

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT ALBANY
Department of Political Science

Russian Domestic Politics
Professor Erik P. Hoffmann

POS 354, Spring 2008
ERes code 354

REQUIRED TEXTS

- R. Daniels, ed., A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF COMMUNISM IN RUSSIA: FROM LENIN TO GORBACHEV, 3rd ed., University Press of New England, 1993.
A. Lynch, HOW RUSSIA IS NOT RULED: REFLECTIONS ON RUSSIAN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT, Cambridge University Press, 2005.
D. Herspring, ed., PUTIN'S RUSSIA: PAST IMPERFECT, FUTURE UNCERTAIN, 3rd ed., Rowman & Littlefield, 2007.

All assigned articles and chapters below are on ERes or in the texts; read in the order listed.

WEEK

- 1/28 Political History from Tsarism to Post-Communism: An Overview
Lynch, 1-84.
R. Tucker, "The Image of Dual Russia," in THE SOVIET POLITICAL MIND: STALINISM AND POST-STALIN CHANGE, 2nd ed., Norton, 1971, 121-142, 293.
- 2/4 Contentious Issues: Continuity and Change, Ideology and Policy
E. Hoffmann, "The Evolution of the Soviet Political System," in E. Hoffmann, ed., THE SOVIET UNION IN THE 1980S, Academy of Political Science, 1985, 1-13.
A. Meyer, "The Soviet Political System," in Hoffmann/Laird, SOVIET POLITY, 753-770.
J. Hazard, "The Peril-Points," in Hoffmann/Laird, SOVIET POLITY, 771-783.
R. Daniels, "Introduction: The Evolution of the Communist Mind—in Russia," on ERes and in A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF COMMUNISM IN RUSSIA, xix-xxxv.
E. Hoffmann, "Conceptualizing State-Society Relations in Russia," in G. Smith, ed., STATE-BUILDING IN RUSSIA: THE YELTSIN LEGACY AND THE CHALLENGE OF THE FUTURE, M. E. Sharpe, 1999, 123-154.
- 2/11 Contentious Issues: Tsarist and Soviet Legacies, State-Society Relations
E. Hoffmann and R. Laird, "Introduction," in E. Hoffmann and R. Laird, eds., THE SOVIET POLITY IN THE MODERN ERA, Aldine, 1984, xi-xvi and 3.
A. Solzhenitsyn, "The Mortal Danger," in Hoffmann/Laird, SOVIET POLITY, 5-39.
R. Tucker, "Swollen State, Spent Society: Stalin's Legacy to Brezhnev's Russia," in Hoffmann/Laird, SOVIET POLITY, 41-67.
Z. Brzezinski, "Soviet Politics: From the Future to the Past?" in Hoffmann/Laird, SOVIET POLITY, 69-83.
S. Cohen, "The Friends and Foes of Change: Reformism and Conservatism in the Soviet Union," in Hoffmann/Laird, SOVIET POLITY, 85-104.

- 2/18 NO CLASS (but reading assignment below)
Lenin and the Origins of Bolshevism, One-Party Rule, the “New Economic Policy,” and the USSR: Key Documents
 Daniels, Chapters 1-2 (especially 4, 6, 16, 23, 25, 42-56, 70, 71, 85, 107, 109-112, 117, 120).
- 2/25 Stalin and Rapid Industrialization, Forced Collectivization, One-Man Rule, and Terror: Key Documents
 Daniels, Chapters 3-4 (especially 131, 153, 166, 170, 177, 180, 188, 190, 198, 205, 212, 220, 232a, 232b, 235, 244).
- 3/3 Khrushchev’s “Thaws,” Brezhnev’s “Stagnation,” and Gorbachev’s “Perestroika,” “Glasnost,” and “Democratization”: Key Documents
 Daniels, Chapters 5-7 (especially 246, 254, 265, 279, 280, 286-301, 304, 313, 318, 331, 337-364, 373-375, 383, 389).
- 3/10 TAKE-HOME MIDTERM EXAM DISTRIBUTED
- 3/17 TAKE-HOME MIDTERM PAPER DUE
Post-Soviet Russia’s “Neopatrimonial” Political System
 Lynch, 85-194.
- 3/24 NO CLASS (enjoy the vacation; no reading assignment)
- 3/31 Domestic Politics
 Herspring, 1-124.
- 4/7 The Economy and Foreign Policy
 Herspring, 127-224.
- 4/14 More on the Economy and Foreign Policy
 Lynch, 195-255.
- 4/21 NO CLASS (but start reading the assignments below and draft a 2-3 page outline of your final paper)
- 4/28 Retrospect and Prospect
 E. Hoffmann, “Can Viable Constitutionalism Take Root in Post-Soviet Russia?” in A. Baaklini and H. Desfosses, eds., *DESIGNS FOR DEMOCRATIC STABILITY: STUDIES IN VIABLE CONSTITUTIONALISM*, M. E. Sharpe, 1997, 211-256.
 F. Fleron, “Post-Soviet Political Culture in Russia: An Assessment of Recent Empirical Investigations,” *EUROPE-ASIA STUDIES*, 48, 2 (1996), especially 225-235 and 250-252.
 R. Rose, W. Mishler, and N. Munro, *RUSSIA TRANSFORMED: DEVELOPING POPULAR SUPPORT FOR A NEW REGIME*, Cambridge, 2006, 1-15 and 185-201.
 P. Ordeshook, “Re-examining Russia: Institutions and Incentives,” in A. Brown, ed., *CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN POLITICS: A READER*, Oxford, 2001, 17-28.

- R. Sharlet, "In Search of the Rule of Law," in S. White, Z. Gitelman, and R. Sakwa, eds., *DEVELOPMENTS IN RUSSIAN POLITICS* 6, Palgrave, 2005, 130-147.
- R. Sil and C. Chen, "State Legitimacy and the (In)significance of Democracy in Post-Communist Russia," *EUROPE-ASIA STUDIES*, 56, 3 (2004), 347-368.
- "Putin's People," *THE ECONOMIST*, 25 August 2007, 11 and 25-28.
- M. McFaul and K. Stoner-Weiss, "The Myth of the Authoritarian Model," *FOREIGN AFFAIRS*, 87, 1 (2008), 68-84.

5/5 FINAL PAPER DUE AT BEGINNING OF THIS CLASS

Your paper is to be an analytical essay in which you present and defend your viewpoints (e.g., arguments, interpretations, ideas, hypotheses) on the most contentious issues raised in this course, beginning with issues concerning continuity and change, ideology and policy, tsarist and Soviet legacies, and state-society relations (see weeks 2/4 and 2/11). Support your viewpoints with evidence from all of the readings and many lectures, documentaries, and class discussions. And be sure to include the most important substantive conclusions you have drawn about tsarist, Soviet, and post-Soviet Russian politics. Your essay should be thoughtful, comprehensive, and succinct and well-argued, well-organized, and well-documented (this is not a research project, narrative history, or descriptive summary of the readings and class materials). Papers are to be a minimum of 15 pages typewritten, double-spaced, and numbered with simple footnotes (e.g., Lynch p. 10; Sakwa in Herspring, pp. 21-22). **NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED** (unless you have compelling medical or personal reasons, you notify the instructor or dean before May 5, and you provide documentation shortly thereafter).

IMPORTANT NOTES

Course Objectives and Contents: This is primarily a course on the domestic or internal politics of Russia. After an overview of the late tsarist and early Soviet periods, we will focus on the Stalinist, post-Stalin, and post-Soviet periods. We will closely examine continuity and change, ideology and policy, tsarist and Soviet legacies, and state-society relations. Particular attention will be paid to the interactions among the core elements of the polity, economy, and society; legacies, institutions, and policies; and democratization, marketization, and legitimization.

Equal attention will be devoted to "the view from the top" and "the view from the bottom." We will explore the political perspectives of the rulers and the ruled, the power distribution among the national and subnational party and governmental organizations, and the authority relationships between the bureaucratic elites and general population. Emphasis will be placed on the formulation and implementation of public policies and their impacts on average citizens. And we will explore the reciprocal influences among political-administrative, socioeconomic, ideological-cultural, demographic-environmental, scientific-technological, and military-international variables.

The instructor's chief expectation is that students read all of the assigned texts and ERes materials and do some clear and informed thinking about Russian politics. Students will be expected to master basic factual information, understand alternative views on contentious issues, and formulate and defend their own views on the whys, hows, and whats of tsarist, Soviet, and post-Soviet politics.

The resource materials for this course are diverse. They include numerous documentary films with rare archival footage, secondary studies by Western and Russian analysts with diverse views, at least one visit by a native Russian, and an exceptional collection of Russian documents in translation. Also, there will be regular “feedback” sessions to give students the opportunity to elaborate and evaluate the main points of a lecture or documentary. And the instructor will use parts of several classes to help students prepare for the exam and structure their paper.

Course Requirements: one take-home midterm exam comprised of a short essay and identification questions and one minimum 15-page paper based on the assigned readings, class discussions, lectures, and documentary films (see week 5/5 for specifics). The exam will count 25-33% and the paper 50-67% of a student’s course grade. If a student’s class participation is consistently outstanding, it may count up to 25% of his or her grade. If a student chooses not to participate in class discussions, the exam and papers will count 100% of the course grade. There will not be a final examination.

There is no prerequisite for this course, but prior study of comparative politics, communist political systems, and/or Russian, Soviet, and post-Soviet history, politics, economics, sociology, and culture will of course be useful.

Regular and prompt class attendance is expected and essential to benefit from and contribute to this course. Class attendance WILL be taken, and students with more than TWO unexcused absences will have their final grades lowered TWO FULL GRADES for the third absence and ONE FULL GRADE for every absence thereafter (e. g., A to C, then C to D, and D to E). Excused absences must be documented in writing to the instructor or dean and may be for medical or personal reasons.

Keeping up with the readings on a weekly basis is also expected and essential. Students who are well prepared for class will benefit much more from the lectures and documentaries and will contribute much more to class discussions and presentations. Furthermore, students will be expected to incorporate into their papers key information presented and discussed in all classes.

It will be a VERY FIRM POLICY NOT TO GIVE “INCOMPLETES” in this course.

On the nature and consequences of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations), see the important UAlbany booklet, COMMUNITY RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES, 2007-2010, especially Appendix C.

All required texts should be purchased from Mary Jane’s or elsewhere as soon as possible. Remember that bookstores often return unsold books to the publisher before the semester ends. If necessary, split the expense with a fellow student.

Students who are especially interested in certain aspects of Russian politics, as well as students who are interested in traveling to Russia and other countries of the former Soviet Union, are encouraged to discuss their special interests with the instructor.

Websites to “google” include the daily Johnson’s Russia List, biweekly Russian Analytical Digest, Seventeen Moments in Soviet History, Russian Government, President of Russia, Economist Country Studies: Russia, Integrum World Wide, BBC News: Europe, and BBC Russian.com (in Russian).

The instructor’s e-mail is eph@albany.edu and his office hours are: Mondays, 1:00-2:30 (downtown); Thursdays, 1:00-2:30 (uptown); and by appointment. The uptown office is the Rockefeller College contact office, Humanities 016 (call 442-3112 for an appointment); the downtown office is Richardson 284 (442-5376). If you cannot visit or call during these hours, talk to the instructor before or after class and arrange a mutually convenient time to get together—quite possibly over coffee or lunch. No calls at home, please.

