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Office Hours: Monday 1:30-
3:00, Wednesday 2:00-3:30 and by appointment

Spring 2016

POLS 332: Russian Politics

Why did Russian democracy fail? What prompted the rise of the new authoritarian Russian state? Is this authoritarianism durable or will it prompt a new cycle of democratization or a revision to an even more authoritarian state? This course is organized to address these questions. They are important both for understanding Russia but also for understanding key issues in political science: when efforts to democratize succeed or fail; the difficulty in establishing market economics; and the importance of the legacy of authoritarian regimes in shaping the success or failure of democratic transitions. These questions are not only interesting to scholars. They also have important implications for how the US deploys democracy assistance funds, works to build democracy across the globe, and manages its future relationship with Russia.

The course is organized in four sections: an introduction that covers the Soviet legacy, the Yeltsin era, the rise of President Putin and the authoritarian system, and finally, the prospects for change in the near future given recent protests. The section on the Soviet period is admittedly brief but we will also do some more historical reading within the other sections of the course. If you do not have a strong background, you may want to do a little investigation, including watching some documentaries from the REEI library, but the course is set-up so that extensive prior knowledge is not essential. We will discuss how to find articles on-line. You may also consult the reference librarians if you have trouble locating the articles listed on the syllabus. We will use the class oncourse cite throughout the class to distribute handouts, post lecture notes, and submit all written assignments. If you are not familiar with the system, please use the help system to learn its key features.

Course Requirements:

Short Papers (30 percent of your grade): Each student should choose a topic relating to an aspect of Russian politics that interests them. The topic will be the basis of a 7-8 page paper that: 1) identifies the problem or question you wish to address and defines its importance for Russian politics and 2) reviews the debates/analysis on that subject. The paper should include 10-12 citations to serious articles in policy or scholarly journals, book chapters, or books (Wikipedia is not a viable source). Papers are due throughout the semester based on the relationship between the paper and the topics covered in class so choose your topic wisely given other commitments. Students will become “experts” on that topic for the class period that deals with the subject. For example, papers on the Chechen war might fit with the discussion of federalism, terrorism, or the rise of Putin. Papers on military reform might fit on the day we discussion the power ministries.

Papers on the mafia are due that day we discuss the mafia. Students may choose to write on any topic that interests them. In addition to these topics, here are some suggestions that you might want to narrow to come up with a workable topic:

Russian Electoral Reform	Art Under Putin
The Khodorkovsky Case	Environmental Issues
Russia's Muslim Population	Aids/HIV in Russia
The Orthodox Church and Russian Politics	Alcohol
Women's Issues	Skinheads
The Russian Communist Party	Protest
Oil and the Oil industry	Pussy Riot
Healthcare system	Election Fraud
Education Reform	2008/2015 Economic Crisis

Potential Bibliographic Sources: It is essential that the articles or books that you use in the paper be a mix of scholarly, journalistic, and policy works. Scholarly journals include: *World Politics*, *Comparative Politics*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Political Science Quarterly*, *American Political Science Review*, *American Journal of Political Science*, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, *Europe-Asia Studies*, *Demokratizatsiya*, *Democratization*, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, *Slavic Review*, *Russian Social Science Review*, *Problems of Post-Communism*, *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, *Journal of Democracy*, etc. Policy journals include *Foreign Affairs*, *National Interest*, and *Foreign Policy*, *Washington Quarterly*, and *Survival*. You should be familiar with how to use library resources, such as ProQuest Research Library, JSTOR, PAIS, etc., to search for articles. If not, please seek help from a librarian. Even a well-structured search on Google Scholar can be helpful.

The goal of this paper is help you to develop your analytic skills. You should think of the paper as a written answer to an important or interesting question. Your answer will be based on organizing evidence and arguments from the sources you choose. ***No more than 10 percent of your paper should be quotes from other sources.*** You should make your argument in your own words.

Participation in discussion, in-class group exercises and homework assignments (25 percent of your grade): To the degree possible, this class will be run as a seminar, incorporating as much discussion as possible into class periods. You must come to class PREPARED to discuss the readings. Before each set of readings, the syllabus subheadings provide guidance look for in the reading, but generally, as you read, think about the following questions: 1) what is the topic being covered? 2) Is there an argument or point of view being offered? 3) Is the argument convincing and why? 4) Is the evidence offered to support the argument convincing and why?

Throughout the semester, I will ask you to do short homework that are intended to push you to analyze events in Russian politics and not just passively accept the reading. Assignments are based on the readings or readily available data and will require minimal outside research. Assignments **MUST** be submitted through oncourse **ON THE DAY**

THAT THE ASSIGNMENT IS DUE. Two late assignments will be accepted with the penalty of one letter grade for every day that the assignment is late. You will receive a “0” on any subsequent late assignments.

The final component of this work will be attendance. Throughout the semester, I will take attendance and incorporate that information into your participation grade.

Summary Essay (30 percent of your grade): Due no later than Friday, December 10, this 1250-1750 word essay is your opportunity to summarize your thinking throughout the course. The essay must use the class readings, discussions and lectures to answer the question: Why did Russia’s democratic transition fail? Your essay will be evaluated on your incorporation and effective use of class materials as well as the persuasiveness of your argument. In other words, you must show that you have done and understood the reading and by providing parenthetical citations (no bibliography) to a wide range of readings from class. A good essay will incorporate no less than ten readings into a comprehensive argument.

Engaging Russian Politics/Thinking Critically (15 percent of your grade): The IU campus is an important center of Russian studies with significant resources available to deepen our understanding of political event. This semester, we will take advantage of these resources in order to deepen our understanding of Russian politics and also sharpen our critical thinking skills. You have two options available to fulfill this requirement:

- 1) Students will attend at least two seminars or two full-length feature films (**exclusive of the ones shown in class**) dealing with the subject of Russian politics. A schedule of talks will be posted on oncourse and updated as new talks are scheduled. You can also monitor talks through the Russian Institute at: <http://www.indiana.edu/~reeiweb/>. Based on the talk, students should write up to a two-page summary (in note or outline format) that addresses the following questions:
 - i. What was the central question or puzzle addressed in the talk?
 - ii. What was the argument or answer to that question/puzzle?
 - iii. Did the speaker present alternative explanations for the puzzle?
 - iv. What was the evidence presented by the speaker to support his/her argument? What is your evaluation of that evidence?
 - v. Was the *argument and evidence* compelling? Were you convinced? Try to stick to a critique of the argument and not the speaker or speaker’s style.

- 2) If you chose the film option, two films from the late Soviet or Russian era and write a two- to three-page summary of the film as it relates to a topic covered in class. There is a library of films available at REEI (<http://www.indiana.edu/~reeiweb/resources/collections.shtml>) and many films are also available on Amazon and Netflix. The goal in this

exercise is for you to be analytic. You do not need to summarize the plot or the characters. If you choose to watch a documentary, please email me prior to watching the film. Using citations from class readings you might discuss:

- i. Does the film reflect the role of the mafia/poverty/crime in Russian life?
- ii. Does the film address an important legacy of the Soviet system and show its impact on Russian politics?
- iii. What is the relationship between the citizens and their government depicted in the film?
- iv. What view of Russian society do you get from the film? Can you identify key social problems or patterns?
- v. Does the film show the effects of economic reforms, globalization, or the effect of the market economy?
- vi. Does the film show popular attitudes towards the state, the president, or politics in general?

You can get films by calling, emailing or just going to the center: Ballantine Hall 565, (812) 855-7309; reei@indiana.edu.

Summaries to fulfill this requirement can be handed in as you complete them throughout the semester but must be completed by **Monday, December 2** with no exceptions. Papers on talks should be submitted within a week of the date of the talk. Be sure to include the name of the speaker, the title of the talk and the date in the heading of your synopsis. Papers must be submitted through oncourse system.

Academic Integrity: As a student at IU, you are expected to adhere to the standards and policies detailed in the [Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct](#) (*Code*). When you submit a paper with your name on it in this course, you are signifying that the work contained therein is all yours, unless otherwise cited or referenced. Any ideas or materials taken from another source for either written or oral use must be fully acknowledged. If you are unsure about the expectations for completing an assignment or taking a test or exam, be sure to seek clarification beforehand. All suspected violations of the *Code* will be handled according to University policies. Sanctions for academic misconduct may include a failing grade on the assignment, reduction in your final grade, a failing grade in the course, among other possibilities, and must include a report to the Dean of Students. If you have questions about what constitutes dishonesty, please do not hesitate to ask. Additionally, you may find the Campus Writing Program's information useful: www.indiana.edu/~wts/wts/plagiarism.html.

Students with Disabilities:

The Office of Disability Services at IU strongly encourages faculty to include the following statement on your syllabus:

If any student will require assistance or academic accommodations for a disability, please contact me after class, during my office hours, or by individual appointment. You must have established your eligibility for disability support services through the Office of Disability Services for Students in Wells Library W302, 812-855-7578.

Link to Campus Disability Services is as follows:

<http://studentaffairs.iub.edu/dss/faculty/faculty-resources/>

Section 1: Understanding the Soviet Legacy

Monday, January 11: WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE SOVIET UNION AND RUSSIA – CENTRAL QUESTIONS

Course overview

Documentary: *The Age of Delirium*

Wednesday, January 13: How Did the Soviet System work in the 1980s

Discussion Questions: The collapse of the Soviet command economy and authoritarian political system mean reconstructing the state and regime. What had to change for Russia to become a democracy (what institutions had to be constructed, what types of social change had to occur, what had to be destroyed?)

Kathryn Verdery, *What Was Socialism and What Comes Next?* Princeton New Jersey: Princeton University Press, Chapter 1. (Available on oncourse)

Neil Robinson, chapter 2, “Soviet Legacies and Post Soviet Policies” In “The Political Economy of Russia”

David E. Hoffman, “Shadows and Shortages,” in *The Oligarchs: Wealth and Power in the New Russia*, New York: Public Affairs, Chapter 1, pp. 11-20. (Available on oncourse).

Monday, January 18: No Class, MLK Celebration

Wednesday, January 21: The Legacy of the Late Soviet Period

Construct a timeline of the historical events of the Soviet Union/Russia, 1980-2016

Homework 1: (please bring a copy of your work to class AND also post your work to oncourse. Only work posted on oncourse will be graded). Put together a timeline of the most important events in Soviet/Russian History from 1980 to the present. If your last name begins with A-G focus on the years 1980-1991 (The Late Soviet Period); if your last name begins with the letters H-P focus on the period 1991-1999 (the Yeltsin Era); if your name begins with P-Z focus on the period between 2000-2016 (the Putin Era).

Section 2: The Yeltsin Legacy

Thursday, September 5: Film, *My Perestroika*

The film runs about 12 minutes longer than our class session so we will start it a bit early and let it run. Please do your best, within your own constraints, to see as much of the film as possible.

Homework 2 – Due Thursday, September 12: Write an essay that is no more than 1000 words (about four double spaced pages) analyzing of *My Perestroika*. Consider the any aspect of the film that you see as important for contemporary Russian politics. For instance, you might consider the legacy of the Soviet period or of the Yeltsin era for Putin’s consolidation of power, or the ways in which generational change and life experience influence world views and the expectations that people have about their government. You might characterize the changes that people have experienced in their lives or the role of “class” in their thinking. You do not need to summarize the film or their characters in this paper. The goal of the exercise is to use the film to understand the

challenges inherent in the transition from a communist/command economy to a democratic/market system.

Tuesday, September 10: Class cancelled to provide time to meet one on one to discuss student paper plans. Sign up sheets will be available in class. All students should bring a bibliography of not less than 10 citations and a one-paragraph summary of what they would like to write about to their meeting. Also, upload your bibliography onto the oncourse/assignments function. You will get credit for your bibliography and meeting.

Thursday, September 12, Who Was Boris Yeltsin and How Did He Defeat Mikhail Gorbachev?

Discussion of My Perestroika

PPT: Gorbachev, Yeltsin and the Collapse of the Soviet Union

What is the value and importance of leadership? More important in a moment of transition.

Timothy J. Colton, *Yeltsin, A Life*, Chapters 1, 17, and 18, Available on oncourse/readings

Masha Gessen, "How Drunk is Boris?" *The New Republic*, Available on oncourse/readings.

Tuesday, September 17: What Happened? The Construction of a New State **Building the ship at sea – ppt.**

Anna Grzymala-Busse and Pauline Jones Luong, "Reconceptualizing the State: Lessons from Postcommunism," *Politics & Society*, vol. 30:4 (December 2002), pp. 529-554. (Available on Oncourse)

Vladimir Brovkin, "*The Fragmentation of Authority and Privatization of the State: From Gorbachev to Yeltsin*," available on Oncourse.

Thursday, September 19, When the State is Weak The Mafia Steps Up!

Volkov, Vadim. "Violent Entrepreneurship in Post-Communist Russia." *Europe-Asia Studies* 51, no. 5 (1999): 741-754.

James Leitzel, Cliff Gaddy and Mikhail Alexeev, Mafiosi and Matrioshki, *The Brookings Review*, 13 (Winter 1995), 1:26-28. (Available on Oncourse).

Tuesday, September 24, Economic Reform – Shock Therapy **Shock Therapy Worksheet**

Homework 3 Due: Think of your everyday economic interactions within the structure of a market economy. What institutions do you observe, use, or rely on to ensure that your transactions are completed? Provide a list of the institutions (8-10) and their functions in economic transactions.

Murrell, Peter. "What is Shock Therapy? What Did it Do in Poland and Russia?" *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 9:2 (1993): 111-37 (Available on oncourse).

Thursday, September 26, Obstacles to Economic Reform **Discussion: Present the J curve and talk about the problems**

J. Hellman, "Winners Take All: The Politics of Partial Reform in Postcommunist Transitions," *World Politics*. Vol. 50, No. 2 (1998): 235-265.

W. Tompson, "Was Gaidar Really Necessary? Russian 'Shock Therapy' Reconsidered," *Problems of Post-Communism* (July/August 2002).

Malia, Martin E., "The Haunting Presence of Marxism-Leninism," *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 10, and Number 2 (April 1999): pp. 41-46.

Tuesday, October 1, Yeltsin's Oligarchs and Nomenklatura Capitalism, **PPT: Yeltsin's oligarchs**

Grigory Yavlinsky, "Russia's Phony Capitalism," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 1998. (Available on Oncourse).

Martin Malia, "The Nomenklatura Capitalists," *The New Republic*, Vol. 212 Issue 21(5/22/95): 17-24. (Available on Oncourse).

Pomerantsev, P. (2013). Diary. *London Review of Books*, 35(8), 38-39. Available at: <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v35/n08/peter-pomerantsev/diary>.

Thursday, October 3, The Persistence of Informal Practices: Society Makes Due
Homework 4: Imagine yourself as a citizen in the early years of the Russian transition. Think of a situation in which you would continue to use *blat* or networks to get ahead, amass wealth, or just survive. Write your answer in 2-3 paragraphs, demonstrating that you understand the concept of *blat*.

Ledeneva, Alena V. 1998. *Russia's Economy of Favors: Blat, Networking, and Informal Exchange*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1 and 6

Tuesday, October 8, Social Capital and Civil Society –

NOTE - Please bring your laptops, tablets and other machines to class so that you can participate in an exercise based on the Russian constitution.

Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work*, Chapter 8. (Available on oncourse)

Laura Henry, "Shaping Social Activism in Post-Soviet Russia: Leadership, Organizational Diversity, and Innovation," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, (2006): 99-124.

Thursday, October 10, Democracy and Democratization

Thomas Carothers, "The End of the Transition Paradigm," *Journal of Democracy*, 13, 1 (2002): 5-21.

Michael McFaul (2002). The Fourth Wave of Democracy and Dictatorship: Noncooperative Transitions in the Postcommunist World. *World Politics*, 54 (2002): 212-244.

Tuesday, October 15: No Class – We will meet in the evening this week to watch *Spinning Boris* a satiric look at Boris Yeltsin and his miraculous re-election in 1996.

Suggested Reading:

David Remnick, "Can Russia Change?" *Foreign Affairs*, January/ February 1997.

Thursday, October 17, Elections in the New Russia

White, Stephen. "Russia, Elections, Democracy." *Government and Opposition* 35, 3 (2000): 302-324.

Tuesday, October 22, The Legacy of the 1990s - PPT. The Social Cost of Transition

Andrei Shleifer and Daniel Treisman, "A Normal Country: Russia After Communism," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 19, 1 (Winter 2005): 151–174. Available on oncourse.

Thursday, October 24, Western Influence and The 1990s

George Soros, "Who Lost Russia?" *The New York Review of Books*, April 13, 2000.

<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2000/apr/13/who-lost-russia/?pagination=false>

John Lloyd, "Russia's Devolution," *The New York Times Magazine*, August 15, 1999.

<http://www.nytimes.com/1999/08/15/magazine/the-russian-devolution.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>

Daniel Treisman, "Blaming Russia First," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 6 (Nov. - Dec., 2000), 146-155.

Section 3: The Putin-Mevedev-Putin Era

Tuesday, October 29: Enter Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin PPT: Putin Emerges

Homework 7: In two pages, summarize the biggest problems that VVP inherited given the outcome of the 1990s.

Text of Yeltsin's Resignation Speech, *New York Times*, Jan. 1, 2000, p. A19. (Available on Oncourse)

Masha Gessen, "Putin Himself First," *The New Republic*, 222 (1/17/2000), 2: 13-14.

Vladimir Putin, "Action Man," BBC Available at:
<http://www.bbc.com/culture/story/20130730-vladimir-putin-action-man>

Thursday, October 31, The New Oligarchs – The Importance of Selective Coercion and Personal Networks in Putin's Regime

Daniel Treisman. "Putin's Silovarchs," *Orbis*, Winter 2007.

Pavel Baev, "The Evolution of Putin's Regime: Inner Circles and Outer Walls," *Problems of Post-Communism*, vol. 51, No. 6 (November/December 2004), pp. 3-13.

David Woodruff, "Khodorkovsky's Gamble, From Business to Politics in the Yukos Conflict," PONARS Policy Memo 308,
http://www.ponarseurasia.org/sites/default/files/policy-memos-pdf/pm_0308.pdf

Tuesday, November 5, Chechnya, Terrorism, the New Russian State **PPT: Russia's War, Terrorism**

James Hughes, "Chechnya: Understanding the Causes of a Protracted Post-Soviet Conflict," *Civil Wars* 4, 4 (2001), 11-48 but focus on pp. 28-38 for the Putin period.

Lynch, Dov. "The Enemy is at the Gate: Russia after Beslan." *International Affairs* 81, 1 (2005): 141-161.

Brian Taylor, "Putin's State Building Project, Issues for the Second Term," PONARS Policy Memo, 323, Available at: http://ponarseurasia.com/sites/default/files/policy-memos-pdf/pm_0323.pdf

Thursday, November 7, The Concept of Managed Democracy **PPT: Nashi and State Response**

Richard Sakwa, "The Dual State in Russia," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 26, 3 (2010): 186-205.

James, Richter, "Putin and the Public Chamber," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 25,1(2009): 39-65.

Nikolai Petrov, "From Managed Democracy to Sovereign Democracy," Available at:
http://csis.org/files/media/isis/pubs/pm_0396.pdf

Tuesday, November 12, The Rise of United Russia and Elections Under Putin

Smyth, Regina, Anna Lowry, and Brandon Wilkening. "Engineering Victory: Institutional Reform, Informal Institutions, and the Formation of a Hegemonic Party regime in the Russian Federation." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 23, no. 2 (2007): 118-137. (Available on oncourse)

Thursday, November 14: The Tandem **PPT: The Tandem**

Homework Eight: In two pages, explore the logic of the tandem and the potential strengths and weaknesses of this arrangement.

Amy Knight, "The Truth About Putin and Medvedev," *The New York Review of Books*, (available at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2008/may/15/the-truth-about-putin-and-medvedev/>)

Andrey Ryabov. "Tandemocracy in Today's Russia," *Russian Analytical Digest*, 49 (2009): 2-8. Available at: <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ots591=0c54e3b3-1e9c-be1e-2c24-a6a8c7060233&lng=en&id=93540>

Jim Hoagland, "Two Faces of Russia," *The Washington Post*, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/09/18/AR2009091802142.html>

The Modernizing Tandem and Its Discontents:

http://www.rferl.org/content/The_Modernizing_Tandem_And_Its_Discontents/2067952.html

"Vova and Dima 4eva," *Foreign Policy Magazine*.

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/09/16/vova_and_dima_4eva?page=0,11

Tuesday, November 19, The Economy Under VVP and the Global Economic Crisis

PPT: Russian Economy Oil and Gas, Need to Revise

Anders Aslund, "The Kremlin's Crisis. Will a Shrinking Economy Force Russia to Pursue Reform," *Foreign Affairs Magazine*, May 20, 2009. Available at:

<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/65098/anders-%C3%83%C2%A5slund/the-kremlins-crisis>

Robert Orrtung, "Russian Political System Faces Significant Challenges Dealing with Economic Crisis," *Russian Analytical Digest*. 49(2009): 2-8. Available at

<http://www.css.ethz.ch/publications/pdfs/RAD-49.pdf>

Daniel Treisman, "Inequality: The Russian Experience," *Current History*, 111, 747(October 2012): 264-269. Available on Oncourse

Thursday, November 19, Film, Putin's Kiss

This class session is NOT an invitation to leave town early for Thanksgiving break, I will take attendance on this day as the film is integral to the class structure.

*****Thanksgiving Break*****

Section 4: Can the Regime Survive?

Tuesday, December 3, Post-Election Protest and Regime Stability

Smyth, Regina, Anton Sobolev, and Irina Soboleva, "A Well-Organized Play." *Problems of Post-Communism* 60, no. 2 (2013): 24-39.

OR

Regina Smyth, Anton Sobolev and Irina Soboleva, "Defining Common Ground: The Language of Mobilization in Russian Protests" Paper Presented at the conference "The Culture of Complaints," Princeton University, March 2013. Available on Oncourse.

OR

Regina Smyth, Anton Sobolev and Irina Soboleva, "Explaining Patterns of Protest Participation in Russia, 2011-2012," Paper presented at the International Conference "Russia's Winter of Discontent: Taking Stock of Changing State-Society Relationships," Uppsala University, Sweden, September 2013. Available on Oncourse.

Thursday, December 5, Why Pussy Riot Matters **PPT: Bounding Protest**

Smyth and Soboleva, "Bounding Protest: Bounding Protest: Pussy Riot and the Battle for Political Participation in Russia," forthcoming (Available on Oncourse).

Tuesday, December 10, Navalny, the Moscow Mayor's Race and the Stability of the Regime

Thursday, December 12, Class Conclusion, Q and A Session with a focus on your final papers.