, to set up additional assignment(s).

Grades: Final grades will be calculated on the following basis: final exam (30%), mid-term exam (25%), Garrels 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), which is located on the ground floor of the law school. The cost is $36. 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.)
Anne Garrels, Putin Country: A Journey Into the Real Russia (Picador, 2017)

Course Credit-Hour Expectations: This course meets for two 75-minute sessions each week over the spring semester and carries the expectation that students will work on course learning activities (reading, writing, assignments, studying, etc.) for about 3 hours out of the classroom for every class period.
**PART I: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

**Jan 23**

**Introduction**

**Jan 25**

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


Litveiko, “In 1917,” *In the Shadow of the Revolution*, pp. 49-65


Levada Center, Lenin’s Mausoleum, December 21, 2017

**Jan 30**

**Becoming a World Power: The Soviet Union Under Stalin**

McAuley, *Soviet Politics*, ch. 3-4


Levada Center, “Perceptions of Stalin,” January 20, 2016

**Feb 1**

**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


**Feb 6**

**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 [Western perspective on Yeltsin at the time of his death]

Feb 8  Understanding Russia’s Place in the World: The Soviet Legacy
Arbatov, The Soviet Viewpoint, pp. 53-59

Feb 13 Understanding Russia’s Place in the World: The Post-Soviet Reality
Wegren ed., Putin’s Russia, chapters 11 & 12
Antonova, “This is the Russia You’re So Afraid Of?” New York Times, March 4, 2017

Feb 15 Contemporary Challenges
Wegren ed., Return to Putin’s Russia, chapters 7 & 9
Cichowlas, “The Most Hated Man in Russia,” Foreign Policy, March 28, 2017
Sharkov, “Russian Parliament Blocks Medvedev Corruption Probe,” Newsweek, April 6, 2017
Chulkovskaya, “StopHam: The End of the Road for Russia’s Parking Vigilantes?” Russia Beyond the Headlines, April 4, 2016

PART II: IS RUSSIA MAKING A TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY?

Feb 20 Defining Democracy & Applying it to the Soviet Reality
Schmitter & Karl, “What Democracy is ... and is Not,” in The Global Resurgence of Democracy, pp. 49-62, 1996
McAuley, Soviet Politics, chs. 1-3 (review)

Feb 22 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
Feb 27  
**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

March 1  
**Political Parties and Elections – Part I**

March 6  
**Political Parties and Elections – Part II**

March 8  
**Reinventing Legislative and Executive Power**
Election Results – President
Wegren, ed., *Putin’s Russia*, Chapter 2 (review)
Bennetts, “Russia Supreme Court Rules Kremlin Critic Cannot Run for President,” *The Guardian*, December 30, 2017

March 13  
**Federalism: The Rise and Fall of Regional Leaders**
Wegren, ed., *Putin’s Russia*, Chapter 3

March 15  
**State-Society Relationship: Civil Society**
Wegren, ed., *Putin’s Russia*, Chapters 5 & 6
Cichowlas, “Patriarch Kirill: From Ambitious Reformer to State Hardliner,”
*Moscow Times*, April 14, 2017
Hartog, “What Happens to a Pollster When Russia Doesn’t Like the Results,” *The Guardian*, September 16, 2017

March 20  MID-TERM EXAM

March 22  Starting Point: Plans and Markets in Theory
Millar, *The ABCs of Soviet Socialism*, pp. 3-33

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

April 3  The Reality of the Planned Economy
Ledeneva, *Russia’s Economy of Favors*, pp. 1-9, 28-52

April 5  Perestroika: Trying to Make the Planned Economy Efficient

April 10  Privatization: The Impact of Market Reforms
Brady, *Kapitalizm*, pp. 7-43

April 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

GARRELS PAPERS DUE IN CLASS

April 17  “Recovery” Under Putin: Real or Illusory?
Wegren, ed., *Return to Putin’s Russia*, Chapter 8
Schoen, “US Sanctions Have Taken a Big Bite Out of Russia’s Economy,” *CNBC*,
July 25, 2017
Kramer, “Russia Is Returning to Growth (Just in Time for an Election),” *New York Times*, November 24, 2017

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

**April 19**
Introduction to Political Justice: *Pussy Riot: A Punk Prayer* (documentary)

**April 24**
Starting Point: Defining the Rule of Law & the Role of Law During the Soviet Era
Fuller, *The Morality of Law*, pp. 33-41
Hendley, *Everyday Law in Russia*, pp. 1-5, 9-12
Excerpt from 1936 (Stalin) Constitution
Excerpt from the 1977 (Brezhnev) Constitution

**April 26**
Reforms to the Legal System Under Gorbachev
Excerpt from the 1977 Constitution, as revised
Sharlet, “The Fate of Individual Rights in the Age of Perestroika,” *Toward the ‘Rule of Law’ in Russia?*, pp. 197-213

**May 1**
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
Barry, “In Russia, Jury is Something to Work Around,” *New York Times*, November 16, 2010
Excerpt from the 1993 (Yeltsin) Constitution

**May 3**
Assessing the Present-Day Role of Law
Hendley, *Everyday Law in Russia*, pp. 142-55, 165-78
Pomerantsev, *Nothing is True and Everything is Possible*, pp. 79-104
*Moscow Times* articles on Jehovah’s Witnesses (declared extremist group)
Rankin, “Russian ‘Gay Propaganda’ Law Ruled Discriminatory by European Court,” *Guardian*, June 20, 2017

FINAL EXAM: MAY 8, 2018 2:45 – 4:45PM