Course Description

This course provides a survey of the politics of communism and post-communism in Russia, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and East Asia. It begins with an overview of the origin and development of Leninism in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and China, stressing both the similarities and differences between these countries’ experiences under Leninism. The second part of the course examines and analyzes the profound political, economic, and social changes in former Leninist societies during the post-communist transformation. Specifically, we will cover different paths of political development; economic reforms; social transformation; and nationalism and ethnic conflicts. The course will conclude with a broad discussion of the international dimensions of post-communism. The primary aims of the course are to familiarize students with the major challenges confronting former Leninist countries as they move away from socialism in varying ways, and to provide students with not only the theoretical tools necessary for understanding the collapse of Leninism, but also the perspectives crucial to making well-grounded evaluations of the diverging political and socio-economic trajectories in these countries.

Course Requirements

Your grade in this course will be determined in the following manner:

Seminar participation 20%
In-class presentations 30%
20-30 page research paper 50%

Class attendance and active, informed participation are mandatory. Students must complete the assigned readings prior to the seminar meetings. The oral presentations require each student to analyze and report on a number of assigned readings for a given week. In addition, students are required to write a major research paper on any aspect of post-Leninist transformations, but the topic must be finalized in consultation with the instructor. To facilitate the writing process, a 3-page paper proposal (1 page description, 1 page outline, 1 page bibliography) will be due at the beginning of seminar on October 19, 2015. The final draft of the paper will be due in the last class on December 7, 2015. Late papers without university-approved reasons will result in grade reduction.
Readings

Archie Brown, The Rise and Fall of Communism (New York: Ecco, 2009)

The rest of the readings are available on Blackboard. Those marked with “available online” can be retrieved by clicking on “E-Journals” from the Libraries web page and typing in the title of the journal in the search box.

PART I: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

August 31: Introduction: Marxism and Leninism

- Course syllabus
- Archie Brown, The Rise and Fall of Communism, 9-55, 101-114

September 21: Leninism in the Soviet Union

- Archie Brown, The Rise and Fall of Communism, 56-77, 194-266, 398-418

September 28: Leninism in China and Eastern Europe

- Archie Brown, The Rise and Fall of Communism, 148-193, 265-397, 421-478 (skim)

PART II: POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION

October 5: The Collapse of Leninism in Eastern Europe and Russia

• Archie Brown, The Rise and Fall of Communism, 481-617

October 12: Post-Communist Democracy-Building


October 19: Post-Communist “Hybrid” Regimes (1)

• Henry Hale, Patronal Politics: Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 1-177
October 26: Post-Communist “Hybrid” Regimes (2)


November 2: Post-Communist Resilient Authoritarianism


PART III: ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

November 9: Economic Reforms in Comparative Perspective


November 16: Post-Communist Civil Societies


November 23: Post-Communist Nationalism and National Identity
PART IV: INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS

November 30: International Diffusion and “Diffusion-Proofing”


December 7: Post-Communist International Relations