Office hours: Tuesday 4-5pm, Thursday 12-2pm, and by appointment. Also, feel free to drop by.

About this course
Welcome! We often hear generalizations about what Russians think and value, like that Russians prefer order or a strong leader or that they have the wrong ideas to sustain democracy. But how do we know what ordinary Russians think? This question is especially hard to answer when we think about the past, where the record left behind is incomplete. But it is also difficult in the present in a country where people do not enjoy elemental political freedoms, like freedom of speech or an uncensored press. In this course, we will investigate the fundamental political beliefs and values of Russians, asking questions like:

- Do ordinary Russians have the wrong ideas and values to build democracy?
- How do citizens respond to arbitrary and capricious political power?
- How can we study the fundamental political beliefs and values of a culture other than our own, especially one in which critical discourse has often been constrained?
- Why and how much does political culture change over time?

We will explore a wide range of attitudes, from traditional collectivist orientations under the tsars and Soviet commissars to emerging democratic beliefs today. We study ideas that supported the government as well as alternative orientations that people developed in resistance to authoritarian rulers.

One goal of this class is to think critically about the kinds of evidence we can use to understand a large group of people’s attitudes and values. Accordingly, we will examine different sources of data, trying to determine which is most helpful for understanding what people think: works of fiction, political philosophies, academic debates, historical analysis, first-hand accounts, ethnographies, and quantitative studies of public opinion.

An overriding goal of the class is to train you to think carefully and challenge your own preconceptions before making broad generalizations that apply to large groups of people.

Prerequisites
Junior-level standing, POLS 3000, and a previous comparative politics course; or instructor permission. Many Russian language students have taken this class and done well, even without a background in political science.
What you’ll learn (also known as “learning objectives”)
By the end of the semester, you will be able to:
- Evaluate the usefulness of the concept of political culture in the study of politics
- Compare the shared values that inform political communities
- Examine methodological and epistemological problems in the study of culture.
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of various kinds of data and methodological approaches
- Read carefully and evaluate and construct analytical arguments in clear and logical prose
- Identify and gather information from credible primary and secondary sources
- Design original research to test arguments and hypotheses with qualitative and/or quantitative approaches
- Critically reflect on the variety within groups of people or cultures

Graduate students will also:
- design original research and seminar projects that investigate political processes with appropriate methodologies and contribute to ongoing scholarly debates

This class fulfills the social science requirement of the College of Arts and Sciences core curriculum. Students will acquire conceptual tools and methodologies to analyze and understand their social world. With these tools, they will be able to act in their world more effectively and become forces for positive change. They will gain a better understanding of human diversity. Students will be able to think and write critically about human behavior and community. They will become aware of the various methodological approaches used by social scientists.

Required materials

There are also some readings available either through various internet databases or e-reserve (password: polcult19).

How you’ll know what you are learning
Participation. This is a seminar class, and that means that it is grounded in discussion by students, not lecturing by me. You should think about class as a time for exploration: for figuring out what the readings mean; for critically evaluating arguments made by various authors, by other students, and by me; for connecting the assigned materials to other things you think are relevant and important. This means you must come to class prepared to engage the material during every class meeting. This daily participation will help you apply the concepts you are learning and expose where you still have questions. You will receive a participation grade for every class.

To participate effectively, you will need to keep up to date with the assigned reading and continually think about how ideas from one set of readings relate to the others. You should be prepared to critically evaluate arguments made by the various authors, by other students, and by me. (Of course, we’ll practice how to do this.) Sometimes, participating will mean contributing to all-class discussions, whether by asking questions or adding insights; sometimes we will have short group activities or planned presentations.
In the first part of the semester, we will start each class with small group conversations aimed at developing key questions for the class discussion. From October 1st on, one student will be responsible for developing questions for class discussion for each week. That student will need to meet with me after they have completed the readings but before 5pm on class day. You are responsible for proposing times you can meet with me. I will do everything I can to work with your schedule.

Participation will be 25 percent of your grade. When you are absent, you are not able to participate.

Reading reviews. You will need to complete seven reviews of the week’s reading, due before class, with a grade of 2 or higher. These reviews are worth 10 percent of your grade. Students without seven passing reviews will not be able to pass the class. There is more information on the reading reviews below.

Analytical essay. You will write one essay of around 5 pages on a question I provide, due October 17th. This essay will be worth 20 percent of your grade.

Research paper. You will write a research paper due at the end of the semester, but with earlier deadlines for parts of the assignment. This paper will be worth 35 percent of your grade. This paper will be 10-15 pages long for undergrads and 20-25 pages and have somewhat different requirements for grad students. This paper may treat an aspect of Russian political culture, may compare Russian and non-Russian political cultures, or may take an idea from your study of Russian political culture and apply it in another context or country. In any event, your paper should either test a hypothesis or support a claim that you want to make. You will need to identify, employ, and evaluate a method for creating the data you need in order to support your claim or hypothesis.

More information on this paper will be provided later in the semester, but it is never too early to start thinking about what you want to do. This paper will require a significant amount of outside research. Talk to me early and often.

Final exam. We will have small group oral final exams, worth 10 percent of your grade.

Reading reviews
To advance our discussion, you must write two paragraphs (no more than two pages double-spaced) on the class readings. The first paragraph should summarize the main argument of each of the week’s readings in one to three sentences each. Where appropriate, this summary should include a description of the evidence the author provides.

The second paragraph should offer precisely targeted analysis of the readings. For instance, you might consider whether the evidence presented or the methods used are persuasive, the degree to which the various arguments complement or conflict with each other, what the implications are concerning our understanding of political culture and what it influences. As we get into the semester, you might compare one week’s readings, arguments, and methods with readings from earlier weeks. The point is to provide thoughtful analysis closely connected to the readings.

You must e-mail the paragraphs to me by the start of class. It might be helpful to you to have a copy with you during class. Since these paragraphs are supposed to help us have a constructive discussion, they cannot be handed in for credit late.

Paragraphs will be graded on a three point scale (3—really good, 2—satisfactory, 1—inadequate). All students must hand in at least seven paragraphs graded 2 or better. Failure to complete seven paragraphs will be sufficient reason for a failing grade in the course, no matter what your other grades are. You are welcome to write more than seven paragraphs, and your added effort will be reflected in your grade. You can also use the paragraphs to give you a preview of how your work might fare in the more conventionally graded essays or to improve your writing for graded essays.
Course policies

Technology. 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 what is happening in class. Laptops can even be a physical barrier between you and the person behind the raised screen. In this class, our interaction among ourselves is so important that I will ask you to keep your phones and laptops off – and off your desks. During some group activities, you will need to access information from your readings or the internet, and you will be able to use laptops then.

Absence. Attendance is required. There is no way to recreate or class discussion by yourself. It is not enough to understand the readings or to get notes from a fellow student. Students are permitted ONE unexcused absence. Students who miss more than three classes for any reason, even for excused reasons, may not be able to finish the course. If you do miss a class for a reason that I excuse, you must hand in the reading paragraphs as soon as you are able but before the next class. These “make-up” readings paragraphs will not count toward the required total.

If you are going to miss class, please e-mail me before the class you need to miss. I will excuse absences for illness or SLU-approved activities, but you are responsible for the work the class does in your absence. In some cases – a missed presentation or group activity – there may be no way to make up the work after the fact. If you have not had the absence pre-approved by me, you will receive a grade of 0 for that activity. Unexcused absences are reflected in your participation grade. The winning strategy is to come to class.

Late work. This is my approach to late essays: if I am still reading your fellow students’ essays when you hand in yours, I will not penalize you for lateness. However, you don’t know how long it will take me to read your fellow students’ essays, so there is some risk involved in handing in the paper late. Given the other pressures in your life, you may consider that risk acceptable. The risk-free strategy is to hand in work on time. (Note, this policy does not apply to in-class work or weekly reading reviews, where there is a penalty if your work is not on time.)

Civility. Sometimes we will discuss controversial issues in class, and you may disagree with things you hear in class. You are always welcome to disagree either with me or with other students, but you must do so in a respectful and informed manner, appropriate to an institution of higher learning.

Plagiarism. It is critical that all work that you hand in is your own work and correctly gives credit to other sources that you consult. Work that does not meet this standard will receive a grade of 0.

Tips for success

Do all the reading and think about it. It is very difficult to fully engage with the topics we will be examining without doing the reading.

I always like to talk to you. If you are having trouble with the material or the way we use class time, let me know. Please come to my office hours or make an appointment for a better time to talk. We can try to identify the problem and explore new strategies that, hopefully, will lead to greater success for you. If there is something that you want to share with me anonymously, please put a note in my mailbox in McGannon 128.

I am happy to give you feedback on anything you are working on. For written assignments, I will read papers in any form (outlines, partial drafts, full drafts) before they are due, and I will give you oral feedback. Since my feedback will be oral, you will need to bring the work to me during office hours or another time we have scheduled.

You might find some of the phenomena discussed in this course – and some of the readings about them – disturbing. I have selected course materials and activities that I think will support your learning, but you may come across material that makes you uncomfortable, perhaps particularly uncomfortable as a result of your own past experiences. If this is the case, we have several ways to alleviate discomfort:

- Discuss the situation in class. Our task in this class is to come to terms with some difficult concepts and behavior. We can help each other through this process.
- Come talk to me privately if there is something about your own experience that makes it hard to
handle this information.

- If you are not comfortable discussing the issue with me directly, perhaps you can notify me through your academic adviser, another trusted faculty member, or a friend.

**GRADING SCALE**

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**PART I: WHAT IS POLITICAL CULTURE? WHAT CAN IT EXPLAIN?**

**August 27**  *Thinking about culture, political culture, and American political culture*


No reading paragraphs, for this week.

*Related Readings (for people who are very interested, or for help with research papers):*


**September 3**  *Methodology and causality in the study of political culture*

ALL STUDENTS MUST COMPLETE THE READING PARAGRAPHS THIS WEEK.


Additional assignment for grad students on the next page!
Grad students only: Read Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel, “Political Culture and Democracy,” In Howard J. Wiarda, ed., New Directions in Comparative Politics. Third edition. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2002. You should meet with me prior to class time and be prepared to present the main arguments from this article in class.

Related Readings:

September 10 Competing interpretations of traditional Russian ideas


Related Readings:

**PART II: RUSSIAN WRITERS AS A WINDOW TO POLITICAL CULTURE**

**September 17  Russian socialism and Dostoevsky**

ALL STUDENTS MUST COMPLETE THE READING PARAGRAPHS THIS WEEK.

Fyodor Dostoevsky, "The Grand Inquisitor" (ch. 5; read additional chapters if you are interested; read this one again if you have to).


**Related readings:**


September 24  Citizen response to arbitrary autocracy


**Graduate students only:** also read Dominic Boyer and Alexei Yurchak, “American Stiob: Or, What Late-Socialist Aesthetics of Parody Reveal about Contemporary Political Culture in the West,” *Cultural Anthropology* 25, no. 2 (2010): 179-221 (e-reserve). You should meet with me prior to class time and be prepared to present the main arguments from this article in class.

**Related readings:**
October 1 Views of and from the Putin Regime


Vladislav Surkov, “Russian Political Culture: The View from Utopia,” Russian Social Science Review 49, no. 6 (November-December 2008), pp. 81-97 (e-reserve or Academic Search Complete).


Related readings:
Kasparov, Garry. 2015. Winter is Coming: Why Vladimir Putin and the enemies of the free world must be stopped. New York: Public Affairs
PART III: THE BEHAVIOR AND IDEAS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE

**October 8  Resisting Tyranny**

**Undergrads** should read chapter 1, “Behind the Official Story,” pp. 1-16 (e-reserve).  
**Grad students** should read chapter 1 and chapter 2, “Domination, Acting, and Fantasy, pp. 17-44 (e-reserve), and meet with me prior to class to discuss chapter 2.  

**Related readings:**  

**October 15  Weapons of the Weak**

Viola, ch. 6, “We Let the Women Do the Talking,” pp. 181-204  

**ESSAY ONE DUE BY OCTOBER 17th AT 5pm** (submit a Word document to ellen.carnaghan@slu.edu)
Related readings:
Koester, Arthur. 1941. *Darkness at Noon.* (many editions)

October 22  NO CLASS—Fall break

October 29  Russian Talk


ONE PAGE STATEMENT ON YOUR FINAL PAPER DUE BY October 28 at noon. I want to meet with each of you either before or after you hand in the one-page statement. The statement should include your thesis/hypothesis and the kinds of data you intend to collect in order to test it.

Related readings:
November 5  The Inertia of Complaint


Ries, ch. 4: "Mystical Poverty and the Rewards of Loss," pp. 126-140. This is not the whole chapter; feel free to read the rest if you want to.


Ries, Epilogue, pp. 188-201.

Related readings:

November 12 Responses to the Collapse of the Soviet Union

Svetlana Alexievich, Secondhand Time: The Last of the Soviets
All students should read pp. 1-106.
We’ll divide up the remainder of the book. You will need to be prepared to summarize your section of the book for the rest of class.

Related readings:
New York: Cambridge University Press.

**November 19 Research papers**

**Draft of RESEARCH PAPER due. This draft should be as complete as possible.**

E-mail to ellen.carnaghan@slu.edu. Be prepared to talk about your paper in class today.

**November 26 Protest in the Putin Regime**


**Graduate students** should also read Michael Bernhard and Ekrem Karakoç, “Civil Society and the Legacies of Dictatorship,” *World Politics* 59, no. 4 (July 2007), pp. 539-567 (e-reserve). Plan to meet with me before class and to present Bernhard and Karakoç’ argument in class.

**Related readings:**


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**December 3 Change and Continuity in Russian Public Opinion**


**Related readings:**


December 10  FINAL EXAM

You will take an oral final exam in groups of 2 or 3. We'll schedule these exams at times convenient for you, either on our scheduled exam date, December 10, or later during exam week.

December 13  FINAL DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE

Submit a Word document to ellen.carnaghan@slu.edu by 5pm.

University and College Policies

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors. The mission of Saint Louis University is “the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity.” Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care, and community service through which SLU fulfills its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern. The full University-level Academic Integrity Policy can be found on the Provost's Office website at: https://www.slu.edu/provost/policies/academic-and-course/policy_academic-integrity_6-26-2015.pdf.

Additionally, each SLU College, School, and Center has its own academic integrity policies, available on their respective websites. All SLU students are expected to know and abide by these policies, which detail definitions of violations, processes for reporting violations, sanctions, and appeals. Please direct questions about any facet of academic integrity to your faculty, the chair of the department or your academic program,
or the Dean/Director of the College, School, or Center in which your program is housed. Specific College of Arts and Sciences Academic Honesty Policies and Procedures may be found at: [http://www.slu.edu/arts-and-sciences/student-resources/academic-honesty.php](http://www.slu.edu/arts-and-sciences/student-resources/academic-honesty.php)

**Disability Accommodations**

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations must formally register their disability with the University. Once successfully registered, students also must notify their course instructor that they wish to use their approved accommodations in the course.

Please contact Disability Services to schedule an appointment to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Most students on the St. Louis campus will contact Disability Services, located in the Student Success Center and available by email at Disability_services@slu.edu or by phone at 314.977.3484. Once approved, information about a student’s eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors by email from Disability Services and within the instructor’s official course roster. Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one also are encouraged to contact to Disability Services. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

**Title IX**

Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual misconduct (e.g., sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic or dating violence), we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident that involves a Title IX matter, *that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX coordinator (or that person's equivalent on your campus) and share the basic facts of your experience.* This is true even if you ask the faculty member not to disclose the incident. The Title IX contact will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

For most students on the St. Louis campus, the appropriate contact is Anna R. Kratky (DuBourg Hall, room 36; anna.kratky@slu.edu; 314-977-3886). If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the University Counseling Center at 314-977-TALK. To view SLU’s sexual misconduct policy, and for resources, please visit the following web addresses: [https://www.slu.edu/here4you](https://www.slu.edu/here4you) and [https://www.slu.edu/general-counsel](https://www.slu.edu/general-counsel).

**Student Success Center**

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. The Student Success Center assists students with academic-related services and is located in the Busch Student Center (Suite, 331). Students can visit the [Student Success Center](http://www.slu.edu/student-success-center) to learn more about tutoring services, university writing services, disability services, and academic coaching.

**University Writing Services**

Students are encouraged to take advantage of University Writing Services in the Student Success Center; getting feedback benefits writers at all skill levels. Trained writing consultants can help with writing projects, multimedia projects, and oral presentations. University Writing Services offers one-on-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, visit the [Student Success Center](http://www.slu.edu/student-success-center) or call the Student Success Center at 314-977-3484.

**Basic Needs Security**

Students in personal or academic distress and/or who may be specifically experiencing challenges such as securing food or difficulty navigating campus resources, and who believe this may affect their performance in the course, are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students Office (deanofstudents@slu.edu or 314-977-9378) for support. Furthermore, please notify the instructor if you are comfortable in doing so, as this will enable them to assist you with finding the resources you may need.