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PSC 381.01: Post Soviet-Russia

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Political Science 381.01

Spring 2007

MWF 9:10-10:00

LA 337

Course Website: <http://courseware.umd.edu>

Professor Eric Hines

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The Politics of Post-Soviet Russia in a Comparative Context

"Democracy cannot be exported to some other place. This must be a product of internal domestic development in a society." — Russian President Vladimir Putin

"I looked the man in the eye. I found him to be very straight forward and trustworthy ... I was able to get a sense of his soul." — George W. Bush on Vladimir Putin

COURSE DESCRIPTION

More than 15 years after the sudden and peaceful dissolution of the Soviet Union, scholars continue to disagree about its causes and the long-term consequences for its 15 successor states. Nowhere are these consequences felt more profoundly than in Russia, where birthrates and male life expectancy have suffered sharp declines and where the early promise of its transition to democracy is disappearing. This course explores the government and politics of post-Soviet Russia in an attempt to evaluate the state of Russian democracy under Russian President Vladimir Putin. It begins with an examination of Russia's Communist past, then delves into the current state of affairs in Russia, and finally concludes with an examination of the political transitions in other post-Soviet countries. Ultimately, this course will develop students' ability to evaluate the success or failure of Russian democracy since 1992 in comparison to other post-Soviet states.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

After completing this course, students should:

- Have a knowledge of the history and institutions of Russia and other post-Soviet regions.
- Understand different theoretical approaches to explaining post-Soviet political development.
- Understand the issues and challenges confronting modern Russia.
- Be able to evaluate Russian democracy using different normative standards.

TEXTBOOK

There are two *required* textbooks for this course available for purchase at the UC Bookstore:

Herspring, Dale, (2006). *Putin's Russia: Past Imperfect, Future Uncertain*. 3rd Edition. Lanham, MA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. ISBN: 0742553930.

Hesli, Vicki, (2006). *Government and Politics in Russia and the Post-Soviet Region*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. ISBN: 0618347364.

Any additional readings will be made available on electronic reserve at the library and on Blackboard.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Students have the responsibility to attend class regularly and complete all assigned readings before coming to class.
2. Students have the responsibility to inform the instructor beforehand of any reasons why they are unable to attend class or complete an assignment on time.
3. Students have the responsibility to complete all assignments by the deadline given by the instructor.
4. Students have the responsibility to complete the requirements of this course within the time framework of the semester. University policy on incompletes will be adhered to strictly.

Instructor Responsibilities

1. The instructor will provide an environment where all students' opinions are encouraged and respected.
2. The instructor will provide information in a way that is accessible and relevant to students.
3. The instructor will design assessments that accurately reflect the objectives of this course.
4. The instructor will make all necessary and reasonable efforts to facilitate student learning.
5. The instructor will provide opportunities for students to anonymously provide feedback regarding his success at meeting these responsibilities.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY

The University requires that this statement be placed on all syllabi at the University of Montana:

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University.

All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at: <http://www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/page/1321>.

STATEMENT ON DISABILITIES:

I strongly encourage students with documented disabilities to discuss with me appropriate accommodations that might be helpful to them. However, I am not qualified to make an assessment of your need for an accommodation or what accommodations are needed. If you have a disability and feel you need accommodations in this course, you must present a letter to me from Disability Services for Students (DSS), Lommasson Center 154 (243-2243), indicating the existence of a disability and the suggested accommodations.

COURSE ORGANIZATION

This is primarily a lecture course. Lecture slides and outlines, and other course material will be available from the University's Blackboard shell for this course (<http://courseware.umt.edu>).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS*Films*

Students are responsible for viewing two films during the course of the semester, *Burnt by the Sun* (1995) and *Brother (Brat)* (1997). Students will have an opportunity to view both films during an evening screening at a time to be determined later. Students may also view the films on their own in the library. A question comparing the two films in the context of the class will appear on the final exam.

Question Time

We will frequently hold a Q&A session in which students submit questions for a class discussion. Questions must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. the class day prior to each "question time." The class will rate the questions and then discuss the answers to the top-rated questions. In addition, students will be sent an article via email on a current event related to the course. The class will discuss how the material covered in the course helps to explain the events in the article. Complete guidelines for questions are posted on Blackboard.

Final Paper

The final assignment for this course is a 6-10 page paper on the problems facing modern Russia. Students will assume the role of Putin's successor and draft a "State of the Russian Federation Address." In their address, students will have to identify the three most significant problems facing Russia, explain why these are the most pressing issues faced by Russia, and explain what their solutions are to these issues. The full guidelines for the final paper will be distributed in class. The papers will be due in class Friday, May 4.

Student Assessment and Exams

Students will be assessed on how well they are achieving the four course objectives. The first midterm will assess your knowledge of Russian history and the different theories we will use to understand post-soviet

political development. The second midterm will assess your knowledge of political institutions in post-Soviet Russia and your understanding of the challenges faced by post-Soviet Russia. The final exam will assess your ability to evaluate Russian democracy in comparison to other post-Soviet states.

FINAL GRADE

The final grade will be based on a 1000 points distributed across five different areas as follows:

Participation:	100 points	[Including Question Time and in-class participation]
First Midterm:	200 points	
Second Midterm:	200 points	
Final Paper:	300 points	
Final Exam:	200 points	

33%

The plus/minus grading system will be used based on the following percent scale:

93-100 A	90-93 A-	87-90 B+	83-87 B	80-83 B-	77-80 C+
73-77 C	70-73 C-	67-70 D+	63-67 D	60-63 D-	0-60 F

COURSE SCHEDULE

I reserve the right to make changes to this schedule as the semester develops.

I. Introduction

January 22	Introduction	Hesli, Chapter 2, pgs. 1-12 Herspring, Chapter 1
January 24	Theories of Democratization	
January 26	Historical-Cultural Theories	
January 29	Library Research Strategies (No Class)	Blackboard Tutorial — No Class

II. The History of the Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union

Three Ideologies

January 31	Marxism, Leninism, and Stalinism	Hesli, Chapter 2, pgs. 13-38
February 2	Question Time	

The Legacy of the Past

February 5	A Brief History of Russia	Hesli, Chapter 4, pgs. 39-73
February 7	Question Time	
	Film: <i>Burnt by the Sun</i>	
February 9	First Midterm	

III. Politics and Government in the Russian Federation

Nationalism in the Russian Federation

February 12	The Russian Federation	Hesli, Chapter 4, pgs. 74-107 Hesli, Chapter 5, pgs. 108-111
February 14	Putin and the Regions	Herspring, Chapter 5
February 16	Question Time	
February 19	President's Day (No Class)	

Political Culture and Democracy in the Russian Federation

February 21	Russian Political Culture	Hesli, Chapter 5, pgs. 111-122
February 23	Putin's Leadership	Herspring, Chapter 2

February 26 Putin and Russian Democracy

Herspring, Chapter 3

February 28 *Question Time**Russia's Institutions*

March 2 Russia's Governing Institutions

Hesli, Chapter 6, pgs. 123-153

March 5 Russian Political Parties

Hesli, Chapter 8, pgs. 184-207

March 7 Putin and the Opposition

Herspring, Chapter 4

March 9 No Class

The Russian People

March 12 Russian Political Participation and Public Opinion

Hesli, Chapter 7, pgs. 154-183

March 14 Russian Civil Society

Hesli, Chapter 9, pgs. 208-221

March 16 *Question Time**The Russian Economy and Public Policy*

March 19 Public Policy Issues in Russia

Hesli, Chapter 10, pgs. 232-264

March 21 Putin and the Economy

Herspring, Chapter 7

March 23 *Question Time*Film: *Brother*March 25-30 **Spring Break**April 2 **Second Midterm****IV. Politics and Government in the Post-Soviet Realm***The Baltic States*

April 4 Government and Politics of Lithuania

Hesli, Chapter 11, pgs. 265-307

April 6 *Question Time**The Slavic States*

April 9 Government and Politics of Ukraine

Hesli, Chapter 12, pgs. 308-343

April 11 Evaluating the Success of the Orange Revolution

April 13 *Question Time**The Transcaucasian Region*

April 16 Government and Politics of Georgia

Hesli, Chapter 13, pgs. 344-378

April 18 Evaluating the Success of the Rose Revolution

April 20 *Question Time**Central Asian Republics*

April 23 Government and Politics of Uzbekistan

Hesli, Chapter 14, pgs. 379-412

April 25 The Cult of Personality in Turkmenistan

April 27 *Question Time***V. Conclusion**

April 30 Putin and the World

Herspring, Chapter 9

May 2 Concluding Thoughts and *Question Time*Hesli, Epilogue
Herspring, Chapter 11May 4 "Snow Day" — An extra day for when we get behind. **Final Papers Due****Final Exam May 7, 2006 10:10-12:10 PM**