Scope and Objectives of the Course

This course covers the political history, Communist ideology, state institutions, and political processes in the Soviet Union and its successor states. It will analyze the record of political “reform” efforts under Gorbachev, Yeltsin, and Putin, and will assess the prospects for improved governance and development in Russia. It will also examine the political change underway in the Republic of Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan accentuated by the “color revolutions” emerging there 2003-5, as well as the challenges of political reform in authoritarian regimes like those ruling Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan; finally, it will examine the challenges faced by the “maturing” democracies in the Baltic Republics. Students will develop analytical and expression skills as they explore the range of cases and issues covered.

NB: This course qualifies as a key social science component of the Undergraduate Specialization in Russian and East European Studies offered by the College of Arts and Letters and the Center for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies.

Key Questions:

What are the lasting effects of the Soviet system and its ideological underpinnings on the present character of and challenges faced by the successor states to the USSR?

What explains the apparent variance in degree of democratization and economic liberalization evident among the 15 successor states to the USSR?

What explains the persistence of authoritarianism in many of the successor states to the USSR?

Do we have a reasonable basis of evidence now to conclude what types of political and economic strategies are most effective in the transition from state socialist regimes to democratic polities and market economies (e.g., shock therapy vs. gradualism; democracy vs. authoritarianism; the viability of the Chinese model, etc.)?
Course Requirements

1) Readings –
   a) The main requirement of the course is to complete the listed readings from the following required texts:

   Anders Aslund, How Capitalism was Built: The Transformation of Central and Eastern Europe, Russia and Central Asia. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007

   b) The Recommended Readings:


   Freedom House, 2010 (available on-line at):
   http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=551

   In addition, a few additional articles and chapters are available On Reserve at the Madison College library (Case Hall), convenient to our class meetings in 339 or are posted on the Angel course website..

   Students are expected to read the assigned material prior to the session of class for which the readings are listed (See below: Reading Notes)

2) Research Paper - Each student in the class will be required to write a research paper of 10-15 pages on the political and economic reform challenges in one of the Soviet successor republics. The first draft of the paper is due on or before the date that the country case is discussed in class (see the schedule below). Conversations with the instructor about the paper and readings are encouraged during office hours (at both 358 S. Case and 304 International Center) and by appointment. The final version of the paper is due in my office (358 S. Case Hall) during the last week of class, Friday, April 29th by 4:00 pm at the latest.
3) **Group Work and Panels** - Students enrolled in MC/PLS 358 will operate in cooperative learning groups for an important portion of their class time. These groups will vary in membership during the duration of the course and will address important theoretical and enduring policy issues. At key points in the course, Oral Panel Presentations will be made by the groups in order to inform the whole class on their assessments and conclusions on important controversies and issues.

4) **Reading Notes** – Students will send their brief “Reading Notes” of important issues and features of the required readings prior to the start of the class on the designated day as an email attachment to: timur@msu.edu. Students will receive a star for each class that they submit reading notes not more than a single Word page.

5) There will be a written midterm examination (Wednesday March 2nd) and a final examination (Tuesday, May 3, 3-5 pm).

### Determinants of Grades:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Examination</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom Discussion and Group Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Notes</td>
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### Honors Credit

Students enrolled in MC/PLS 358 may receive honors credit for the course. To receive honors credit, a student must participate in an additional honors seminar/reading group on the role of the question of the Persistence of Authoritarianism in the successor states to the U.S.S.R. and Eurasia more broadly. Students will meet weekly with “like-minded” students, at a mutually convenient time and will read and discuss several common readings:

Each member of the group will then write a 5-7 page analytical paper, critiquing the key readings and discussing his or her own conception of the future of the region in light of the conclusions reached. These papers will then serve as a basis for a wider discussion of future scenarios in the final general sessions of MC/PLS 358. No student whose cumulative grade is less than 3.5 in MC/PLS 358 will be eligible for honors credit.

### Academic Dishonesty

MC/PLS 358 will be conducted according to the University's policies on academic honesty/dishonesty. If you need clarification on these policies, please speak with the instructor. Do keep in mind that the penalty in cases involving proven academic dishonesty, may well be that the student should receive, as a minimum, a 0.0 in the course.
Topics and Schedule

Mon., 1/10 – Introduction and Overview

   Recommended Reading:
       Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels, The Communist Manifesto, pp. 3-73
       Alexander Solzhenitsyn, One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich

Wed., 1/12 – Concepts and Theories

   Required Reading:
       Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels, The Communist Manifesto, pp. 74-217

   Recommended Reading:
       Peter Kenez, A History of the Soviet Union from the Beginning to the End
       Alexander Solzhenitsyn, One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich

Mon., 1/17 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Observance -- Class cancelled

Wed., 1/19 -- Concepts and Theories

   Required Reading:
       Thomas F. Remington, Politics in Russia, 6th Ed., pp.1-30
       Marx and Engels, The Communist Manifesto, pp. 218-258

   Recommended Reading:
       Peter Kenez, A History of the Soviet Union from the Beginning to the End

Mon., 1/24 – History and Ideology

   Required Reading:
       Remington, Politics in Russia, pp. 1-30

   Recommended Reading:
       Peter Kenez, A History of the Soviet Union from the Beginning to the End
       Alfred G. Meyer, Leninism, 1957

Wed., 1/26 – The U.S.S.R.

   Required Reading:
       Remington, Politics in Russia, pp. 31-56
       Aslund, How Capitalism Was Built, pp. 1-10

   Recommended Reading:
Mon., 1/31 -- The Collapse of the U.S.S.R.

Required Reading:
Aslund, How Capitalism Was Built, pp. 11-28

Recommended Reading:
Peter Kenez, A History of the Soviet Union from the Beginning to the End

Wed., 2/2 -- The Russian Political System: The Constitutional Order?

Required Reading:
Remington, Politics in Russia, pp. 57-88

Recommended Reading:
Stepen D. Shenfield, Russian Fascism: Traditions, Tendencies, Movements, 2000

Mon., 2/7 -- The Russian Political System: Political Participation and Recruitment

Required Reading:
Remington, Politics in Russia, pp. 89-119

Recommended Reading:
Boris Yeltsin, The Struggle for Russia, 1994
Lilia Shevtsova, Putin’s Russia

Wed., 2/9 -- The Russian Political System: Ideology and Political Culture

Required Reading:
Remington, Politics in Russia, pp. 120-150

Mon., 2/14 -- The Russian Political System: Interest Groups and Political Parties

Required Reading:
Remington, Politics in Russia, pp. 151-192
Wed., 2/16  The Russian Political Economy

Required Reading:
Remington, Politics in Russia, pp. 193-221
Aslund, How Capitalism Was Built, pp. 29-56

Mon., 2/21  - The Russian Political Economy

Required Reading:
Aslund, How Capitalism Was Built, pp. 57-81
Aslund, How Capitalism Was Built, pp. 82-103

Wed., 2/23  - Financial Stability

Required Reading:
Aslund, How Capitalism Was Built, pp. 104-142.

Mon., 2/28  - Privatization & Social System

Required Reading:
Aslund, How Capitalism Was Built, pp. 143-181
Aslund, How Capitalism Was Built, pp. 182-205

Wed., 3/2  Midterm Examination

Spring Break

Mon. 3/14 – Russia: Politics and the Law

Required Reading:
Remington, Politics in Russia, pp. 222-252

Wed. 3/16  -- Central Asia: The Sovietisation & Creation of New Nations

Required Reading:
Roy, The New Central Asia, pp. 50-84.
Recommended Reading:
Mon., 3/21 -- Central Asia: Recomposition & Political Factionalism

Required Reading:
Roy, The New Central Asia, pp. 85-124

Wed., 3/23 – Central Asia: Islam

Required Reading:
Khalid, Islam after Communism, pp. 50-115.

Mon., 3/28 - Central Asia: From Nationalism to Independence

Required Reading:
Khalid, Islam after Communism, pp. 116-139.

Wed., 3/30 -- Central Asia: Post-Soviet Period

Required Reading:

Mon., 4/4 – Central Asia: A New Geo-Strategic Context

Required Reading:
Khalid, Islam after Communism, pp. 168-203.

Wed., 4/6 -- Student Presentations: The Baltics

Required Reading:
Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia folders on Angel

Mon. 4/11 -- Student Presentations: The Western States

Required Reading:
Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldavia folders on Angel

Wed., 4/13-- Student Presentations: The Caucasus

Required Reading:
Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan folders on Angel
Recommended Reading:  

**Mon., 4/18 -- Student Presentations: Central Asia I**

Required Reading:  
Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan folders on Angel

**Wed., 4/20 – Student Presentations: Central Asia II**

Required Reading:  
Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan folders on Angel

**Mon., 4/25 -- The Challenge of Dual Transitions**

Required Reading:  
Aslund, *How Capitalism Was Built*, pp. 206-280

**Wed., 4/27 – Summary and Conclusions**

Required Reading:  
Remington, *Politics in Russia*, pp. 253-272  
Aslund, *How Capitalism Was Built*, pp. 281-313

**Final Examination: Tuesday, May 3, 3-5:00 pm**