Politics of Former Soviet States
Political Science 347
Winter 2011

Prof. Scott Cooper
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Office Hours: 1:30 - 2:15 Mon/Wed, 10-11 Tu/Th, 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 that 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. 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), 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, human rights, and so on. 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:


M. Wesley Shoemaker, Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States 2010, 41st ed., 2010 (Stryker-Post)

There will also be a painfully large packet of required readings available on Blackboard or 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

*Remember: Reading questions for every reading are on Blackboard.*

Jan 5    Introduction, Syllabus

Jan 7    Rise and Fall of the Russian Empire
         Shoemaker pp. 1-29

Jan 10   Revolution and Lenin
         Shoemaker pp. 29-37

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 17   No Class: Holiday

Jan 19   Soviet Economy
         Shoemaker pp. 60-78, 102-8

Jan 21   Gorbachev’s Revolution
         Sakwa pp. 9-39

Jan 24   Disintegration of the USSR
         Shoemaker pp. 130-33
         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. 133-39
         Sakwa ch. 18

PART TWO: RUSSIAN POLITICS

Jan 28   Russian Constitution
         Sakwa pp. 40-53, 63-65, 105-8
         David Brooker, “Founding Presidents of Soviet Successor States,”
         *Demokratizatsiya*, Winter 2004
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Sources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 31</td>
<td>Presidency: Yeltsin</td>
<td>Sakwa pp. 108-25</td>
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<td><em>The Onion</em>, “Society for Creative Anachronism Seizes Control of Russia,” 26 May 1999</td>
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<td>Feb 2</td>
<td>Presidency: Putin</td>
<td>Shoemaker pp. 86-93</td>
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<td>Sakwa pp. 96-102</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Richard Sakwa, “Regime Change From Yeltsin to Putin,” in <em>Russian Politics Under Putin</em>, 2004</td>
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<td>Feb 7</td>
<td>Parliament and Parties</td>
<td>Sakwa ch. 9, pp. 128-29, 136-49, 164-69, 174-83</td>
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</table>
Feb 9  Center vs. Regions  
Sakwa ch. 11-12

Feb 11  Chechnya  
Shoemaker pp. 5-7, 87-88

BBC News, “Timeline: Chechnya”


Pavel Baev, “Has Russia Achieved Victory in Its War Against Terror?” Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2006

Feb 14  Government and Economic Policy  
Sakwa ch. 13, pp. 83-91, 314-29

Jerry Hough, The Logic of Economic Reform in Russia, 2001, ch. 2

Feb 16  Privatization and Statism  
Shoemaker pp. 116-20, 125-27


Feb 18  Russian Economy in Comparative Perspective  


Neil Buckley, “Investing in Russia: Economy: Investment and Reform Remain Key to Growth,” Financial Times, 30 September 2010
Feb 21  No Class: Holiday

Feb 22  Exam Review
(Tuesday)

Feb 23  **EXAM 2**

Feb 25  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

Feb 28  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 2   Media
       Sakwa pp. 345-49

       Masha Lipman, “Constrained or Irrelevant,” *Current History*, October
       2005

       Communication*, June 2004

Mar 4   National Identity and Public Opinion
       Sakwa pp. 207-26, 352-54

       *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 7  Baltic Politics and Foreign Policy

James Kurth, “Between Russia and the West,” *Current History*, Oct 1999


Mar 9  Baltic Ethnic Politics


Mar 11  Baltic Economic Transition
Wayne Thompson, *Nordic, Central, and Southeastern Europe*, 2007, pp. 120-37 (Estonia)


Mar 14  Schizophrenic Ukraine
Shoemaker pp. 154-76


Mar 16  Ukraine: Beyond the Orange Revolution


Neil Buckley and Roman Olearchyk, “Ukraine: A Nation on Guard,” *Financial Times*, 20 October 2010

Mark Rachkevych, “In 2010, Yanukovych Takes Complete Control,” *Kyiv Post*, 23 December 2010
Mar 18         Belarus: Europe’s Last Dictatorship
               Shoemaker pp. 140-53
               Sakwa pp. 438-39

               Grigory Ioffe, “Understanding Belarus,” Europe-Asia Studies, January 2004

               Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty, “Has Moscow Had Enough of Belarus’s Lukashenka?” RFERL.org, 19 July 2010

Mar 21         Divided Moldova
               Shoemaker pp. 177-90

               William Crowther, “Moldova, Transnistria, and the PCRM’s Turn to the West,” East European Quarterly, Fall 2007

               Diana Toma and Markus Salzmann, “Political Crisis in Moldova Intensifies After Election,” World Socialist Web Site, 14 December 2010

Mar 23         Central Asian State-Building
               Shoemaker pp. 278-89 (Uzbekistan)


Mar 25         Central Asian Clans
               Shoemaker pp. 245-67 (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan)


               Philip Pan, “Russia Is Said to Have Fueled Unrest in Kyrgyzstan,” Washington Post, 12 April 2010

Mar 28         Central Asian Economies
               Shoemaker pp. 233-44 (Kazakhstan)

Mar 30  Central Asian Oil  
  Shoemaker pp. 268-77 (Turkmenistan)  
  Michael Ross, “Does Oil Hinder Democracy?” *World Politics*, April 2001

Apr 1  Central Asian Development

Apr 4  Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh  
  Shoemaker pp. 191-205, 211  

Apr 6  Azerbaijan’s Monarchy  
  Shoemaker pp. 206-218  

Apr 8  Georgia and Ethnic Conflict  
  Shoemaker pp. 219-32  
  Ghia Nodia, “Georgia Gets a More Democratic Constitution, Though the Process Is Not Perfect,” *RFE/RL.org*, 19 October 2010  
  Daisy Sindelar, “As Corruption Rises Worldwide, Georgia Proves the Exception,” *RFE/RL.org*, 9 December 2010

Apr 11  On the Road to Democracy?  

Apr 13  Exam Review

Apr 18  **8 am: FINAL EXAM** (note delayed start time)