"We hoped for the best, but things turned out as usual.”

Viktor Chernomydrin, Prime Minister of Russia, 1992-1998

http://pennpoliticalreview.org/archives/3074

Office hours: Tuesday 1:00-2:00 and Thursday 11:00-1:00, and by appointment
  I am often (but not always) in my office at other times. Feel free to drop by.

Course objectives
This course uses the experience of the Soviet Union and contemporary Russia to understand change in political and economic systems, from collapse of existing governments to the revolutionary reconstruction of society to tensions between autocracy and a government responsive to popular demands. Particular focus is placed on how ordinary citizens are affected by systemic social and political change and the factors that influence whether they can shape political outcomes. For Political Science majors, this class counts as a comparative politics course. WELCOME!

Learning outcomes
This class fulfills the core Global Citizenship requirement. The Global Citizenship requirement is designed to educate students about global and transnational problems and to provide students with the tools to address issues of social justice beyond the United States. Students who complete the Global Citizenship requirement will gain a substantial subset of the following capabilities:

1. Identify sources of and strategies to address conflict, cooperation or competition in a global or regional context.
2. Investigate how people and nations confront inequality and claim a just place, whether in their own societies or in the world.
3. Identify how perceptions of “otherness” impact leaders, communities, and community-building in areas beyond the U.S. through the examination of such factors as race, ethnicity, gender, religion, economic class, age, physical and mental capability, and sexual orientation.
4. Understand the impact of their lives and choices on global and international issues.
5. Understand how their values are related to those of other people in the world.

This class also fulfills the core Social Science requirement. Students will acquire conceptual tools and methodologies to analyze and understand their social world. With these tools, you will be able to act in the world more effectively and become forces for positive change. You will gain a better understanding of human diversity. You will be able to think and write critically about human behavior and community. You will become aware of the various methodological approaches used by social scientists.
Specifically, after this class you will be able to:

**Knowledge**
- Describe changes in the Soviet and Russian political systems over time.
- Analyze differences in the operation of democratic and authoritarian political systems.
- Assess the power of citizens to affect regimes in nondemocratic systems

**Critical thinking**
- Evaluate competing scholarly arguments, especially about the nature of totalitarianism, the determinants of social and political change, and the reasons for the development of democracy or autocracy
- Construct logical and empirically supported arguments, both written and oral

*Engage in political and social life in the service of the greater good*
- Analyze how leaders, their values, and their policies shape society
- Assess the social costs of autocracy
- Compare diverse understandings of social and economic justice and the kinds of political institutions constructed to deliver them.
- Assess the human costs and political demands of social change

**University Writing Services**
I encourage you to take advantage of University Writing Services. Getting feedback benefits all writers! Trained writing consultants can help with any writing, multimedia project, or oral presentation. During one-on-one consultations, you can work on everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. *These services do fill up*, so please make an appointment! Also, bring your assignment description, and a few goals, to the consultation! For more information, or to make an appointment, visit [https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/university-writing-services/index.php](https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/university-writing-services/index.php).

**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 and career related services, is located in the Busch Student Center (Suite 331) and the School of Nursing (Suite 114). Students can visit [https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/index.php](https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/index.php) to learn more about:
- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring services, university writing services, disability services, academic coaching, career services, and/or facets of curriculum planning).

**Disability Services Academic Accommodations**
Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations **must** contact Disability Services to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements.

Please contact Disability Services, located within the Student Success Center, at [https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/disability-services/index.php](https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/disability-services/index.php) or 314.977.3484 to schedule an appointment. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

Once approved, information about academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors via email from Disability Services and viewed within Banner via the instructor’s course roster.

**Note:** Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one are encouraged to contact Disability Services.
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 of misconduct, that faculty member must notify SLU’s Title IX coordinator, Anna R. Kratky (DuBourg Hall, room 36; anna.kratky@slu.edu; 314-977-3886) and share the basic facts of your experience with her. The Title IX coordinator 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.

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:
http://www.slu.edu/about/safety/pdfs/sexual-misconduct-policy-version7.0.pdf
www.slu.edu/here4you.

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 via which SLU embodies 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 governing University-level Academic Integrity Policy was adopted in Spring 2015, and can be accessed on the Provost’s Office website at: http://www.slu.edu/provost/policies/academic-and-course/policy_academic-integrity_6-26-2015.pdf.

Additionally, each SLU College, School, and Center has adopted 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 of your academic program, or the Dean/Director of the College, School or Center in which your program is housed.

College of Arts and Science Academic Integrity Information
Saint Louis University is a community of learning in which integrity and mutual trust are vital. Since the mission of the University is “the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity,” acts of falsehood violate its very reason for existence. They also demean and compromise the activities of teaching, research, and community service that are the primary corporate purposes of the institution.

Academic dishonesty runs counter to the ethical principles of Christianity and of other cultural traditions and undercuts the spiritual and intellectual ideals of the Catholic Church and the Society of Jesus, upon which the University is founded. The destructive effects of academic dishonesty are many. Not only does it undermine the grading process, robbing teachers of their ability to assess the accomplishments of their students and to give proper responses and rewards, but it also impairs the ability of the University to certify to the outside world the skills and attainments of its graduates. Such dishonesty allows students to take unfair advantage of their peers and undermines moral character as well as self-respect. It also damages the bonds of academic trust upon which the entire University rests.
Since the College of Arts and Sciences seeks to prepare students for lives of integrity and for occupations of trust, it regards all acts of academic dishonesty as matters of serious concern. In establishing high standards of integrity, the College is not only affirming certain rules students are to observe at Saint Louis University, but giving students ethical principles and practices to take with them as they move into diverse professions and walks of life beyond the walls of the University. To this end, the College relies, not merely on the willing compliance and support of its students, but on the adherence to professional ethics displayed by its students and by its faculty, staff, and administrators as well.

For more details on the College of Arts and Sciences Academic Integrity Policy, see: http://www.slu.edu/arts-and-sciences/student-resources/academic-honesty.php

**Required books**


Books are available at the campus bookstore.
There are additional readings on e-reserve:
(Password: sovpol18)

**Course requirements**

Two papers, on questions I provide, around 6 pages each—approximately 40 % of course grade
Two short-essay quizzes—approximately 15 %
Final essay exam—20 %
Attendance and class participation—25 %

**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.
- **Careful reading is essential.** Complete all reading assignments before the class for which they are listed.
- It is helpful to keep up with current events in the former Soviet Union. Try http://www.rferl.org/ and/or a good newspaper.
- I provide a reading question for each day to help you see what you should be getting out of the reading. You are welcome to write 1-2 page answers to the question for practice addressing the kinds of questions you’ll be graded on and for extra credit. A thoughtful, carefully reasoned answer could earn you up to 2 points added to your participation grade, up to a maximum of 10 points for the semester. For extra credit, answers must be submitted on the day the question is listed. For practice without extra credit, you can hand in answers any time.
- There will be in-class assignments, unannounced quizzes, and other activities based on the day’s readings. Grades on these assignments will be part of your participation grade.
Additional requirements for Honors students: Honors students will act as teaching/research assistants for this course. This work will involve some research, class presentations, contributions to discussions, and small group leadership. Honors students will be required to hand in a five-page reflection on what they learned from this experience (due Dec 6th). If others would like to share in this experience, let me know.

Missed quizzes and tests must be excused by me before the test is given. Otherwise, the student will receive a grade of 0 for the missing work. Grades of 0 will also be given for missing papers. The zeros will be averaged into the final course grade. Late essays may be subject to penalties.

Russian language students. Students who are studying Russian language may enjoy keeping up with Russian news from Russian language sources. This blog will help you get started:

Listen to Эхо Москвы on-line: http://tunein.com/radio/Echo-of-Moscow-912-s8735/

Новая Газета is an excellent independent newspaper: https://www.novayagazeta.ru/

Grading Scale

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<thead>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>60-70</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 60</td>
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</tbody>
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Things I want my professor to know

If there is ever anything you’d like me to know – maybe about struggles you are having or aspects of the class that aren’t working for you – you can always meet with me or e-mail me. If you’d rather remain anonymous, you can leave a note in my mailbox in McGannon 128. I want to be sure you can succeed.

REVOLUTION AND STATE-BUILDING

August 28  Introduction: political change

August 30  Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, The Communist Manifesto, entire.

Why does Marx consider the proletariat a class in “radical chains”? 


Does it make sense to think – as Marx does – that revolution will arise organically from the situation of the proletariat under capitalism? What does Lenin think? What does Olson think?
September 6
Did the revolution that occurred in Russia in November 1917 conform more to Marx’s or to Lenin’s predictions?

September 11
If Olson is right that people are always better off living under democracy, why aren’t democracies more common?

September 13
V. I. Lenin, Excerpts from State and Revolution, in David McLellan, Marxism: Essential Writings, pp. 163-177 (on e-reserve).
What are some explanations for the regular recreation of autocratic regimes in Russia? Which makes sense to you?

TOTALITARIANISM
September 18
How is Olson’s explanation for the Stalin regime different from Fainsod’s?

September 20
What does it mean for vanguard parties to become “fossilized,” and why does it happen?

QUIZ
September 25
Koestler, “The Second Hearing.”
How can revolutionaries justify their actions when they don’t know what the ultimate consequences will be?

September 27
Koestler, finish the book
Is Rubashov’s “swing theory” a convincing justification for dictatorship?

October 2
Was the Soviet Union still “totalitarian” after Stalin?
October 4  

Why did observers think the Soviet system was more stable than it really was? What did they miss? Why did they miss it?

**THE END OF THE SOVIET SYSTEM AND THE RISE OF CAPITALISM**

October 9  
McAuley, “Perestroika and the End of Party Rule,” “Dispersal of Power,” and “Conclusion,” pp. 89-123.


Why might it be hard to reform a totalitarian system?

October 11  
ESSAY ONE DUE

Movie: Vor’ (The Thief)

October 16  


Does the behavior of ordinary people as the Soviet system was collapsing support Kliamkin and Migranian’s argument that the Soviet Union wasn’t ready for democracy?

October 18  

How did the multicultural nature of the Soviet Union contribute to its collapse?

October 23  
FALL BREAK—no classes

October 25  
Joel Ostrow, “Glasnost Gutted the Party, Democratization Doomed the State, Political Liberalization and the Soviet Disintegration,” in Ostrow, pp. 84-114.


Why did the Soviet Union unravel so quickly?

October 30  

Does central planning encourage desirable behavior on the part of economic actors? Does shock therapy?
November 1
Katherine Verdery, “What was Socialism and Why Did it Fall?,” in Ostow, pp. 70-83.

Would a “China strategy” of economic reform without political reform have worked in Russia?

RETURN TO AUTOCRACY

November 6
Gessen, chs. 1-3, pp. 11-70.

Would you explain the concentration of power that occurred under Putin by looking at the man or the institutions he inherited?

QUIZ

November 8

Why did “strengthening vertical power” seem like a good idea after Yeltsin?

November 13

Why is a strong legislature good for democracy?

November 15
Vladimir Gel’man, “Party Politics in Russia: From Competition to Hierarchy,” in Ostrow, pp. 273-289.

Why would an autocrat bother to have a legislature and political parties?

November 20

Why is it so difficult to create a strong opposition in Russia?
How would you handle the many personal and professional compromises implicit in living in an autocratic regime?
November 22
THANKSGIVING—no classes

RUSSIA AND THE WORLD
November 27

How should the U.S. respond to Russian aggression in Ukraine?

November 29
ESSAY TWO DUE

December 4

What are unintended consequences of US democracy promotion abroad?

December 6

Why did democracy fail in Russia? Do you think Russia will become more democratic in the future?

HONORS STUDENTS: 5 page reflection due

December 18
FINAL EXAM, 8:30-9:30

Selected Supplemental Reading

FICTION
Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics


PERSONAL AND JOURNALISTIC ACCOUNTS

The Soviet Period:

Reform and Collapse

Putin's Russia
Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics


Pomerantsev, Peter. 2015. *Nothing is True and Everything is Possible: The Surreal Heart of the New Russia.* PublicAffairs.


SOME SCHOLARLY WORKS:


