

Politics of Former Soviet States

Political Science 347

Winter 2009

Prof. Scott Cooper
Email: scott_cooper@byu.edu
Phone: 422-4053
Office: 762 Kimball Tower

9-9:50 pm MWF
346 MARB

Office Hours: Mon 10-11, Tues 10-11, Wed 10-11, Fri 10-11, or by appointment

If you can't come during my office hours, contact me to set up another time. Don't be afraid to come see me. My job is not to avoid you and try to fail you. My job is to explain things and help you understand. I like my job.

Prerequisites:

Poli Sci 150 or 350 recommended
Poli Sci 200 recommended

Knowledge of the Russian language is *not* a prerequisite, but we will use some Russian terms (e.g., perestroika) to describe key events and concepts. If I use a term in lecture you are not familiar with, please remind me to write it on the board and define it.

Subject Matter and Course Goals:

This course examines the politics of all fifteen newly independent countries that emerged from the disintegration of the Soviet Union. These are an incredibly diverse group on many dimensions—including size and power, economic conditions, political behavior and institutions, geography, religion, language, and culture—but they can be studied together because of their common heritage within the Soviet Union, and, for most, within the Russian Empire. We will begin by looking at their common history, but the bulk of our time will be spent comparing these countries' post-Soviet transformations. What kinds of political structures have they adopted? What have been the patterns of politics? How have their economies and societies changed over the past decade and a half of independence? At the same time, we must also consider the interaction between these formerly united republics. What are the patterns of conflict and cooperation? What ties have they formed with Russia, the dominant regional power, and with countries beyond the borders of the old Soviet Union?

Notice that this is *not* a course exclusively in Russian politics, although Russia will be our foremost concern. This will be a course in comparative politics, emphasizing similarities and differences across the full spectrum of Soviet successor states. We will obviously only scratch the surface of many interesting and important issues, but the goal is to help you acquire a foundation for continued study of this fascinating region throughout your life.

Grading:

10%	Exam 1
30%	Exam 2
30%	Final Exam
15%	Participation and Reading Response Essays
15%	Short Paper

All **Exams** are given in class. Exams will consist primarily of short answer and short essay questions. In preparing for exams, general understanding is useful, but does not substitute for a firm grasp of the details. You will need to pay close attention to both lectures and readings to do well on exams. Notice that, according to BYU policy, “satisfactory” or “average” work merits a C grade. Only “good” or “excellent” work merits higher grades.

Because the course is organized so that later topics build on earlier topics, all the exams will be comprehensive: each exam will require you to have integrated all the previous materials in the course. However, the focus of each exam, including the final, will be the most recent material. You may not use cellphones or electronic devices during exams. Remember also that according to BYU policy the final exam *cannot* be given early; please make your travel plans accordingly.

You are required to turn in 12 **Reading Response Essays**—6 on Russia and 6 on the other countries. Specific dates and topics will be announced in class. Each essay should be about 1½ pages (typed and double spaced). The goal is to help you in your preparation, so that you will be better able to participate in our class discussions. As a result, *each assignment is due in class* on the day indicated in the syllabus: late assignments cannot be accepted (even if your computer crashes or car breaks down). You will be able to choose which assignments to complete, but it is your responsibility to make sure that you turn in all twelve. I encourage you to start turning in assignments early in the semester, in case unforeseen circumstances force you to skip later assignments.

This course will also include opportunities for class discussion of these important issues and ideas. Regular preparation for and participation in class discussions is crucial to your learning. For this reason, I will evaluate **Participation** (on a -1 to +3 scale) to encourage everyone to join our discussions. As with the exams, quality will outweigh quantity.

Attendance in class is expected. I will not take attendance every day, but may do so at any time. If you are unable to be in class for non-voluntary reasons (i.e., illness, death in the family, BYU travel, etc.), please send me a brief email or voicemail explaining why you were unable to be in class.

The **Short Paper** is intended to help you become a “country expert” on a country, other than Russia, that you are not already familiar with. You may *not* write on a country in which you have lived—e.g., a country where you served an LDS mission. You will sign up for one of the fourteen post-Soviet states (other than Russia). Topics will include economic policy, security policy,

democratization, national identity formation, and human rights. Papers should be about 8 pages and should make explicit comparisons to Russia or other countries in the region. Deadlines will be staggered according to when we discuss your country in class.

Finally, you should remember that all forms of **cheating**—including **plagiarism**—are grave violations of the standards of any university. In my time at BYU, I have had to give failing grades as a result of academic dishonesty, and I will do so again if necessary. BYU's Academic Honesty Policy is in the catalog and on the web at <http://honorcode.byu.edu>. If you have any questions about what constitutes academic honesty in this class, please don't hesitate to ask me.

Readings:

The reading load for this course is heavy. You should **expect to read about 150 pages per week**. All readings should be done *before* class. There will be 2 required books:

Richard Sakwa, *Russian Politics and Society*, 4th ed., 2008 (Routledge)

M. Wesley Shoemaker, *Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States 2008*, 39th ed., 2007 (Stryker-Post)

There will also be a painfully large, 2-part packet of required readings available at the JFSB copy center (B115 JFSB).

Other University Policies:

Federal law and BYU policy provide protections for students against sexual discrimination and harassment (including student-to-student harassment) and also require reasonable accommodation of students with disabilities. If you feel you have encountered sexual harassment or discrimination, please talk to me, the Equal Employment Office (422-5895), or the Honor Code Office (422-2847). If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (422-2767) and discuss it with me.

PART ONE: SOVIET HERITAGE

- Jan 5 Introduction, Syllabus
- Jan 7 Rise and Fall of the Russian Empire
Shoemaker pp. 1-28
- Jan 9 Revolution and Lenin
Shoemaker pp. 28-37
- Jan 12 Soviet Politics Under Stalin
Shoemaker pp. 37-60
- Jan 14 Soviet Politics After Stalin
Donald Kelley, *Politics in Russia*, 1999, ch. 5
- Jan 16 Soviet Economy
Shoemaker pp. 60-77, 101-7
- Jan 19 No Class: Holiday
- Jan 21 Gorbachev's Revolution
Sakwa pp. 9-39
- Jan 23 Disintegration of the USSR
Shoemaker pp. 77-78, 128-31

Henry Hale, "The Makeup and Breakup of Ethnofederal States,"
Perspectives on Politics, March 2005
- Jan 26 **EXAM 1 (beginning of class!)**
Commonwealth of Independent States
Shoemaker pp. 131-37
Sakwa ch. 18

PART TWO: RUSSIAN POLITICS

- Jan 28 Russian Constitution
Shoemaker pp. 78-86

David Brooker, "Founding Presidents of Soviet Successor States,"
Demokratizatsiya, Winter 2004

- Jan 30 Presidency: Yeltsin
 Sakwa ch. 6
- Lee Hockstader, “Rough-Hewn Father of Russian Democracy,”
 Washington Post, 24 April 2007
- The Onion*, “Society for Creative Anachronism Seizes Control of Russia,”
 26 May 1999
- Feb 2 Presidency: Putin
 Shoemaker pp. 86-93
 Sakwa pp. 96-102
- Richard Sakwa, “Regime Change From Yeltsin to Putin,” in *Russian
 Politics Under Putin*, 2004
- Dmitri Trenin, “The Legacy of Vladimir Putin,” *Current History*, October
 2007
- Zbigniew Brzezinski, “Putin’s Choice,” *Washington Quarterly*, Spring
 2008
- Feb 4 Presidency: Medvedev and Putin
 Catherine Belton, “Anointed Enigma,” *Financial Times*, 28 February 2008
- Philip Pan and Howard Schneider, “Russia Amends Constitution to
 Extend Presidential Term,” *Washington Post*, 30 December 2008
- Kathryn Stoner-Weiss, “It Is Still Putin’s Russia,” *Current History*,
 October 2008
- Feb 6 Parliament and Parties
 Sakwa pp. 128-29, 136-49, 164-69, 174-83, ch. 9
- Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, “The Rise of Competitive
 Authoritarianism,” *Journal of Democracy*, April 2002
- Feb 9 Center vs. Regions
 Sakwa ch. 11-12

- Feb 11 Chechnya
Shoemaker pp. 4-6, 87-88
- BBC News, "Timeline: Chechnya"
- Anatol Lieven, "Nightmare in the Caucasus," *Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2000
- Pavel Baev, "Has Russia Achieved Victory in Its War Against Terror?" *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 2006
- Feb 13 Government and Economic Policy
Sakwa ch. 13, pp. 83-91, 314-28
- Jerry Hough, *The Logic of Economic Reform in Russia*, 2001, ch. 2
- Feb 16 No Class: Holiday
- Feb 17/Tues No Class: Cooper Travel
- Feb 18 Privatization and Statism
Shoemaker pp. 115-17, 123-26
- Marshall Goldman, "Render Unto Caesar: Putin and the Oligarchs," *Current History*, October 2003
- Peter Lavelle, "What Does Putin Want?" *Current History*, October 2004
- Peter Finn, "Kremlin Inc. Widening Control Over Industry," *Washington Post*, 19 November 2006
- Marshall Goldman, "Moscow's New Economic Imperialism," *Current History*, October 2008
- Feb 20 Russian Economy in Comparative Perspective
Andrei Shleifer and Daniel Treisman, "A Normal Country," *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2004
- Peter Leeson and William Trumbull, "Comparing Apples," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, July-September 2006
- Feb 23 Exam Review
- Feb 25 **EXAM 2**

- Feb 27 Foreign Policy
Sakwa ch. 16
- Andrei Tsygankov, "Vladimir Putin's Vision of Russia as a Normal Great Power," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, April-June 2005
- Quentin Peel, "How Russia is Reasserting Itself," *Financial Times*, 31 July 2007
- Mar 2 Foreign Policy in the Near Abroad
Sakwa pp. 226-35
- Svante Cornell, "War in Georgia, Jitters All Around," *Current History*, October 2008
- Andrei Kazantsev, "Russian Policy in Central Asia and the Caspian Sea Region," *Europe-Asia Studies*, August 2008
- Mar 4 Media
Sakwa pp. 345-49
- Masha Lipman, "Constrained or Irrelevant," *Current History*, October 2005
- Jonathan Becker, "Lessons from Russia," *European Journal of Communication*, June 2004
- Mar 6 National Identity and Public Opinion
Sakwa pp. 207-26, 352-59
- Richard Pipes, "Flight From Freedom: What Russians Think and Want," *Foreign Affairs*, 2004
- Jonas Bernstein, "Almost Two-thirds of Russians Believe Democracy is the Best Political System," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 16 January 2008

PART THREE: POLITICS IN THE NEAR ABROAD

- Mar 9 Baltic Politics and Foreign Policy
Wayne Thompson, *Nordic, Central, and Southeastern Europe*, 2007, pp. 111-19, 149-62 (Baltics, Lithuania)

James Kurth, "Between Russia and the West," *Current History*, October 1999

Daniel Hamilton, "Still Punching Above Their Weight," *Current History*, March 2008
- Mar 11 Baltic Ethnic Politics
Wayne Thompson, *Nordic, Central, and Southeastern Europe*, 2007, pp. 138-48 (Latvia)

David Laitin, "The Four Nationality Games and Soviet Politics," *Journal of Soviet Nationalities*, Spring 1991 [1992]
- Mar 13 Baltic Economic Transition
Wayne Thompson, *Nordic, Central, and Southeastern Europe*, 2007, pp. 120-37 (Estonia)

R. A. Panagiotou, "Estonia's Success: Prescription or Legacy," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, September 2001
- Mar 16 Schizophrenic Ukraine
Shoemaker pp. 151-71

Rawi Abdelal, "Memories of Nations and States," *Nationalities Papers*, September 2002
- Mar 18 Ukraine: Orange Revolution
Mark Kramer, "Ukraine's Orange Evolution," *Current History*, March 2008

Michael McFaul, "Ukraine Imports Democracy," *International Security*, Fall 2007
- Mar 20 Belarus: Europe's Last Dictatorship
Shoemaker pp. 138-50
Sakwa pp. 438-39

Grigory Ioffe, "Understanding Belarus," *Europe-Asia Studies*, January 2004

- Mar 23 Divided Moldova
 Shoemaker pp. 172-83
 William Crowther, "Moldova, Transnistria, and the PCRM's Turn to the West," *East European Quarterly*, Fall 2007
- Mar 25 Central Asian State-Building
 Shoemaker pp. 268-79 (Uzbekistan)
 Edward Walker, "Islam, Islamism, and Political Order in Central Asia," *Journal of International Affairs*, 2003
- Mar 27 Central Asian Clans
 Shoemaker pp. 236-57 (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan)
 Kathleen Collins, "Clans, Pacts, and Politics in Central Asia," *Journal of Democracy*, July 2002
- Mar 30 Central Asian Economies
 Shoemaker pp. 224-35 (Kazakhstan)
 Martin Spechler, "The Economies of Central Asia," *Comparative Economic Studies*, March 2008
- Apr 1 Central Asian Oil
 Shoemaker pp. 258-67 (Turkmenistan)
 Michael Ross, "Does Oil Hinder Democracy?" *World Politics*, April 2001
- Apr 3 Central Asian Development
- Apr 6 Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh
 Shoemaker pp. 184-97, 203
 Razmik Panossian, "The Irony of Nagorno-Karabakh," *Regional & Federal Studies*, Autumn 2001
- Apr 8 Azerbaijan's Monarchy
 Shoemaker pp. 198-210
 Mehran Kamrava, "State-Building in Azerbaijan," *Middle East Journal*, Spring 2001

- Apr 10 Georgia and Ethnic Conflict
Shoemaker pp. 211-23
- Svante Cornell, "Autonomy as a Source of Conflict," *World Politics*,
January 2002
- Apr 13 On the Road to Democracy?
Stephen White, "Rethinking Postcommunist Transition," *Government and
Opposition*, Autumn 2003
- Apr 18 **8 am: FINAL EXAM** (note delayed start time)
(Saturday)