

**PO SC 471 Russian Politics**  
**Fall 2009**  
**Dr. Aron G. Tannenbaum**  
**Clemson University**

**1. Class meeting times:**

- Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00 – 12:15
- Riggs 219

**2. How to contact the instructor:**

- Office: Brackett 230
- Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30 – 10:30 am
- And by appointment
- Email: [atannen@clermson.edu](mailto:atannen@clermson.edu)
- Office phone: NA. Students should use email as the primary method of contacting the instructor. In an emergency, contact the political science department office, 864-656-3233, but only in an emergency. To talk with the instructor by phone, send him an email with your phone number and two exact times for him to call you back

**3. Course description**

Russia is a very old country but a very new state. Russia the country entered world history more than a thousand years ago. Russia the state, however, was created only in 1992 out of the rubble of the collapse of its predecessor, the Soviet Union. This course examines the new Russian state.

Why study Russian politics? Because we can learn a great deal about the meaning of the term “political.” The most fundamental acts of political creation are taking place there before our eyes. Having rejected Soviet totalitarianism, the peoples of Russia are trying to create new political institutions, analogous to the acts of political creation that were undertaken by the American Founders in 1776. We are eyewitnesses, as well as indirect participants, in the efforts of the Russians to figure out how to create and govern their “new” country.

Twice in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Russian peoples have to reconstruct their political and social life after the catastrophic collapse of their old order. In 1917 the Tsarist Russian Empire collapsed and was replaced by the Soviet Union. In 1991 the Soviet Union collapsed. Out of its wreckage came the Russian Federation and 14 other newborn countries. This course examines these two collapses, and the two rebuildings that followed, analyzing their causes and consequences. The course pays particular attention to the aftermath of the Soviet collapse and asks the following questions: what are Russians doing to rebuild their political lives? What should they be doing? And what are they capable of doing?

Students studying American politics are accustomed to seeing settled constitutional arrangements, agreed-upon national borders, a relatively stable economy and society, and well-understood cultural values and traditions. Contemporary Russia has none of these features. There, the most fundamental questions concerning the size and shape of the country, its constitutional structure and distribution of political power, the structure of its economy, and even the fundamental values by which life should be lived, are being decided before our very eyes.

#### 4. Course goals

- Observe and analyze the death-throes of an old (Soviet) civilization and the birth-pangs of a new (post-Soviet) civilization
- Investigate the relationship between capitalism, democracy and socialism, in Russia and in general
- Analyze the relationship between economic and political change, in Russia and in general
- Further develop students' academic skills, including
  - Classroom participation
  - Finding the main point in advanced social science writing
  - Conducting research
  - Writing essays

#### 5. Course requirements and grading system

25%	Mid-term take-home essay exam
25%	Five announced in-class quizzes (lowest grade dropped)
25%	Research paper (various due dates)
25%	Final take-home exam

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100%

Extra credit assignments are available

#### 6. Books and materials:

- **Required:**

- McAuley, Mary. *Soviet Politics 1917-1991*. Oxford Univ. Press, 1992. ISBN 0-19-878067-2, paper
- Remington, Thomas. *Politics in Russia*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Longman 2010. ISBN 13: 978-0-205-70491-0 paperback
- Lucas, Edward. *The New Cold War: Putin's Russia and the Threat to the West*, rev. and updated. Palgrave Macmillan 2009. ISBN 13: 978-0-230-61434-5 paperback.
- Other required readings will be made available on the internet

- **Recommended:**

- Daily perusal of an internet news site such as
  - [www.themoscowtimes.com](http://www.themoscowtimes.com)
  - [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)
- Occasional perusal of an internet analytic site such as
  - [www.cdi.org/russia](http://www.cdi.org/russia) [Center for Defense Information, a Washington think-tank]
  - <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/> [Russia in Global Affairs, a Russian publication]
  - [www.carnegie.ru/en](http://www.carnegie.ru/en)
  - [www.foreignaffairs.org](http://www.foreignaffairs.org) [A mainline American foreign affairs organization]
  - [www.foreignpolicy.com](http://www.foreignpolicy.com)

## 7. Attendance

- Class starts promptly at 11 am. Excessive lateness will be counted as a cut.
- Cuts: each student is allowed to miss up to three (3) class sessions for any or no reason without penalty. Students should husband these cuts and not use them up all at once or for trivial reasons.
- Excused absences: a student who misses a class for a valid and reasonable cause will not have that absence counted as a cut. Such reasons include, but are not limited to mandatory attendance at other university events, serious illness, religious observance, court appearances, etc. If asked, the student must present some documentation of the reason for missing the class in order to receive an excused absence. The instructor decides whether or not a given excuse is valid. If the instructor decides that the excuse is not valid, the absence counts as a cut. Remember, only three cuts are allowed.
- If the flu strikes you, do not come to class until a medical person says it is safe, both for you and for the rest of the class. No flu absence counts as a cut.
- At the end of the semester, if a student has accumulated more than three cuts, the student's final course grade will be reduced by one mark for each cut more than three. For instance, if a student's final course grade would have been A minus, the grade will be lowered to B plus for four cuts, B for five cuts, and so on.
- Students must sign the attendance sheet each class day. If the sheet is not signed, the day counts as a cut.
- Students must wait for ten minutes if the instructor is late for class.
- Students with disabilities which may affect their classroom attendance, seating, or performance should notify the instructor at the start of the semester.
- Students must sit in assigned seats. Students needing special seating should inform the instructor at the start of the semester.

## 8. Classroom decorum

- Arrive on time in the classroom; do not come in late ,especially not habitually
- Do not start packing up books to leave until the instructor dismisses the class
- Mute or turn off cell phones / pagers as the class begins
- Do not use cell phones / pagers in class
- As tempting as it may sometimes be, please refrain from playing games on laptops or cell phones during class
- When speaking, disagree with what a person says but not with the person him/herself
- Do not bring instruments of violence into the classroom: guns, knives, chains, paddles, etc.
- Keep all research materials until your final grade is published
- The instructor reserves the right to inspect all research materials

**9. Important dates for PO SC 471, Fall 2009**

August 20	Thursday	First class meeting
August 25	Tuesday	Last day to add courses
September 1	Tuesday	Last day to drop a course w/o a W grade
September 8	Tuesday	Last day to order diploma for May commencement
<b>September 10</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>First quiz</b>
<b>September 24</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Second quiz</b>
September 24	Thursday	Mid-term take-home essay handed out
September 29	Tuesday	5 pm deadline to submit first drafts of essay via email
September 30	Wednesday	12 N instructor returns first drafts via email with comments
<b>October 1</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Mid-term take-home essay due in</b>
October 2	Friday	Last day for instructors to issue midterm evaluations
<b>October 8</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Third quiz</b>
October 9	Friday	Last day to drop a class or withdraw from the university w/o final grades
October 29	Thursday	<b>Fourth quiz</b>
October 12-13	Monday - Tuesday	Fall break, no classes
November 2	Monday	Registration for fall semester starts
<b>November 19</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Fifth quiz</b>
Nov 25 – 27	Wed - Friday	Thanksgiving vacation
December 3	Thursday	Last day of class
December 3	Thursday	Final take-home essay exam handed out
December 9	Wednesday	<b>Final take-home essay due in, 3 pm</b>

## 10. Reading assignments Alt 2

Note: The reading assignments below are subject to change by addition, deletion, or substitution.

### Part I: Political History of the Soviet Experiment, 1917 - 1991

#### 1. Rise of the Soviet Union, 1917 – 1960s

**Questions: What was the “Soviet Experiment?” What was it like at its peak?**

Overview

Remington, chpt 2, pp 31 – 47

Lenin and the Bolsheviks

McAuley Introduction and chapters 1, 2

Stalin and the “Revolution From Above”

McAuley, chpts 3, 4

Khrushchev and the first Soviet reform attempt

McAuley, chpt 5

George Kennan, “The Russian Revolution Fifty Years After: Its Nature and Consequences,”

*Foreign Affairs* 46:1 October 1967

#### 2. Stagnation and Collapse, 1970s – 1991

**Questions: Why did the Soviet Union collapse? Why was its collapse so unexpected?**

Brezhnev and the Gerontocracy: Stagnation

McAuley, chpt 6

Gorbachev and the second Soviet reform attempt

Remington, chpt 2, pp 47 – 50

McAuley, chpt 7, 8

Gorbachev and Yeltsin and the dual of two states

Remington, chpt 2, pp 50 – 54

McAuley, conclusion

Michael Mandelbaum, “Coup de Grace: The End of the Soviet Union,” in *Foreign Affairs*

71:1 1991/1992

#### 3. Soviet Foreign Policy During the Cold War, Late 1940s – Late 1980s

**Question: What was the Cold War all about?**

X [George Kennan], “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” *Foreign Affairs* July 1947

Vladimir Batyuk, “The End of the Cold War [A Russian View],” *History Today*, 49: 4,

April 1999

**Part 2: The New Russian State, 1992 – Present (With Comparisons to the Soviet Experience)**

**4. Introduction to the new Russian state**

**Questions: Is Russia a new democratic state in Europe? Or a diminished continuation of the old Soviet Union? Or something else?**

Remington, chpt 1, “State and Regime in Russia”

Remington, chpt 3, “Russia’s Constitutional Order”

Lucas, chpt 1, “Putin’s Rise to Power”

Lucas, chpt 2, “Putin in Power”

C.J. Chivers, “With Lenin’s Ideas Dead, What to Do With His Body?” *New York Times*, October 5, 2005

Steven Lee Myers, “Still the Tyrant, Stalin Refuses to be Wished Away,” *New York Times*, May 4, 2005

Eleanor Randolph, “Ultimate Soviet Henchman Returns to His Pedestal,” *New York Times*, November 20, 2005

**5. Russian Political Culture**

**Question: What are the underlying values and attitudes of Russians toward politics?**

Remington, chpt 5, “Political Culture and National Identity”

Lucas, chpt 5, “The ‘New Tsarism’: What Makes Russia’s Leaders Tick?”

**6. Political Participation**

**Questions: Who takes part in politics in Russia? How do they take part? And why?**

Remington, chpt 4, “Political Participation and Recruitment”

Remington, chpt 6, “Interest Groups and Political Parties”

Lucas, chpt 3, “Sinister Pretense: The Kremlin’s Use of State Power Against Dissent”

**7. The State, the Market, and the Law**

**Questions: Why are Russians having such difficulty in establishing a law-based state? A market-based state?**

Remington, chpt 7, “Between State and Market”

Remington, chpt 8, “Politics and the Law”

Lucas, chpt 4, “Why Money is Russia’s Greatest Strength and Our Greatest Weakness”

**8. Russian Foreign Policy**

**Questions: Is Putin’s Russia seeking to become a normal European state? Or is it seeking to resurrect the old Soviet Union? Or something else?**

Remington, chpt 9, “Russia as Regional Superpower”

Lucas, chpts 6 – 9 (selections to be announced)

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