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## **RUSSIAN POLITICS & GOVERNMENT**

### **Political Science 4070**

Professor Wm A Clark  
240 Stubbs Hall  
Office: Tu & Th 1:00-2:00  
poclark@lsu.edu

Tu & Th 7:30-8:50  
116 Stubbs Hall  
Fall 2015

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### **Course Description**

This course seeks to provide a detailed introduction to politics and government in Russia, in both its Soviet and post-Soviet forms. The primary focus of the class is on domestic politics, although of necessity issues relating to Russia's external relations will also be confronted. As this course takes place, Russia is twenty-four years removed from its break from communism, marked as the latter was by an authoritarian, collectivist, and statist system based at least rhetorically on Marxism-Leninism. Russia today is a decidedly more open, more market-driven, and more liberal society than it was during its Soviet period, although its commitment to western notions of democracy and individual rights is ambiguous at best. Much of the past quarter century has involved a rather difficult political and economic transition away from the old, communist authoritarianism and toward its present political and economic identity, the true nature of which is the subject of much debate. The course will, then, focus on the politics of Soviet rule, Russia's transition from communism, the nature of the current system, and the future trajectory of change in the country.

### **Course Requirements**

Students are expected to attend class regularly and to dedicate class time to the subject matter under consideration. Each student is responsible for all materials that are presented in class lectures and in the reading assignments.

Each student shall sit for two non-cumulative examinations. The first examination will be held during the class session on Thursday, October 8 and will constitute 30 percent of the course grade. The second examination will be held during the final examination period, on Wednesday, December 9 from 7:30-9:30 a.m., and will also constitute 30 percent of the course grade.

Each student shall also sit for four (4) short, 15-question multiple-choice quizzes, two prior to the midterm exam and two after the midterm exam. Combined, these quizzes will constitute 20 percent of the course grade. These quizzes will be based exclusively on the reading assignments. Students will be notified of the date of the quizzes 1-2 class periods ahead of time.

Finally, each student will be required to write a short analytical paper (a minimum of 7 double-spaced, typed pages, or 2250 words) that assesses one of the debates captured by the reading clusters that follow at the end of the syllabus. The paper is weighted at 20 percent of the course grade. This paper is due on or before Tuesday, November 24. Late papers will be subject to a grade penalty. Further details on the essay requirements can be found at the end of this syllabus.

No extra-credit assignments will be made available.

Only bona fide (PS-22 based) excuses delivered in advance (and documented) will be deemed as acceptable reasons for missing exams or quizzes (and only such excuses will mandate a make-up exam or quiz). Link: <http://sites01.lsu.edu/wp/policiesprocedures/policies-procedures/22/>

This course is a 3-credit course. According to the LSU *General Catalog*, it is expected that students will dedicate at least 2 hours of outside work for every hour spent in class.

Link: <http://catalog.lsu.edu/content.php?catoid=2&navoid=211>

### **Required Readings:**

Martin Malia (1994). The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917-1991 (The Free Press).

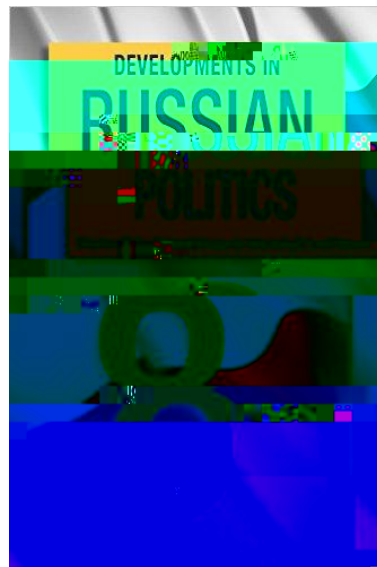
*Martin Malia was Professor of History at the University of California, Berkeley*

Stephen White, Richard Sakwa, and Henry E. Hale, editors (2014). Developments in Russian Politics 8, 8<sup>th</sup> edition (Duke University Press)

*Stephen White is Professor of Politics at the School of Slavonic, Central, and Eastern European Studies at the University of Glasgow (UK)*

*Richard Sakwa is Professor of Russian and European Politics at the University of Kent at Canterbury (UK)*

*Henry E. Hale is Associate Professor of Political Science and International Affairs at George Washington University*



## **Grading System**

Letter grades for the course will be based on the following thresholds, reflective of both LSU's new +/- grading scale and the LSU *General Catalog*, which stipulates that the various letter grades reflect the following levels of mastery of the course material. Each student will be assigned a grade

**Tu September 29**  
Nomenklatur

## **Analytical Paper Assignment**

Select a debate/controversy from the list below and write a formal, analytical paper on that theme. The basis of the paper must come from the source material provided for each controversy (all articles are available via your course Moodle page and should be read in the order listed below). Your paper should describe the nature of the debate (what are the experts arguing about and why is it important?), state the basic opposing positions in detail (paying special heed to the evidence each side brings to bear on the question and how each side confronts the evidence of the other), and adjudicate the debate (that is, come to a decision on which side of the debate has in your view presented a more compelling case, and explain on what basis that side has in your view prevailed). You may supplement the sources provided with additional material, but only if the additional material you seek to use is cited by one of the originally provided sources. This last task might require that you access published research via the “indexes and databases” link on the Middleton Library home page.

**N.B.: All papers must be submitted electronically via e-mail to the instructor**

**N.B.: All papers will be subjected to analysis by a plagiarism software program**

The paper should be:

(2) **Was Stalin a Rational Dictator?**

Vincent Barnett (2006). "Understanding Stalinism – the „Orwellian Discrepancy and the „Rational Choice Dictator ,” Europe-Asia Studies, vol. 58, no. 3: 457-466

Stephen G. Wheatcroft (2006). "Understanding Stalinism – A Reply,” Europe-Asia Studies, vol. 58, no. 7: 1141-1147

Mark Harrison (2006). "The Rational-Choice Dictator – A Reply,” Europe-Asia Studies, vol. 58, no. 7: 1148-1154

R. W. Davies (2006). "Understanding Stalinism – A Reply,” Europe-Asia Studies, vol. 58, no. 7: 1154-1156

Vincent Barnett (2007). "Stalinist Logic, Excess Mortality and the Rational Fool: A Response to Davies, Wheatcroft and Harrison,” Europe-Asia Studies, vol. 59, no. 3: 521-527

(3) **Was the USSR Reformable?**

Stephen F. Cohen (2004). "Was the Soviet System Reformable?” Slavic Review, vol. 63, no. 3: 459-488

Archie Brown (2004), "The Soviet Union: Reform of the System or Systemic Transformation,” Slavic Review, vol. 63, no. 3: 489-504

Mark Kramer (2004). "The Reform of the Soviet System and the Demise of the Soviet State,” Slavic Review, vol. 63, no. 3: 505-512

Stephen E. Hanson (2004). "Reform and Revolution in the Late Soviet Context,” Slavic Review, vol. 63, no. 3: 527-534

Karen Dawisha (2004). "The Question of Questions: Was the Soviet Union Worth Saving?” Slavic Review, vol. 63, no. 3: 513-526

Stephen F. Cohen (2004). "A Reply,” Slavic Review, vol. 63, no. 3: 553-554

(4) **Do Leninist Regimes Require Cults of Personality?**

E. A. Rees (2004). "Leader Cults: Varieties, Preconditions and Functions, pp. 3-28 in Balazs Apor, Jan C. Behrends, Polly Jones, and E. A. Rees, eds., The Leader Cult in Communist Dictatorships: Stalin and the Eastern Bloc (Palgrave Macmillan)

Robert C. Tucker (1979). "The Rise of Stalin s Personality Cult,” American Historical Review, vol. 84, no. 2: 347-366

Carol Strong & Matt Killingsworth (2011). "Stalin the Charismatic Leader? Explaining „Cult of Personality as a Legitimat. “The te,”

Jeremy T. Paltiel (1983). "The Cult of Personality: Some Comparative Reflections on Political Culture in Leninist Regimes," Studies in Comparative Communism," vol. 16, nos. 1-2: 49-64

Graeme Gill (1984). "Personality Cult, Political Culture and Party Structure," Studies in Comparative Politics," vol. 17, no. 2: 111-121

Julie A. Cassiday & Emily D. Johnson (2010). "Putin, Putiniana, and the Question of a Post-Soviet Cult of Personality," The Slavonic and East European Review, vol. 88, no. 4: 681-707

(5) **Who Rules Russia? Is There Any**

Olga Kryshchanovskaya & Stephen White (2003). "Putin's Militocracy," Post-Soviet Affairs, vol. 19, no. 4: 289-306

Ian Bremmer & Samuel Charap (2006-2007). "The Siloviki in Putin's Russia: Who Are They and What Do They Want?" The Washington Quarterly, vol. 30, no. 1: 83-92.

Andrei Illarionov (2009). "The Siloviki in Charge," Journal of Democracy, vol. 20, no. 2: 9-72

Bettina Renz (2006). "Putin's Militocracy? An Alternative Explanation of *Siloviki* in Contemporary Russian Politics," Europe-Asia Studies, vol. 58, no. 6: 903-924

Eugene Huskey (2010). "Elite Recruitment and State-Society Relations in Technocratic Authoritarian Regimes: The Russian Case," Communist and Post-Communist Studies, vol. 43, no. 4: 363-372

David W. Rivera & Sharon Werning Rivera (2014). "Is Russia a Militocracy? Conceptual Issues and Extant Findings Regarding Elite Militarization," Post-Soviet Affairs, vol. 30, no. 1: 27-50

(6)

William Zimmerman (1998). "Is Ukraine a Political Community?" Communist and Post-Communist Studies, vol. 31, no. 1: 43-55

Mark von Hagen (1995). "Does Ukraine Have a History?" Slavic Review, vol. 54, no. 3: 658-673

Serhii M. Plokhyy (1995). "The History of a „Non-Historical Nation: Notes on the Nature and Current Problems of Ukrainian Historiography," Slavic Review, vol. 54, no. 3: 709-716

Eugene B. Rumer (1994). "Eurasia Letter: Will Ukraine Return to Russia?" Foreign Policy, no 96: 129-144

Roman Szporluk (1997). "Ukraine: From an Imperial Periphery to a Sovereign State," Daedalus, vol. 126, no. 3: 85-119