Political Science 323

Russian Government and Foreign Policy

Few societies generate as much fear and fascination in the West as does Russia--and the old Soviet Union. It was not that long ago that the Soviet Union was seen as one of the world's great menaces, and western nations spent vast amounts of energy and treasure building defenses against the ideological and military threat that country seemed to represent. Today, the threat seems just as great--although now the problem is viewed as one of collapse of a pivotal economy and political system.

One political scientist describes Russia's fascination for the West as based on the failure of "transitions." At least three times this century the Russian system has gone through cataclysmic change: At the turn of the century, as the old Czarist system began to give way under the force of modernization; at the end of World War I, as revolutionary forces moved across Russia and the surrounding republics; and in the late 1980's, as new forces came to the fore in an attempt to bring Russia back in line with a rapidly changing world. All of these transitions, ultimately, seemed to fail. In the aftermath of these failures, Russia and the world were thrown into immensely difficult periods of introspection and reaction.

Why the great failures of this century? What forces are at work in Russian society that seem to generate this seemingly unending series of upheavals? What political cleavages exist that make the Russian polity so conflictual? What institutions need to be developed and refined before Russian society can make these transitions without such great upheaval?

This seminar will examine modern Russia by focusing on social patterns, government institutions, and political activity. The course will examine the politics of modern Russia, study the institutions that shape these politics, evaluate the interrelationship of economic and political activity, and look at Russia's changing role in the world.

Requirements

- A mid-term exam paper;
- A 15-page final paper;
- Active participation in class discussions (and completion of the assigned readings before class) is expected;
- 30% of the grade will be based on in-class participation; 30% of the grade will be based on the mid-term; and 40% of the grade will be based on the final paper (including outline and draft);
- Final papers are due November 19.

Required Texts:

Ronald Suny, *The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States*

Robert Service, *A History of 20th Century Russia*

Dmitri Volkononov, *Autopsy for an Empire: The Seven Leaders Who Built the Soviet Regime*


John Dunlop, *The Rise of Russia and the Fall of the Soviet Empire*

David Remnick, *Lenin's Tomb: The Last Days of the Soviet Empire*
David Remnick, *Resurrection: The Struggle for a New Russia*

Fall, 1998

Prof. Grow

Political Science 323

Russian Government and Foreign Policy

**Week I: Intro: Russia and the Challenge of Change**

Sept 10 *Readings:*

Handout

**Week II: Crisis and Revolution**

Sept 15 *Readings:*

Lowenhardt, *The Reincarnation of Russia*, Intro, Ch. 1

Suny, *The Soviet Experiment*, Ch. 1-4

Service, *A History of 20th Century Russia*, Ch. 1-4

Sept 17 *Readings:*

Volkogonov, Ch 1 ("Lenin")

**Week III: Building Socialism**

Sept 22 *Readings:*

Suny, *The Soviet Experiment*, Ch. 5-8

Service, *A History of 20th Century Russia*, Ch. 5-8

Sept 24 *Readings:*

Handout

**Week IV: Stalinism**

Sept 29 *Readings:*

Suny, *The Soviet Experiment*, Ch. 9-12

Service, *A History of 20th Century Russia*, Ch. 9-12

Oct 1 *Readings:*

Volkogonov, Ch 2 ("Stalin")

**Week V: Hot War/ Cold War**
Oct 6 Readings:

Suny, *The Soviet Experiment*, Ch. 13-16
Service, *A History of 20th Century Russia*, Ch. 13-16

Oct 8 Readings:

Handout

**Week VI: Khrushchev and the First Reform**

Oct 13 Readings:

Suny, *The Soviet Experiment*, Ch. 17-18

Oct 15 p.m. (Roy's house)

*Exam question due*

Readings:

Volkogonov, Ch 3 ("Khrushchev")
Remnick, *Lenin's Tomb*, Part I

**Week VII: Brezhnev to Gorbochev**

Oct 20 Readings:

Suny, *The Soviet Experiment*, Ch. 19-20
Service, *A History of 20th Century Russia*, Ch. 19-21

Dunlop, *The Rise of Russia*, Ch. 1

Oct 22 Readings:

Volkogonov, Ch 4 ("Brezhnev"); Ch. 7 ("Gorbachev")
Remnick, *Lenin's Tomb*, Part II

**Week VIII: The End of the Union**

Oct 27 Readings:

Suny, *The Soviet Experiment*, Ch. 21

Dunlop, *The Rise of Russia*, Ch. 2-4

Oct 29 Readings:

Remnick, *Lenin's Tomb*, Part III
Week IX: The Second Republic

Nov 3 Readings:

Suny, The Soviet Experiment, Ch. 22
Service, A History of 20th Century Russia, Ch. 25-26
Dunlop, The Rise of Russia, Ch. 5-6

Nov 5 p.m. (Roy's house)

Readings:

Remnick, Lenin's Tomb, Part IV
Remnick, Resurrection, Ch. 6-9

Week X: Crisis and Revolution

Nov 10 Readings:

Service, A History of 20th Century Russia, Ch. 27

Nov 12 Readings:

Remnick, Resurrection, Ch. 10-11, Epilogue

Nov. 19 Exam Period

Final Paper Due: Take home question/paper based on critique of Lowenhardt, Ch. 2-5