

POLITICS IN RUSSIA (CPO 3633/EUS 4930) – SPRING 2025  
Professor Moraski

*Abbreviated Syllabus*  
(Last updated January 2, 2025)

**\*\*See Canvas before the semester begins for the final syllabus.\*\***

Contents

CONTACT INFORMATION.....	1
COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES .....	1
STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES .....	2
Required Reading.....	2
Final Course Grades.....	2
POLICIES AND RELATED INFORMATION.....	3
Persons with Disabilities.....	3
Policy on Cheating.....	3
Course Evaluations .....	4
Counseling .....	4
COURSE OUTLINE.....	4
Wednesday, February 12 – Exam 1 .....	5
Wednesday, March 12 – Exam 2 .....	6
Tuesday, April 29, 3:00-3:50 pm – Exam 3.....	8

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays, Period 5 (11:45-12:35)  
019 Anderson Hall

Professor Moraski  
313 Anderson Hall  
Phone: 352-273-2361  
Email: [bmoraski@ufl.edu](mailto:bmoraski@ufl.edu)  
Website: <https://people.clas.ufl.edu/bmoraski/>

Office Hours  
Mondays & Wednesdays:  
1-2:30 pm or by appointment

[Return to top](#)

## COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES

This course focuses on politics in the Russian Federation. As the core of the former Soviet Union, the initial problems that Russia confronted highlight the various economic, political, and social difficulties that accompanied the region's transition away from communism. While Russia had made more progress toward the institution of free and competitive elections than several other former Soviet republics during the 1990s (e.g., Belarus and the Central Asian states), economic and political freedoms have substantially declined since 2000. How can we understand these developments? The course provides students with a foundation for answering this difficult question.

The course begins by covering the major political developments of Soviet rule. Following a discussion of the collapse of the Soviet Union, we focus on the initial struggle for power in post-Soviet Russia and the origins and evolution of Russia's initial political institutions. After outlining Russia's institutional framework, we turn to how Russia's first president, Boris Yeltsin, addressed the various challenges that the country confronted during his time in office and how those policies facilitated the rise of Russia's second (and fourth!) president, Vladimir Putin. The remainder of the course considers how Putin consolidated power in Russia so that he could leave office in 2008 only to return in 2012 and the implications of these changes on Russia's political trajectory.

As a Comparative Politics (CPO) course, the class serves as an example of how to compare domestic politics in a single country at different moments in time. I also occasionally place Russian developments in comparative perspective, highlighting at times how the experience of one country can lead to a reconsideration of conventional wisdom.

[Return to top](#)

## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

### Required Reading

The required reading for the course comes from a variety of online book chapters, journal articles, and other electronic resources.

Using scholarly journal articles and other electronic sources keeps the course content current as well as the costs of the material for the students to a minimum. You can locate the readings yourself by using the internet and the University of Florida's library (<http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/Links> to an external site). However, to ease the burden, I have uploaded the works to Canvas. You may find them using the "Files" link. To log in, go to <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/>.

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, especially early on, cannot be found in the assigned readings. I regularly use lectures to “fill in the blanks” so that I can assign more interesting texts than what would otherwise be required. Likewise, I will not cover many aspects of the assigned readings because I do not want to use the lectures to reiterate what students can read on their own. Note, however, that all the material in the assigned readings is fair game for the exams.

In sum, students should plan to attend class consistently and do all the assigned readings if they wish to perform well in the course.

Please note that **I reserve the right to change the course schedule** throughout the semester. I will use Canvas to announce, ahead of time, any necessary changes to the exam dates. I will also regularly remind students of the assigned readings at the start of each class session.

### Final Course Grades

The following components will determine final course grades:

- Three in-class exams, each worth 30% of the final course grade (i.e., 90% of the final course grade);
- Attendance and participation during *regular* class periods (i.e., not exam days), worth 10% of the final course grade.

### Exams

Make-up exams will be arranged only for *university-accepted excuses*. In the event of an absence, students should provide proper documentation.

If a student misses an exam and cannot contact me beforehand, the student should contact me within 48 hours of the absence to receive full consideration. In almost any situation, you should be able to pass along a message via email or voicemail even if it is from a roommate or family member.

If you foresee a problem with the exam dates, this may not be the right course for you. If a makeup exam is required (due to illness, for example), the makeup will be available during the

first hour of the final exam period: 4:00-5:00 pm on April 29. To preserve the integrity of the exams, the format of any make-up will differ from the original.

[Return to top](#)

### Attendance and Participation

Higher attendance rates and more frequent, high-quality participation will yield better attendance and participation grades. Full credit indicates perfect attendance as well as frequent participation reflecting knowledge of the assigned readings. For students who attend less than 70% of class sessions, participation can help but not enough to merit more than a 70% for this portion of the course grade. In addition, I reserve the right to assign **zeros** for attendance and participation to students who are habitually tardy, consistently absent, or engage in disruptive behavior.

Note as well that I do not give full attendance credit if you come in late. ***If you arrive after the class starts***, it is incumbent upon you to check with me after class to make sure that I have recorded your attendance. The size of a “tardy penalty” depends on how late you are. If you arrive shortly after the lecture has begun, I usually apply a 10% penalty (i.e., 0.9 rather than 1.0 for the period).

For information on UF grading policies for assigning grade points, see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>. Note that a grade of C- is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, or College Basic distribution credit.

[Return to top](#)

## POLICIES AND RELATED INFORMATION

### 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.

### Policy on Cheating

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”

The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

In the event that a student is found cheating, s/he will automatically fail the course and will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs.

### Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

### Counseling

Phone numbers and contact sites for university counseling services and mental health Services can be found at <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx> or you may call 392-1575. To contact the University Police Department call 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

**Additional policies will be available on the full course syllabus**, which students will be able to access on Canvas in January 2023.

[Return to top](#)

## COURSE OUTLINE \*\*Subject to changes\*\*

### Week 1 (Jan 13-17) – The Origins of Soviet Rule

Monday

- Course overview

Wednesday

- Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*.

Friday

- Suny, *Revenge of the Past*, pp. 98-117

### Week 2 (Jan 20-24) – Politics during the Soviet Union

**Monday, January 20 – No class (MLK Jr. Holiday)**

Wednesday

- Suny, *Revenge of the Past*, pp. 118-126
- Satter, *It was a Long Time Ago, and It Never Happened Anyway*, Chapter 6: “The Responsibility of the State”

Friday

- Suny, *Revenge of the Past*, Chapter 4

[Return to top](#)

### Week 3 (Jan 27-31) – Russia’s Transition from Communism

#### Monday

- Cohen, Stephen F. 2004. “Was the Soviet System Reformable?” *Slavic Review* 63(3): 459-488.

#### Wednesday

- Evans, Geoffrey and Stephen Whitefield. 1998. “The Evolution of Left and Right in Post-Soviet Russia.” *Europe-Asia Studies* 50(6): 1023-1043.

#### Friday

- Remington, Thomas F. 2000. “The Evolution of Executive-Legislative Relations in Russia since 1993.” *Slavic Review* 59(3): 499-520.

### Week 4 (Feb 3-7) – Federalism and Law in Yeltsin's Russia

#### Monday

- Breslauer, George W. 1999. “Boris Yeltsin as Patriarch.” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 15(2): 186-200.

#### Wednesday

- Hale, Henry E. 2005. “The Makeup and Breakup of Ethnofederal States: Why Russia Survives Where the USSR Fell.” *Perspectives on Politics* 3(1): 55-70.

#### Friday

- Hendley, Kathryn. 1999. “Rewriting the Rules of the Game in Russia: The Neglected Issue of the Demand for Law.” *East European Constitutional Review* 8(4): 89-95.

### Week 5 (Feb 10-14) – The "Wild '90s"

#### Monday

- Volkov, *Violent Entrepreneurs*, Chapter 1: “Veblen’s Warning”

### **Wednesday, February 12 – Exam 1**

#### Friday

- Rose, Richard. 1999. “Living in an Antimodern Society.” *East European Constitutional Review* 8(1/2): 68-75.

### Week 6 (Feb 17-21) – Russia's Competitive, Multiparty Elections

#### Monday

- Moser, *Unexpected Outcomes*, pp 32-43.

#### Wednesday

- Rose, Richard. 2000. “How Floating Parties Frustrate Democratic Accountability: A Supply-Side View of Russia’s Elections.” *East European Constitutional Review* 9: 53-9.

[Return to top](#)

Friday

- McFaul, Michael. 2000. "Russia under Putin: One Step Forward, Two Steps Back." *Journal of Democracy* 11(3): 19-33.

#### Week 7 (Feb 24-28) – Putin's Rise

Monday

- Wilhelmsen, Julie. 2005. "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: The Islamisation of the Chechen Separatist Movement." *Europe-Asia Studies* 57(1): 35-59.

Wednesday

- White, Stephen and Ian McAllister. 2003. "Putin and His Supporters." *Europe-Asia Studies* 55(3): 383-99.

Friday

- Remington, Thomas. 2006. "Presidential Support in the State Duma." *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 31(1): 5-32.

#### Week 8 (March 1-7) – Putin's Consolidation of Power

Monday

- Moraski, Bryon J. and William M. Reisinger. 2007. "Eroding Democracy: Federal Intervention in Russia's Gubernatorial Elections." *Democratization* 14(4): 603-21.

Wednesday

- McFaul, Michael and Kathryn Stoner-Weiss. 2008. "The Myth of the Authoritarian Model." *Foreign Affairs* 87(1): 68-84.

Friday

- Robertson, Graeme B. 2009. "Managing Society: Protest, Civil Society, and Regime in Putin's Russia." *Slavic Review* 68 (3): 528-47.

#### Week 9 (Mar 10-14) – Managing Succession

Monday

- Atwal, Maya and Edwin Bacon. 2012. "The Youth Movement Nashi: Contentious Politics, Civil Society, and Party Politics." *East European Politics* 28(3): 256-66.

#### **Wednesday, March 12 – Exam 2**

Friday

- *Putin's Kiss.*

#### Week 10 (Mar 17-21) – No Class (Spring Break)

[Return to top](#)

Week 11 (Mar 24-28) – Russia's “Managed Democracy”

Monday

- Hale, *Patronal Politics*, pp. 276-282
- Ryabov, Andrei. 2008. “Analysis: Tandemocracy in Today’s Russia.” *Russian Analytical Digest* 49 (November 5): 2-7.

Wednesday

- Sharafutdinova, Gulnaz. 2010. “Subnational Governance in Russia: How Putin Changed the Contract with His Agents and the Problems It Created.” *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*. 40(4): 672-696.

Friday

- Gustafson, Thane. 2012. “Putin’s Petroleum Problem: How Oil Is Holding Russia Back—and How It Could Save It.” *Foreign Affairs* 91(6): 83-96.

Week 12 (Mar 31-Apr 4) – Putin's “Return”

Monday

- March, Luke. 2012. “The Russian Duma ‘Opposition’: No Drama Out of Crisis?” *East European Politics* 28(3): 241-255.

Wednesday

- *Russian Analytical Digest* #108, “Duma Elections and Protest” [All]

**Friday, April 4 - No Class. I will be at a conference.**

Week 13 (Apr 7-11) – Managing Putin's Return

Monday

- Moraski, Bryon J. 2017. “Reverse Coattail Effects in Undemocratic Elections: An Analysis of Russian Locomotives.” *Democratization* 24(4): 575-593.

Wednesday

- Fedor, Julie and Rolf Fredheim. 2017. ““We need more clips about Putin, and lots of them’: Russia's state-commissioned online visual culture.” *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 45(2): 161-181.

Friday

- Frye, *Weak Strongman*, Chapter 7: “Hitting Them with Carrots: The Role of Repression”

Week 14 (Apr 14-18) – Putin 3.0

Monday

- Greene, Samuel A. and Graeme B. Robertson. 2019. *Putin v. the People*. Chapter 4: “The Gatherer of Lands”

[Return to top](#)



Wednesday

- Turchenko, Mikhail, and Grigorii V. Golosov. 2021. "Smart Enough to Make a Difference? An Empirical Test of the Efficacy of Strategic Voting in Russia's Authoritarian Elections." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 37(1): 65–79.

Friday

- Greene and Robertson, *Putin v. the People*, Chapter 7: "Russia's Putin"
- Von Gall, Caroline and Laura Jäckel. 2020. "The 2020 Russian Constitutional Reform." *Russian Analytical Digest* 250: 2-5.

Week 15 (Apr 21-23) – Assessing "Putin-ism"

Monday

- Gel'man, Vladimir. 2023. *The Politics of Bad Governance in Contemporary Russia*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press. **TBD**

Wednesday, April 23

- Medvedev, Sergei. 2023. *A War Made in Russia*. Hoboken, NJ: Polity Press. **TBD**

Finals Week (April 28-May 2)

**Tuesday, April 29, 3:00-3:50 pm – Exam 3**

**Makeup Exams (if necessary) will be 4:00-4:50 pm on Tuesday, April 29.**

[Return to top](#)