This course is a theoretical and historical examination of revolutions: their origins, development, and results. It explores theories about various aspects of revolutions and applies those theories to case studies of actual revolutions. Although revolutions, upheavals, coups, and rebellions from around the world are used as examples, special focus is given to the Bolshevik and Sandinista revolutions, the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe, and the Arab Spring uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt.

Throughout the course, students will be expected to pursue three levels of inquiry. On the most direct level, they will be expected to master the factual details of the historical events we study. Second, considerable attention will be given to scholarly attempts to explain those facts through general theories of revolution. The third level of inquiry will be concerned with such methodological and epistemological questions as what limits what we can know about revolutions and what restricts our ability to develop theories to explain them. Students will be expected to shift back and forth between these levels of inquiry. Classes will combine lecture, discussion, and group and individual investigation.

course objectives
Over the course of the semester, you should:

Critically evaluate theoretical explanations of how political systems operate
• apply and evaluate major theories of revolutionary change.
• gain a greater appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to understanding complex political behavior.
• examine how the goals and interests of various social groups may come into conflict and the variety of ways those conflicts can be resolved.

Make empirical, theoretical, and normative arguments through written work, and oral presentations in a methodologically-sound, persuasive, and ethical manner.
• learn about revolutions around the world, including in Russia, Nicaragua, Eastern Europe, Tunisia, and Egypt.
• conceive, critique, and coherently present original social science research projects.
Understand and critically evaluate the moral values that inform political institutions, behavior, and policies.

- become more sensitive to the shared values that underlie political communities and that inspire political change.

Evaluate the impact of your own actions and choices on your community, your country, and the world.

- investigate the roles of individuals in maintaining and changing political systems.

requirements
Participation, including reading assignments and group work – 25 percent
Essay one (6 pp.) – 15 percent
Essay two (Research design, 10-15 pp.) – 25 percent
Quizzes and other short assignments – 15 percent
Final exam – 20 percent

Missed quizzes and tests must be excused by me before the test is given. Otherwise, you will receive a grade of 0 for the missing work. Late essays may be subject to penalties.

Reading assignments: Reading assignments must be completed by the date for which they are listed. For each class, students are expected to write at least five bullet points about the readings. The bullet points should capture the main arguments in each of the readings. As the semester progresses, the points should include your observations concerning connections between and challenges to the arguments you are reading. At least one point should be a question that you think merits class discussion. Occasionally, I will collect these bullet points. More often, we will start the discussion based on the questions you have raised. In any event, writing the bullet points will help you master the readings and prepare for a better discussion.

Group work: We will divide class into three groups of about 8 students. One group will focus on Latin America (especially Cuba and Nicaragua), one of Eastern Europe (especially Poland and Czechoslovakia), and one group will focus on the Arab Spring (especially Tunisia and Egypt). Each group will do extra reading on revolutions in their part of the world. Groups can divide up tasks among members; some members may focus on countries that we do not cover in class. Before the section of the course dealing with the group’s area of the world, groups will meet with me. While the class is focused on the group’s area of the world, members of the group will be responsible for initiating class discussion each day during that section of the class.

Additional requirements for Honors students: Honors students will act as teaching/research assistants for this course. This work will include some additional readings, research, class presentations, contributions to discussions, meetings with me, and small group leadership. Honors students will need to hand in a five-page reflection on what they learned from this experience (due December 4).

class participation
The quality of this class depends a great deal on you and your readiness to contribute meaningfully to class discussions. You should think about class as a time for exploration, for figuring out what readings mean, and for critically evaluating arguments made by various authors, by other students, and by me. A number of things follow from this:

- Attendance is required, and excessive absence will harm your grade.
- Laptops (and, of course, phones) may not be used in class. While the most self-disciplined among us will not be distracted by the wealth of entertainments provided by the internet, laptops tend to reduce uninterrupted focus on the discussion and serve as barriers to honest and direct interaction.
Grading Scale

A  93-100  B+  87-89  C+  77-79  D  60-70
A-  90-92  B  83-86  C  73-76  F  below 60
B-  80-82  C-  70-72

- **A Quality Work** – work of superior quality. Class participation is voluntary, frequent, relevant, and demonstrates thoughtful reflection on the readings. Written work is clear, correct in content and presentation, well-organized and thought-provoking. Performance on exams demonstrates complete mastery of facts and concepts and the ability to apply concepts to new situations.

- **B Quality Work** – work of high quality. Class participation is voluntary, frequent, and reflects effort to understand the readings. Written work reflects a good understanding of the issues and concepts with minimal error. Performance on exams is very strong; demonstrates mastery of facts and concepts.

- **C Quality Work** – work that minimally meets the course requirements. Class participation is occasional and/or rarely voluntary, with comments that reveal only a superficial grasp of issues and concepts. Written work may be disorganized or contain errors. Performance on exams demonstrates knowledge of facts and concepts.

- **D Quality Work** – work that has minimal clarity and comprehension. Class participation is minimal, never voluntary, and reveals a lack of preparation and/or understanding. Written work is confusing, contradictory, repetitive, and/or not well supported. Writing is marred with errors. Performance on exams demonstrates minimal mastery of facts and concepts.

- **F Quality Work** – Unsatisfactory performance along most measures, often including missing assignments.

**The Writing Center:** The Writing Center provides intensive one-on-one help with writing, multimedia projects and oral presentations. You can visit the Center at any stage of the writing process: invention, development of a thesis, research, integrating outside sources, organization and revision. Writers may also receive help in improving grammar, diction, sentence structure, syntax and mechanics. To set up an appointment (necessary at busy parts of the semester), call 977-2930. For more information, see [www.slu.edu/x34507.xml](http://www.slu.edu/x34507.xml).

**Academic Honesty:** The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity. Academic integrity is violated by any dishonesty such as soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of work submitted toward academic credit. While not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, examples include copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed book exam, submitting materials authored by or revised by another person as the student’s own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing or recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination or quiz without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, sharing or receiving the questions from an on-line quiz with another student, taking an on-line quiz with the help of another student, and colluding with another student or students to engage in academic dishonesty.

All clear violations of academic integrity will be met with appropriate sanctions. In this course, academic dishonesty on an assignment will result in an **automatic grade of 0 for that assignment** and a report of academic dishonesty sent to the Academic Honesty Committee of the College of Arts and Sciences. In the case of Class B violations, the Academic Honesty Committee may impose a larger sanction including, but not limited to, assigning a failing grade in the course, disciplinary probation, suspension, and
dismissal from the University.

Students should refer to the following SLU website for more information about Class A and B violations and the procedures following a report of academic dishonesty: [http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml](http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml)

**Student learning:**
In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Student Success Center (BSC 331) or by going to [www.slu.edu/success](http://www.slu.edu/success).

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at 314-977-8885 or visit the Student Success Center. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.

August 28  
*Introduction*

**THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION: PRACTICE MEETS THEORY**

August 30  

Fitzpatrick, ch. 2, "1917: The Revolutions of February and October," pp. 40-57 (i.e., not the whole chapter).


September 4  


September 6  


September 11  

Fitzpatrick, ch. 6, "Ending the Revolution," pp. 149-172.
GENERAL THEORIES OF REVOLUTION

Assignment on Theories of Revolution: Table of Summaries
Summarize key elements of each of the theories of revolution we discuss in class: Marx, Lenin, Tocqueville, Weber, Huntington, Tilly, Wolf, Lichbach, Skocpol, Goldstone (reading for October 2), Selbin, and, finally, Kriesi. For each theory, note the dependent and independent variables, summarize the argument, and highlight key problems. Any other information that helps you remember the theory may also be included; however, your summary of ALL the theories must fit on two pages.

You may use this table during quizzes and the final exam. If you want to continue the table in the second half of the semester, you may add two more pages. Due October 11.

September 13

QUIZ ONE

September 18

September 20

September 25

September 27
Skocpol and Ellen Kay Trinberger, "Revolutions: A Structural Analysis," in Goldstone, pp. 63-69.
Skocpol, “Conclusion," from States and Social Revolutions, pp. 284-293 (e-reserve).

Honors students should read one chapter of States and Social Revolutions. Choose from ch. 2, 3, 6, or 7. There will be copies of the book on reserve in the library or contact me.

October 2
Eric Selbin, “Agency and Culture in Revolutions,” in Goldstone, pp. 76-84.
October 4  

October 9  

October 11  
ESSAY ONE DUE

TABLE OF SUMMARIES DUE

TESTING THEORIES OF REVOLUTION: EASTERN EUROPE, NICARAGUA, AND IRAN

Nicaragua (and Cuba, too)

October 16  
Goldstone, “Revolutions in Modern Dictatorships,” in Goldstone, pp. 69-76.

October 18  
Forrest D. Colburn, My Car in Managua, pp. 1-65.

October 23  
Fall break—no class

October 25  
Colburn, pp. 66-134.
Valentine M. Moghadam, “Gender and Revolutions,” in Goldstone, pp. 94-107.

October 30  

QUIZ TWO

Eastern Europe

November 1  

November 6  
ORAL PRESENTATIONS ON INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH

November 8  
ORAL PRESENTATIONS ON INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH
Valerie Bunce, “Domestic Socialism: Monopoly and Deregulation,” from Subversive Institutions: The Design and Destruction of Socialism and the State, pp. 20-37, 66-71 (e-reserve).
November 13
John Foran and Jeff Goodwin, “Dictatorship or Democracy: Outcomes of Revolution,” in Goldstone, pp. 107-120.

November 15

November 20

Honors students will present to class two other arguments about Eastern European revolutions. (You can divide up this task.)

November 22
Thanksgiving, no class

Arab Spring
November 27

November 29

December 4

HONORS PAPERS DUE

December 6
RESEARCH DESIGNS DUE

December 18
FINAL EXAM 8:30-9:30

Some Recommended Readings

Theoretical Approaches
McAdam, Doug, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, eds. 1996. *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings.* New York: Cambridge University Press.
Skocpol, Theda. 1979. *States and Social Revolutions.* Cambridge: Cambridge Press.

**Textbooks**

**Russian Revolution**

**Chinese Revolution**

Latin America

Eastern Europe

Havel, Vaclav. "The Power of the Powerless." (available in many collections)


**Arab Spring**


