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PSC 495.01: The Post Soviet Caucasus

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FACT PACK
AND
COURSE BREAKDOWN
FOR

GEOG 495/PSC 495: The Post-Soviet Caucasus
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:40-2:00
Social Sciences Building 262

Instructor

Thomas Goltz

Department of Geography, Central & Southwest Asian Studies Program

GEOG 495/PSC 495: The Post-Soviet Caucasus

**Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:40-2:00
Social Sciences Building 262**

Instructor: **Thomas Goltz**, M.A., Visiting Scholar
Department of Geography, Central & Southwest Asian Studies Program

Thomas Goltz holds an MA in Middle Eastern Studies from New York University (1985), and is a nationally acknowledged expert on the Caucasus and Turkey. The author of three books (Azerbaijan/1998; Chechnya/2003 and Georgia/2006) and numerous feature articles on the region (which have appeared in publications as diverse as *The Washington Quarterly* and *Soldier of Fortune*), he is also an award-winning videographer, and has worked with the *BBC*, *60 Minutes* and *Nightline*. He speaks German, Turkish, Azerbaijani, Russian and some Arabic. When not teaching at UM, he lives in Livingston, Montana.

Description: The Caucasus—that funnel of land between the Caspian and Black Seas – was the ‘wild west’ of Russian imperial expansion in the 19th Century. The region has now become the ‘wild east’ of the post-Soviet period, an area where 21st century rivals such as Russia and the United States and Turkey and Iran vie for influence and economic control of the area’s resources, primarily hydro-carbons. Wracked by at least three wars of secession (Karabakh in Azerbaijan; Abkhazia in Georgia and Chechnya in the Russian Federation), the region has become a laboratory of nation building and national fragmentation. This course will be an introduction to the peoples, politics and problems of this complex part of the post-Soviet, new-Eurasian world.

Level: The course is open to students of all interests and levels, but is directed primarily at third and fourth year undergraduates specializing in geography, history, and international relations and particularly for those students with an interest in Eurasia and/or Russia. Given the background of the instructor, students of journalism are also encouraged to participate.

Materials: A standard reference book on the post-Soviet Caucasus has yet to be written, so excerpts from books, articles and papers will be made available at the reserve desk at the library. The list of readings associated with each week of the semester serves merely as a guide. A bibliography will be provided at the beginning of the class and expanded throughout the semester. Additionally, the instructor will supply collated articles and papers of significance from various periodicals for review and discussion, as well as suggest Internet resources. The classroom experience will be enhanced by the periodic use of documentary videos, and the occasional presentation by visiting experts on various aspects of Caucasian culture.