



# Course program and reading list

Semester 2 Year 2024

**School:** Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy & Strategy B.A

## Current Political Developments

**Lecturer:**

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<b>Course No.:</b>	<b>Course Type :</b>	<b>Weekly Hours :</b>	<b>Credit:</b>
3250	Seminar	3	3

<b>Course Requirements :</b>	<b>Group Code :</b>	<b>Language:</b>
Final Paper	241325000	English

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### Course Description

**The Politics and Society of Russia and Eurasia**

The Soviet Union was a major force in international politics during the 20th century, and the shadow of its legacy is still casted on the vast Eurasian region. Russia remains a regional hegemon with global aspirations, re-emerging as a geopolitical energy power and dominating global and regional politics. But Eurasia includes 14 other republics that span from Central Asia to the Baltics, Eastern Europe, and the Caucasus. These countries share a common history, but have followed very distinct paths post-independence. They represent a fascinating plethora of political and social regimes – some of them turned into dictatorships that attempt to offer their citizens strong social safety nets, other attempted to establish robust democratic institutions, yet other struggle with destabilizing active of frozen conflicts.

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### Course Goals

This course aims to offer an overview of the major issues and challenges facing this

diverse region. Part I explores the politics and economic policies of Russia and Eurasia. It first looks at the Soviet legacy that still affects the region, and then seeks to understand the current political stance of Putin's Russia. The course then discusses the interrelations among political elites, parties, masses, and opposition movements in Russia and Eurasia, and the resource curse in these countries. Part II of the course zooms in on social issues that affect the region—changing gender roles, the formal and informal labor market, the role of religion, and media and civil society. Part III focuses on the Russian foreign policy, examining its approach to the West and to its "Near Abroad", and discussing its information warfare policies.

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## Grading

Final paper – 60%

Paper presentation - 20%

Movie presentation - 10%

Class participation – 10%

Discretionary bonus of up to 5 points for outstanding contribution in class

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## Reading List

### **Part I. The Soviet Legacy**

#### **1. Introduction - The History of Russia & the Soviet Union**

#### **2. The Origins & Impact**

- [Seventeen Moments in Soviet History: An On-Line Archive of Primary Sources](#), Michigan State University.
- Andrei Shleifer and Daniel Treisman, "A Normal Country: Russia After Communism," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* (Winter. 19:1, 151-174, 2005)
- Henry Hale, "25 Years After the USSR: What's Gone Wrong," *27 Journal of Democracy* 24-35 (2016)

#### **3. Post Soviet Traditions**

- Lucan Way and Steven Levitsky, [Competitive authoritarianism: hybrid regimes after the Cold War](#), Cambridge University Press, 2010 (excerpts)
- Dmitri Furman, "Imitation Democracies: The Post-Soviet Penumbra," *New Left Review* 54 (November-December 2008)
- Andrei Shleifer and Daniel Treisman, "A Normal Country: Russia After Communism," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* (Winter. 19:1, 151-174, 2005)

## **Part II. The Politics & Economy of the Post-Soviet Space**

### **4. Understanding Putin's Russia**

- Vladislav Surkov, "[Putin's Lasting State](#)," February 14, 2019
- David Foglesong & Gordon M. Hahn, "Ten Myths about Russia: Understanding and Dealing with Russia's Complexity and Ambiguity," *Problems of Post-Communism* 49:6 (2012)
- M. Steven Fish, "[What Is Putinism?](#)" *Journal of Democracy* 28:4 (October 2017)
- Brian Taylor, *The Code of Putinism*, Introduction, Chapter 1 (Oxford University Press, 2018)
- Sergei Guriev & Daniel Treisman, *Spin Dictators: The Changing Face of Tyranny in the 21st Century*, Introduction (2022)

### **5. Political elites, parties, and masses**

- Stephen White & Olga Kryshatanovskaya, *The Sovietization of the Russian Politics*, excerpts (2009)
- Vladimir Gel'man, *Authoritarian Russia: Analyzing Post-Soviet Regime Changes*, excerpts (2015)
- Lucan Way, "Authoritarian State Building and the Sources of Regime Competitiveness in the Fourth Wave. The Cases of Belarus, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine," *World Politics* 57:2, pp.231–261 (2005)

### **6. Opposition, media & civil society**

- Graeme Robertson & Samuel Greene, "The Kremlin Emboldened: How Putin Wins Support?," *Journal of Democracy* 28:4, 86–100 (2017)
- Marc Howard, "The Weakness of Postcommunist Civil Society," *Journal of Democracy* 13:1 (2002)
- Scott Gehlbach, "Reflections on Putin and the Media" *Post-Soviet Affairs* 26(1): 77–87 (2010)
- Anton Sobolev and Alexei Zakharov, "Civic and Political Activism in Russia." *The New Autocracy: Information, Politics, and Policy in Putin's Russia*, 2018, pp. 249–276.

### **7. The Russian Capitalism: "Putinomics" and "petro-economy"**

- Anders Aslund, *How Capitalism Was Built: The Transformation of CEE, Russia and Central Asia*, Chapter 10 (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2009)
- Pauline Jones Luong and Erika Weinthal, *Oil is not a curse: ownership structure and institutions in Soviet successor states*, Chapter 10 (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2010)

### **8. Religion**

- Ahmed Khalid, "Islam After Communism: Religion & Politics in Central Asia" *Chapter 7* (2014)
- Mariya Omelicheva, "Islam and Power Legitimation: Instrumentalisation of Religion in Central Asian States," *Contemporary Politics* 22(2): 144–63 (2016)

### **Part III. Foreign Policy**

#### **11. Russia and the West**

- Lyudmila Igumnova, "Russia's Strategic Culture Between American and European Worldviews," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, vol.24, 2011, pp.253-273.
- Vladimir Putin, "A Plea for Caution From Russia," *New York Times*. September 11, 2013
- Fyodor Lukyanov, "Putin's Foreign Policy: the Quest to Restore Russia's Rightful Place" *Foreign Affairs* (2016)

#### **12. Russia and the "Near Abroad"**

- Wood, Elizabeth A., William E. Pomeranz, et al., "A Small, Victorious War? The Symbolic Politics of Vladimir Putin," *Roots of Russia's War in Ukraine* (2015)
- Daniel Treisman. 2016. "Why Putin Took Crimea" *Foreign Affairs* 95.3 (May/June)

#### **13. Digital Warfare and Influence**

- New York Times, [Russian Hacking and Influence in the U.S. Elections](#)
- Alina Polyakova & Spencer P. Boyer, "[The Future of Political Warfare: Russia, the West, and the Coming Age of Global Digital Competition](#)," *Brookings Institute* (2018)

#### **Movies:**

1. [Burnt by the Sun \(1994\)](#)
2. [Moscow Doesn't Believe in Tears \(1979\): Part 1, Part 2](#)
3. [The Brother \(1997\)](#)
4. [DMB \(2000\)](#)
5. [The Island \(2006\)](#)
6. [Cargo 200 \(2007\)](#)
7. [Election Day \(2007\)](#)
8. [The Geographer Drank His Globe Away \(2013\)](#)
9. [Leviathan \(2014\)](#)
10. [20 Days in Mariupol \(2023\)](#)