

**PSCI 217: RUSSIAN POLITICS**  
*(Russian Politics, Economy & Society in Historical Perspective)*

**Prof. Rudra Sil**  
**University of Pennsylvania**  
**(Fall 2005)**  
**T.A: Kaija Schilde**  
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Lecture: TR 3-4  
 Room: Logan 402

Office hours: TR 10-12  
 Room: 236 Stiteler

**Course Description:** This course will present an in-depth examination of political, economic and social change in post-Soviet Russia within a historical context. After an initial discussion of the challenges facing Putin's Russia and the relevance of the past to understanding these challenges, the first part of this course will embark on an in-depth study of political economy and social change in Soviet Russia from 1917 to 1991. We will consider the origins of Russian communism and trace the evolution of government, economy and society from examine in a broad historical perspective the evolution of the Soviet regime under Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev and Gorbachev. Throughout this time, we will examine the tensions between ideology and practice, and how these tensions became more evident following Gorbachev's decision to initiate *glasnost* (openness), *perestroika* (restructuring) and *demokratizatsiia* (democratization) in the late 1980s. The second part of the course will begin with an examination of the collapse of the USSR and the establishment of a new Russian federation under the leadership of Boris Yeltsin. We will proceed to make sense of the continuities and changes in politics, economics and society in the Russian Federation, first during a period of "state breakdown" under Yeltsin, and then during a period of "state rebuilding" under Putin. In tracing political change between 1991 and the present, we will pay particularly close attention to the question of whether democracy has been consolidated or restricted in the process of building a "super-presidential" system. We will also examine the struggle over market-oriented reforms as well as their social and political consequences. We will consider the implications of the long period of economic decline coinciding with Yeltsin's rule, as well as the possibility that Putin may be gravitating towards a strategy of state-guided economic development. We will also take into account problems of federalism and regionalism in the Former Soviet Union and the fate of such previously powerful institutions as the Soviet army and the secret police. The course will conclude with a broad discussion of the direction of political, economic and social change in Russia, bearing in mind insights from historical comparisons and the possible impact of communist legacies.

**Readings:** The average number of pages assigned for each week is about 125, although the second half of the course will feature more separate sources so as to incorporate recent news articles to complement the scholarly treatments of various topics. It is recommended that you do the readings immediately following the lectures to which they are linked in the schedule below. All readings will be from a bulkpack available at Campus Copy Center (Walnut & 39th St) and from two textbooks available at the Penn Book Center (34<sup>th</sup> St. & Walnut).

(1) Ronald G. Suny, *The Soviet Experiment* (Oxford University Press, 1997)

(2) Dale Herspring, ed. *Putin's Russia* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005)

**Requirements:** Attendance in recitations is mandatory, and participation will account for 20% of the final grade. There will be one in-class mid-term, worth 30% of the overall grade, and you will be allowed to bring in one sheet of notes to assist you. The remaining 50% of the grade will be accounted for by a take-home final on which you are all expected to do your own work as stipulated in Penn's honor code; the exam will consist of a typed, double-spaced 10-12 page paper responding to two related questions (each answer will count for one-third of the overall grade). The paper should be turned into the T.A.'s box by 12 noon on December 10.

*Note: students taking this course for graduate credit (PSCI-517) will be graded on the basis of (i) a take-home essay to be completed in the week of the midterm (the essay must incorporate references to some supplemental readings from the appended bibliography), and (ii) a 15-20 page paper based on independent research on a topic to be approved by me (due Dec 10).*

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## **SCHEDULE OF LECTURE TOPICS AND ASSIGNED READINGS**

THURS, SEPT 8

1) Introduction & Overview: Why the Past Matters for Understanding Putin's Russia

- HERSPRING (ed), 1-9, 13-26: Dale Herspring, "Introduction," and Timothy Colton and Michael McFaul, "Putin and Democratization."
- Vladimir Putin, "State of the Nation Address" (April 25, 2005), at [http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2005/04/25/2031\\_type70029\\_87086.shtml](http://www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2005/04/25/2031_type70029_87086.shtml)
- Vladimir Isachenkov, "Soviet-Era red star gets rehabilitated," *Associated Press* (Moscow), November 26, 2002.

### **PART I:**

### **THE RISE AND DECLINE OF SOVIET RUSSIA, 1917-1991**

TUES, SEPT 13

2. Two Origins of Soviet Communism: Imperial Russia and Marxist Theory

- SUNY 3-33
- Robert Tucker, *The Marxian Revolutionary Idea*, pp. 3-32.

THURS, SEPT 15

3. The Revolutions of 1917: The Triumph of the Bolsheviks

- Vladimir I. Lenin, "The State and Revolution," from Robert Tucker, ed. *The Lenin Anthology*, pp. 371-84 [also recommended pp. 335-50].
- SUNY, pp. 35-60

TUES, SEPT 20

4. Lenin's Ambiguous Legacy: War Communism and the New Economic Policy

- SUNY, pp. 60-94 (may skim 72-82), 123-151
- Richard Pipes, "The Establishment of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics," in Rachel Denber, ed. *The Soviet Nationality Reader*, pp. 35-47; 77-81.

THURS, SEPT 22

5. The Debates of the 1920s and the Emergence of Stalinism

- SUNY, pp. 151-168, 170-193
- Josef V. Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism" (excerpts), from C. Cohen, ed. *Communism, Fascism and Democracy*, pp. 154-164.

TUES, SEPT 27

6. Stalinism as Development? Collectivization and Planned Industrialization

- SUNY, pp. 217-251
- James Millar and Alec Nove, "Was Stalin Really Necessary? A Debate," *Problems of Communism* (July/August 1976) .

THURS, SEPT 29

7. Stalinism as Revolution? Terror, Control and the Making of a New Society

- SUNY, pp. 252-290
- T. H. Rigby, "Stalinism and the Mono-Organizational Society," from R. Tucker, ed. *Stalinism*, pp. 53-76
- Robert Tucker, "Stalinism as Revolution from Above," from *Stalinism*, pp. 77-108.

TUES, OCT 4

8. Khrushchev and 'De-Stalinization': Return to 'True' Communism?

- SUNY, pp. 387-420
- Khrushchev, "The Secret Speech: Delivered to the Closed Session of the 20th Party Congress," in Thomas P. Whitney, ed. *Khrushchev Speaks*, pp. 207-25, 252-65.
- George Breslauer, "Khrushchev Reconsidered," *Problems of Communism* (Sept/Oct 1976).

THURS, OCT 6

9. The Brezhnev Era: Stability or Stagnation?

- SUNY, pp. 421-446
- Leonid Brezhnev, "Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 23<sup>rd</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (March 29, 1966)," and "A Historic Stage on the Road to Communism (1977)," as reprinted in R. V. Daniels, ed. *A Documentary History of Communism in Russia*, pp. 280-283, 314-316
- Hedrick Smith, *The Russians*, pp. 30-67
- "Currents of Dissent" [Comments by Sakharov, Solzhenitsyn and Medvedev on USSR under Brezhnev] in Daniels, ed. *A Documentary History of Communism*, pp. 290-301

TUES, OCT 11

10. Gorbachev's Reforms I: Glasnost' & Perestroika

- SUNY, pp. 449-477
- M. S. Gorbachev, Speech at Khabarovsk (July 31, 1986) in A. Dallin and Lapidus, eds. *The Soviet System*, pp. 315-320.
- Stephen Hanson, "Gorbachev: The Last True Leninist Believer?" in Daniel Chirot, ed. *The Crisis of Leninism and the Decline of the Left*, pp. 33-59.
- Steven Fish, *Democracy From Scratch*, pp. 30-51.

THURS, OCT 13

11. Gorbachev's Reforms II: Demokratizatsiia, Nationalism & the Coup

- SUNY, pp. 477-484
- Steven Fish, *Democracy From Scratch*, pp. 30-51
- Gail Lapidus, "Gorbachev's Nationalities Problem," in Dallin and Lapidus, pp. 430-440.
- John Dunlop, "Anatomy of a Failed Coup," in Dallin and Lapidus, pp. 595-622.
- M. S. Gorbachev, "Resignation Speech, December 25, 1991," in Dallin and Lapidus, pp. 644-646.

THURS, OCT 20

12. Lenin to Gorbachev: Routinization or Development?

- Ken Jowitt, "Neotraditionalism" from *The New World Disorder*, pp. 121-58.
- Richard Lowenthal, "Development Versus Utopia in Communist Countries," in Chalmers Johnson, ed. *Change in Communist Systems*, pp. 33-54, 104-116.
- Martin Malia ("Z"), "To the Stalin Mausoleum," in Dallin and Lapidus, pp. 658-80.
- Moshe Lewin, *The Gorbachev Phenomeonon*, pp. 145-53
- Peter Rutland, "The Russian Revolution of 1991 and the Dissolution of the USSR," forthcoming in: James deFronzo (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Revolutions* (ABC-Clio).

TUES, OCT 25

13. Midterm Examination (in-class)

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***PART II: THE RISE OF A "NEW RUSSIA," 1991-2005***

THURS, OCT 27

14. The Birth of a New Russia and the Making of a New Constitution, 1992-1993

- Stephen White, *Russia's New Politics* (Cambridge Univ Press, 2000), pp. 70-106
- Steven Fish, "The Executive Deception: Superpresidentialism and the Degradation of Russian Politics," in Valerie Sperling, ed. *Building the Russian State*, pp. 177-192
- Victor Shenis, "The Constitution," in M. McFaul, N. Petrov and A. Ryabov, eds. *Between Dictatorship and Democracy: Russian Postcommunist Political Reform* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2004), pp. 56-82.

TUES, NOV 1

15. The Evolving Political Spectrum: Parties, Elections and the Making of Putinism

- William A. Clark, "The Russian State Duma: 1993, 1995, and 1999," *Problems of Post-Communism*, 46, 6 (Nov/Dec 1999): 3-11.
- Yitzhak Brudny, "Continuity of Change in Russian Electoral Patterns? The December 1999 – March 2000 Electoral Cycle," in A. Brown, ed. *Contemporary Russian Politics*, pp. 154-178.
- HERSPRING, pp. 31-51: Thomas Remington, "Putin, the Duma, and Political Parties"
- Kim Murphy, "Russia Overhauls Its Election Laws," *Los Angeles Times* (July 7, 2005).

THURS, NOV 3

16. Is Liberal Democracy Being Consolidated in Contemporary Russia?

- HERSPRING (ed), pp. 13-26, 55-70: Timothy Colton & Michael McFaul, "Putin and Democratization," and Masha Lipman & Michael McFaul "Putin and the Media."
- Alexander Lukin, "Electoral Democracy or Electoral Clanism? Russian Democratization and Theories of Transition," in A. Brown, ed. *Contemporary Russian Politics*, 530-545
- Rudra Sil and Cheng Chen, "State Legitimacy and the (In)significance of Democracy in Post-Communist Russia," *Europe-Asia Studies* 56, 3 (May 2004): 347-368
- Peter Rutland, "Why is Russia Still an Authoritarian State? (Or What would De Tocqueville Say?)" Paper presented at the 2005 APSA Meeting, September 1-4, 2005

TUES, NOV 8

17. Privatization and Russia's "Virtual Economy" Under Yeltsin

- Clifford Gaddy and Barry Ickes, "Russia's Virtual Economy," *Foreign Affairs* 77, 5 (1998): 53-67 [print-out of electronic version]
- Richard Ericson, "Is Russia in Transition to a Market Economy?" in A. Brown, ed. *Contemporary Russian Politics*, pp. 252-258
- James Wedel, "How the Chubais Clan, Harvard Fed Corruption," *Los Angeles Times* (September 12, 1999) – 2 pgs
- Colin McMahon, "In Russia, Ignoring Taxes a Deeply Rooted Tradition: Government Collects a Fraction of What It's Owed," *Chicago Tribune* (October 1, 1998).

THURS, NOV 10

18. Rebuilding the Russian Economy? Or Monopolizing Rents from Oil & Gas?

- HERSPRING (ed), pp. 121-139, 161-169: James Millar, "Putin and the Economy," and Peter Rutland, "Putin and the Oligarchs."
- Stefan Wagstyl, "Economy: What Lurks Beneath the Glitter," *Financial Times (UK)*, October 19, 2004.
- Christian Lowe & Dmitry Zhdannikov, "Russia's Khodorkovsky Jailed for 9 Years," *Reuters*, Moscow (May 31, 2005).

TUES, NOV 15

19. Russian Society: Rebirth or Decay?

- Richard Rose, "Postcommunism and the Problem of Trust," in L. Diamond and M. F. Plattner, eds. *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, pp. 251-63.
- Vladimir Shlapentokh, "Social Inequality in Post-Communist Russia: The Attitudes of the Political Elite and the Masses (1991-1998)," *Europe-Asia Studies* 51, 7 (1999): 1167-81
- Peter Rutland and Natasha Kogan, "The Russian Mafia: Between Hype and Reality," in A. Brown, ed. *Contemporary Russian Politics*, pp. 139-147
- HERSPRING (ed), pp. 89-114: David Powell, "Putin, Demography, Health and Environment."

THURS, NOV 17

20. Federalism, Regionalism and the Chechnya Conflict

- Kathryn Stoner-Weiss, "Central Weakness and Provincial Autonomy: Observations on the Devolution Process in Russia," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 15, 1 (1999): 87-106
- Gulnaz Sharafutdinova, "Chechnya Versus Tatarstan: Understanding Ethnopolitics in Post-Communist Russia," *Problems of Post-Communism* 47, 2 (2000): 13-22.
- HERSPRING (ed), pp. 205-229, 237-257: Jacob Kipp, "Putin and Russia's Wars in Chechnya," and Nikolai Petrov & Darrell Slider, "Putin and the Regions."

TUES, NOV 22

21. The Soviet Legacy and the Russian Military-Security Apparatus

- J. Michael Waller, "The KGB Legacy in Russia," *Problems of Post-Communism* (Nov/Dec, 1995): 3-10.
- Eva Busza, "State Dysfunctionality, Institutional Decay, and the Russian Military," in V. Sperling, ed. *Building the Russian State*, pp. 113-129
- HERSPRING (ed), pp. 185-200: Dale Herspring, "Putin and Military Reform."

\*\* THURS, NOV 24 -- THANKSGIVING \*\*

TUES, NOV 29

22. Russian Foreign Policy From Yeltsin to Putin

- Stephen White, *Russia's New Politics* (Cambridge Univ Press, 2000), pp. 213-254
- Boris Kagarlitsky, "Globalization and Russia," *ZNET Commentary* (March 12, 2001) -- <http://www.zmag.org/sustainers/content/2001-03/12kagarlitsky.htm>
- HERSPRING (ed), pp. 259-289: Dale Herspring & Peter Rutland, "Putin and Russian Foreign Policy."

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**CONCLUSION:  
RUSSIA IN COMPARATIVE-HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

THURS, DEC 1

23. Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union

- Marc Morje Howard, "Postcommunist Civil Society in Comparative Perspective," *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 10, 3 (Summer 2002): 285-305
- Grzegorz Ekiert, "Patterns of Postcommunist Transformation in Central and Eastern Europe," in Ekiert and Hanson, eds. *Capitalism and Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 89-119.
- Cheng Chen, "Pathways of Institutional Diffusion Under Leninism: A Historical Comparison of Romania and Hungary," in Dennis Galvan and Rudra Sil, eds. *Reconfiguring Institutions: Syncretic Responses to Challenges of Political and Economic Transformation* (New York: Palgrave, 2007), pp. 205-224.
- Rudra Sil, "The Evolving Significance of Leninism in Comparative-Historical Analysis," in V. Tismaneanu, M. Howard and R. Sil, eds. *World Order After Leninism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), pp. 227-248.

TUES, DEC 6

24. Russia, China and the Wider World

- Stephen Hanson and Jeffrey Kopstein, “The Weimar/Russia Comparison,” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 13,3 (July-September 1997): 252-283.
- Christopher Marsh, “Learning From Your Comrade’s Mistakes: The Impact of the Soviet Past on China’s Future,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 36 (2003) 259–272
- Joseph Stieglitz, *Globalization and Its Discontents*, pp. 180-188 [on Russia and China]
- Calvin Chen and Rudra Sil, “Communist Legacies, Postcommunist Transformations, and the Fate of Organized Labor in Russia and China,” *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 41, 2 (Summer 2006): 62-87.

THURS, DEC 8

25. From the Past to the Future: Where is Putin’s Russia Headed?

- HERSPRING (ed), pp. 293-300: Dale Herspring, “Conclusion.”
- NEED TO ADD: selection of recent articles and editorials