A Soviet era joke:
—Where is the USA heading?
—To catastrophe.
—Where are we heading?
—We are trying to overtake and surpass them.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
Welcome! This course examines the fundamental political beliefs, values, and preferences of Russians. Topics range 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.

Throughout the course, one of the questions we will be trying to answer is how we can study the fundamental political beliefs and values of a culture other than our own, especially in a context like Russia where at many points in time it was impossible for people to express their ideas freely. In an effort to answer that question, we will examine a number of different kinds of 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.

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 underlie political communities
• Distinguish among the diversity of traditions in political science
  Examine methodological and epistemological problems in the study of culture.
  Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of various kinds of data and methodological approaches
• Critique competing theoretical explanations
• Read carefully and evaluations 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

Graduate students will also:
• Produce a comprehensive review of the scholarly literature relevant to their research topic

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.

OFFICE HOURS: Monday 4-5pm, Wednesday 3-4pm, and by appointment. Also, feel free to drop by.
REQUIRED BOOKS AND READINGS


There are also some additional readings, available either through various internet databases or e-reserve (password: polcult17).

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:


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 314-977-3484 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.
WRITING CENTER. 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 www.slu.edu/writingservices.xml or call 977-3484.

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ASSIGNMENTS—65 percent of your course grade

One essay of around 5 pages on a question I provide, due March 9—approximately 15% of your grade

One longer research paper, 10-15 pages for undergrads—approximately 35% of your grade

For grad students, this paper will be 20-25 pages and have somewhat different requirements.

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—15% For undergraduates, this will be a small group oral exam. For grad students, it will be an in-class written exam.

All students must complete a course evaluation for the class.
ATTENDANCE, PARTICIPATION, AND READING—35 percent of your final grade

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. A number of things follow from this:

Attendance is required. There is no way to recreate this process of 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 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 (see below).

Laptops (and, of course, phones) may not be used in class. Laptops tend to reduce uninterrupted focus on the discussion. Even the physical presence of a laptop or phone on the table is an obstacle to an honest and direct interaction with the person behind it. In any event, class time will not be spent taking detailed notes on information provided by me.

Careful reading is essential. Students must carefully read all assignments, noting questions or points that they want to raise in class. You will receive a discussion grade for every class. This grade will be based on your contributions to class discussion, any oral presentations, group projects, or short written assignments that contribute to class discussion. Quizzes, both pre-announced and not, could occur and would be factored into this discussion grade.

In the first half of the semester, we will start each class with small group conversations aimed at developing key questions for the class discussion. In the second half of the semester, two students will be responsible for developing questions for class discussion for each week. Those students will need to meet with me after they have completed the readings and talked about them with each other but before 5pm on class day. You are responsible for proposing times you can meet with me.

Graduate students will have some separate meetings with me.

READING PARAGRAPHS—seven, graded 2 or higher, required for course credit

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 each of the week’s readings in three sentences each. For each reading, you should (1) identify the author’s primary question, (2) describe the answer, and (3) describe the data and methods the author used to reach the answer.

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 participation 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.
PART I: WHAT IS POLITICAL CULTURE? WHAT CAN IT EXPLAIN?

January 17  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):


January 24  Methodology and causality in the study of political culture

ALL STUDENTS MUST COMPLETE THE READING PARAGRAPHS THIS WEEK.


Grad students only: read Lisa Wedeen, “Conceptualizing Culture: Possibilities for Political Science.” *American Political Science Review* 96, no. 4 (2002): 713-28 (e-reserve or JStore). You should meet with me as a group prior to class time and be prepared to present the main arguments from this article in class.
Related Readings:

**January 31 Competing interpretations of traditional Russian ideas**

(Available through e-reserve or JSTOR).


**Related Readings:**
Russian Political Culture


PART II: RUSSIAN WRITERS AS A WINDOW TO POLITICAL CULTURE

February 7  **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:


February 14  Citizen response to arbitrary autocracy


**Graduate students only:** also read Oleg Kharkhordin, “Civil Society and Orthodox Christianity,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 50, no. 6 (1998): 949-968 (Academic Search Premier). Plan both to meet with me before class and to present this article in class.

Related readings:


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**February 21 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 Premier).


Garry Kasparov, “The U.S. doesn’t have a problem with Russia. It has a problem with Vladimir Putin: Russian aggression is for Putin’s personal benefit,” *Washington Post,* 3 January 2017 (e-reserve).

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**Related readings:**


PART III: THE BEHAVIOR AND IDEAS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE

February 28  Resisting Tyranny


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:

March 7  Weapons of the Weak


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


ESSAY ONE DUE BY MARCH 9th AT 5pm (submit a Word document to carnagep@slu.edu)
Related readings:
Koester, Arthur. 1941. *Darkness at Noon*. (many editions)

March 14 NO CLASS—Spring break

March 21 *Russian Talk*


**ONE PAGE STATEMENT ON YOUR FINAL PAPER DUE BY MARCH 24 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:
March 28  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:

April 4 Responses to the Collapse of the Soviet Union

Svetlana Alexievich, Secondhand Time: The Last of the Soviets, pp. 3-281.
All students should read pp. 1-106.
We'll divide up the remaining part of this reading.

Related readings:
April 11 **Surviving the new Russia**

Secondhand Time, pp. 287-470.
All students should read 287-349 and 434-470.
We'll divide up the remaining part of the reading.

**Related readings:**

April 18 **Draft of RESEARCH PAPER due. This draft should be as complete as possible.**

Be prepared to talk about your paper in class today.

April 25 **Protest in the Putin Regime**


**Graduate students** should also read 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, no. 2 (January 2005): 231-261 (Project Muse). Plan to meet with me before class and to present Way’s argument in class.

**Related readings:**


May 2  Change and Continuity in Russian Public Opinion


Related readings:

May 5  FINAL DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE
Submit a Word document to carnagep@slu.edu by 5pm.

May 9  FINAL EXAM
Grad students: Students taking the class for graduate credit will take a written exam during the scheduled exam time, May 9, 6:30-8:30pm. This exam is designed to give you practice that will help with the field exam required for the MA.
Undergrads: Undergrads will take an oral final exam in groups of 3 or 4. We’ll schedule these exams at times convenient for you, either earlier on May 9 or later during exam week.