Course Description: The course will examine the history and politics of the country that arguably had the greatest impact on twentieth-century politics—the Soviet Union—and of the Russian Federation that emerged from it in 1991. In the first half of the course, we will study the Russian Revolution and the emergence of a totalitarian state under Lenin and Stalin, de-Stalinization under Khrushchev, “the era of stagnation” under Brezhnev, and the reforms initiated by Gorbachev that culminated in the collapse of communism as an ideological and political movement. In the second half of the course, we will examine Russia’s failed transition from authoritarianism to democracy during the presidencies of Boris Yeltsin, Vladimir Putin, and Dmitrii Medvedev. In particular, we will examine Putin’s creation of a “militocracy,” as it is called, and debate whether that development represents the most convincing explanation of Russia’s reversion to autocracy. A guiding theme of the course will be the role played by political leadership in the evolution of Russian politics.

Required Readings:
Most of the readings for the course will be drawn from the following texts, which are recommended for purchase. All of them are available in the college bookstore.


A small number of additional readings will be placed on reserve. Specific reading assignments and a schedule of topics will be distributed on a weekly basis.

Grading Policy:
Final grades will be computed on the following basis:
Written Assignments – 34%
Midterm Exam – 33%
Final Exam – 33%

Assignments: This class will require numerous short writing assignments. More information about them will be distributed over the course of the semester. In total, roughly twenty-five pages of writing will be required.

Exams: The exams will be designed to measure your familiarity with the ideas, concepts, and facts contained in both the readings and lectures. Make-up exams will not
be held, thus it is imperative that you be present for the exams. The midterm will be held on October 13. The final exam will be held on December 16. Please make sure to keep these dates in mind when making any travel plans.

Class Participation: Your participation in class discussions will not be formally graded, but your contributions to those discussions will play some role in my determination of final grades. Specifically, if your cumulative numerical score falls at the cusp between two letter grades, then my assessment of the quantity and quality of those contributions will determine whether your score is assigned to the higher or lower letter grade. Hence, it is highly recommended that you do the readings before each class in order to be able to recount their main arguments and comment critically on them.

Department Policy on Learning Outcomes
See http://fhssadv.byu.edu/Advisement/polisci1.dhtml.

University Policy on Plagiarism
While all students sign the honor code, there are still specific skills most students need to master over time in order to correctly cite sources, especially in this new age of the internet; as well as deal with the stress and strain of college life without resorting to cheating. Please know that as your professor I will notice instances of cheating on exams or plagiarizing on papers. General information about the honor code can be found at honorcode.byu.edu. Details about Academic Honesty are found at http://saas.byu.edu/catalog/2009-2010ucat/GeneralInfo/HonorCode.php#HCOfficeInvovement.

Writing submitted for credit at BYU must consist of the student's own ideas presented in sentences and paragraphs of his or her own construction. The work of other writers or speakers may be included when appropriate (as in a research paper or book review), but such material must support the student's own work (not substitute for it) and must be clearly identified by appropriate introduction and punctuation and by footnoting or other standard referencing.

The substitution of another person's work for the student's own or the inclusion of another person's work without adequate acknowledgment (whether done intentionally or not) is known as plagiarism. It is a violation of academic, ethical, and legal standards and can result in a failing grade not only for the paper but also for the course in which the paper is written. In extreme cases, it can justify expulsion from the University. Because of the seriousness of the possible consequences, students who wonder if their papers are within these guidelines should visit the Writing Lab or consult a faculty member who specializes in the teaching of writing or who specializes in the subject discussed in the paper. Useful books to consult on the topic include the current Harbrace College Handbook, the MLA Handbook, and James D. Lester's Writing Research Papers.

University Policy on Discrimination
Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds.
The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education. Title IX covers discrimination in programs, admissions, activities, and student-to-student sexual harassment. BYU’s policy against sexual harassment extends not only to employees of the university but to students as well. If you encounter unlawful sexual harassment or gender based discrimination, please talk to your professor; contact the Equal Employment Opportunities Office at 422-5895 or 367-5689 (24-hours); or contact the Honor Code Office at 422-2847.

University Policy on Disabilities

Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere which reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the University Accessibility Center (422-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the UAC office. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal Employment Opportunity Office at 422-5895, D-282 ASB.