COURSE OBJECTIVES

What happens to a global superpower once it collapses? How does a European backwater become a global superpower in the first place? Can democracy take root in a country, like Russia, with such a long history of authoritarian and totalitarian rule?

This course focuses on politics in the Russian Federation. It briefly introduces the student to the politics of the Soviet Union and addresses the fundamental changes that have occurred in Russia, the largest and most important country to emerge from the breakup of the USSR. As the core of the former Soviet Union, current problems in Russia highlight the various economic, political and social difficulties that have accompanied the region's transition away from Soviet rule. While Russia had made more progress toward a democratic political system and a capitalist economy than several former Soviet republics during the 1990s (like Belarus, Ukraine and the Central Asian states), economic and political freedoms have since declined substantially. How can we understand these developments? The course provides students a foundation for answering this difficult question.

The course begins by covering early Soviet-era politics, the major political and social events that occurred during Soviet rule, and the economic and political reforms under Gorbachev. Following a discussion of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the course focuses on the initial struggle for power in post-Soviet Russia and the origins and evolution of its political institutions. After establishing the institutional framework structuring Russian politics, the course turns to the various political challenges that faced post-Soviet Russia under Yeltsin as well as those that confront Russia today. This survey will include comparisons of how Russia’s political institutions, policies, and place in the world have changed over time. As a Comparative Politics (CPO) course, there will be a regular attempt to places these developments in comparative perspective.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students are responsible for all materials in the lectures and readings as well as any handouts (electronic or otherwise). A significant portion of the material that will be covered in class cannot be found in the assigned readings. Likewise, many aspects of the assigned readings will not be covered in class. Thus, while the lectures and readings will complement one another,
students are required to regularly attend class and do the assigned readings ahead of time. The following components will determine final course grades:

1. Class attendance and in-class participation, worth 20% of the final course grade;
2. Two examinations, each is worth 40% of the final course grade (80% total).

The required reading for the course comes from:
2. Online journal articles and other electronic resources.

Using scholarly journal articles keeps the course content current while the electronic option keeps the costs of the material for the course to a minimum.

You can locate the readings yourself by using the internet and the University of Florida's library, including its website (http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/). However, to ease the burden, I have created a project site for the course on e-Learning (https://lss.at.ufl.edu/) and have uploaded the required reading there.

**Persons with Disabilities**

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Anyone with a disability should feel free to see me during office hours to make the necessary arrangements.

**POLICIES**

**Policies on Attendance, Participation, Cell Phones, and Laptops**

Since class discussions and lectures often add new concepts, ideas, and interpretations to the material covered in the reading that students will be responsible for knowing, it is in your best interest to attend every class and to arrive on time. All cell phones and computers should be silenced before class begins. Their use should be approved class purposes only (e.g., taking notes, reviewing the reading, etc.). Violations of these policies may constitute disruptive behavior.

Higher attendance rates and more frequent (and higher quality) participation will yield better attendance and participation grades:

- 19-20%: Reflects perfect attendance as well as frequent participation revealing knowledge of the assigned readings;
- 12-18%, Indicates that a student attended 60-90% of class sessions with occasional (rather than frequent) participation about the topic being discussed and not necessarily based on the assigned readings (e.g., personal experience or reflection)
- 6-11%: Signifies that a student attended 60% or less of class sessions. (The frequency of participation is not considered in this score because attendance is too limited.)
- 0-5%: Reflects a failure to attend class, habitual tardiness, or disruptive behavior.

Students are encouraged to review the University’s attendance policies at http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationattendance.html.
Students should consider following political developments in the Russian Federation. One option is to use a free email News Alert from Google (using the search term, Russia).

Policies on Make-up Exams and Late Papers
Make-up exams will be arranged only for university accepted excuses. In the event of an absence, students should provide me with proper documentation. In all cases, students should try to notify the professor prior to the absence. If a student misses a quiz or an exam and cannot contact me beforehand, it is the student’s responsibility to contact me within 24 hours of the absence. If the student fails to contact the professor within the allotted time, the student will receive a zero. (In almost any situation, you should be able to pass along a message to the professor via email, a roommate or a family member.) Make-ups will be given during finals week (see below).

All papers and class assignments are due before the start of class. Late papers will be downgraded in relation to how late they are. Papers arriving after the start of class but within 24 hours will receive a 5% penalty. The late penalty will increase by 5% every 24 hours.

Policies on Cheating & Plagiarism
All students should observe the University of Florida’s standards of academic honesty. In the event that a student is found cheating, s/he will automatically fail the course and will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs.

Acts of plagiarism include turning in any assignment that:
• is written by someone else (e.g., by another author, student, or downloaded off the internet);
• copies, verbatim, sentences or phrases from the work of another author without enclosing the sentences or phrases in quotation marks and properly acknowledging the source through a commonly accepted citation style;
• paraphrases (i.e., restating in your own words) text written by someone else without citing that author;
• uses a unique idea or concept, which you discovered in a specific reading, without citing that work.

NOTE: Students are not permitted to turn in the same assignment, or parts of the same assignment, to two classes or two professors without prior authorization from the professor(s).

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<th>(Grade Point Equivalent)</th>
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<td>A- = 87-89</td>
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<td>B+ = 84-86</td>
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<td>B = 80-83</td>
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<tr>
<td>B- = 77-79</td>
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<td>C+ = 74-76</td>
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<td>C- = 67-69</td>
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Grading Scale continued  (Grade Point Equivalent)

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Course Outline  
(SUBJECT TO CHANGES)

Week 1 (May 13-17) – Communism: Theory v. Practice
- Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*

Week 2 (May 20-24) – Yeltsin’s Russia

Week 3 (May 27-31) – From Yeltsin to Putin

Monday: No class (Memorial Day)
Week 4 (June 3-7) – Consolidating Putin-ism

Monday, June 3 – Exam 1


Week 5 (June 10-14) – Contemporary Issues


Week 6 (June 17-21) – Assessing Russia's Future


Friday, June 21 – Exam 2