Scope and Objectives of the Course

This seminar will examine comparatively the experience of states undergoing rapid economic, political and social change since the collapse of the Soviet Union. It will provide an interdisciplinary analysis of the progress made and challenges faced in post-socialist era Europe, Russia, and the other successor republics to the former Soviet Union. As such, it will examine the philosophical debates underlying development and reform efforts, the evolution of political and economic institutions, and the course of program and policy development. It will also examine the impact of the socio-cultural context that may influence both the course of the debates and the feasibility of alternative policy strategies in a changing and increasingly interdependent global economy. An important focus will be on the comparative analysis of democracy and democratization, beginning with an historical and philosophical review of key debates and developments, including the various “waves” of democratization. Can the “Persistence of Authoritarianism” in Eurasia be stemmed? Is democracy a human right? Is democracy obviously the best approach to governance in all socio-cultural contexts and in all stages of development? If not, why not? Can external actors provide an effective stimulus to political change in resistant regimes?

The course objectives are to provide an overview of the impact of theory, policy and institutions in transition and an opportunity for conducting detailed research on specific aspects of that impact. It is designed to serve as the “capstone” experience for Madison students majoring in international relations, providing opportunity for using and refining knowledge, skills and a spirit of inquiry developed in previous coursework and experience at Madison College. We strive to develop an inclination for students to reflect on the conflicting perspectives and national experiences examined in the seminar as a means to prepare for engaged citizenship in the coming decades.

KEY QUESTIONS

1. Under what legal and governmental institutions can economic, political and personal freedoms and prosperity flourish? How do socio-cultural factors and traditions interact with this process? What do key texts in the Western philosophical and literary tradition offer to current debates on the viability of alternative economic transition strategies? Is it even appropriate to speak confidently of “transition” along a clear and predictable dimension? For countries that face the challenge of “transition” both to democracy and a market economy, is there evidence of a superior
strategy for the timing/sequencing of economic and political initiatives?

2. What do non-Western conceptions of effective governance and economic development contribute to current issues of economic transition? Do the literatures of anti-imperialism and decolonization offer viable solutions to or at least interesting interpretations of the struggles of developing countries in today’s global economy?

3. What is missing in the current debates on economic transition? Is there a “third way” yet to be fully defined? Do the proponents and critics of market forces and state intervention alternatives (along with empirical studies of impact) offer prospects for fresh theoretical development and policy development?

4. Is there a substantial debate between the relative merits of democracy versus “modernizing authoritarianism” in certain socio-cultural-political environments? Do the authoritarian regimes persisting in Eurasia offer guidance on evaluating this debate?

5. What are the implications of alternative strategies of economic and political transition in Southeast Europe and Central Asia for regional stability? Is there an independent future for Central Asia?

Course Requirements:

1. Each student in the seminar will be required to write a substantial research paper of at least 30 pages in length (typed and double spaced) and to give an oral presentation of his or her findings when the topic is discussed by the members of the seminar. The topic for the research paper will be selected, in consultation with the instructor, in line with the key questions above, for transition countries or with a focus on the role of key peripheral countries seeking to influence the course of Central Asia. In most instances, the papers will focus on one of the following country cases:

   “Transition” states among the Successor Republics to the Former Soviet Union in Eurasia/Central Asia
   (e.g., Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan)

   “Transition” States in Eastern, Central and Southeast Europe
   (e.g., Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia)

   A brief description of the proposed research will be due on January 27, and a preliminary outline and bibliography of proposed sources for the paper is due on or before February 10. The final paper will be due on or before Thursday, April 28.
An oral presentation of the preliminary findings of each paper must be made to the seminar in conjunction with the scheduled examination of the relevant topic below. Each presentation should be approximately 20-30 minutes in length to permit both full consideration of the paper's argument and adequate discussion by the seminar of assumptions, evidence and implications. Each student should prepare a written summary and outline of the presentation for distribution to all members of the seminar at the session prior to the session of the scheduled presentation. This summary should include a clear statement of the student's thesis and any supporting or background quantitative data. A prize will be awarded to the best presentation made to the seminar, based on a vote of its members.

2. Students are expected to participate in class discussion of the topics listed on the syllabus, basing their participation on the assigned readings. As a consequence, reading assignments must be completed prior to the class session for which they are listed. Each student will have at least two opportunities to serve as a formal discussant during the Seminar. Normally this will involve a "critical" response to an oral presentation made by a fellow student on his or her research paper (see above), but it might also involve an initial presentation and critique of readings for a session during the first half of the Seminar.

Students are asked to acquire the following books. As the attached assignments indicate, they will be read in their entirety:

John Dunn, Democracy: A History
    Atlantic Books, 2005

Pauline Jones Luong, ed. The Transformation of Central Asia: States and Societies from Soviet Rule to Independence. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004

Harvey C. Mansfield, Tocqueville: A Very Short Introduction
    Oxford University Press, 2010

Amartya Sen, Development as Freedom
    Random House/Anchor Books, 1999

Nations in Transit 2010

In addition, a modest selection of articles and book chapters will be placed ON RESERVE or posted on the course Angel Website. Students are also asked to read a major newspaper with substantial international business and economic reporting daily. The first few minutes of each class will be devoted to breaking news relevant to economic and political trends in Southeastern Europe and Central Asia in particular,
and to the course of democratization and economic liberalization more generally. The New York Times is available free daily at two prominent distribution points on the 3rd floor of Case Hall; The Wall Street Journal and a variety of foreign and domestic alternatives are available in the MSU Library, numerous bookshops and on the internet.

Recommended Readings:


Larry Diamond, Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University, 1999


Derk Jan Eppink, Bonfire of Bureaucracy in Europe: Plea for a United Europe of States.


Tom Plate, *Conversations with Lee Kuan Yew – Citizen Singapore: How to Build a Nation*. 


3. Each student is also required to write three analytical book critiques, focusing in large part on the 3 main texts for the course (Dunn, Sen and Luong), but also making reference to some of the list of recommended texts above. These critiques should be at least 5 typed, double spaced pages each; they should summarize the major arguments of the book in about 2 pages and critically evaluate it in the remaining 3 pages with comparative references to at least one additional text each. The critiques are due on the final day that the book in question is covered in class, as indicated below on the reading assignments.

**Determinants of Grades:**

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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
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<td>Oral Presentation</td>
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If class participation and the book critiques are adequate, there will be no final examination. As
noted on the assignment list below, however, I am holding the final exam period available for an examination if one proves necessary. The grade on this exam will then replace a large portion of the participation grade at minimum.

**Honors Credit:**

Students enrolled in MC 492 may receive honors credit for the course. To receive honors credit, a student must complete an additional paper assignment selected in consultation with the instructor. Examples of an acceptable assignment would include: 1) an additional (comparative) book critique, perhaps joining in on a student-faculty reading group planned to examine some of the new critical literature on the role of the U.S. in the world and the question of whether a new period of “empire” is emerging; 2) a brief assessment/policy position paper regarding the role of intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) in supporting economic or political transition; 3) an assessment of the impact of foreign assistance by a major donor country to a transition country. No student whose cumulative grade is less than 3.5 in MC 492 will be eligible for honors credit.

**Academic Honesty:**

MC 492 will be conducted according to the college's policies on academic honesty/dishonesty. If you need clarification on these policies, please speak with the instructor or the College's Director of Academic Affairs. Do keep in mind that “The Faculty Assembled (of James Madison College) recommend that in cases involving proven academic dishonesty, the student should receive, as a minimum, a 0.0 in the course and that a record of the circumstances, sanctions, and any appeal, be placed in the student’s confidential file.”

**Topics and Assignments:**

   
   **Required Reading:**
   
   
   Christopher Walker, “Nations in Transit 2010: Democracy and Dissent”
   

2. (Th., 1/13) A Review of Democratic Theory: Democracy’s First Coming
   
   **Required Reading:**
   
   Dunn, pp. 23-70

   **Recommended Reading:**
   
   John Keane, *The Life and Death of Democracy*
   
   Xenophon, *Hellenika*, Books 1 and 2 – available at:
   
   [http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1174/1174-h/1174-h.htm#2H_4_0002](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1174/1174-h/1174-h.htm#2H_4_0002)
3. (T., 1/18) A Review of Democratic Theory: Democracy’s Second Coming

Required Reading:
Dunn, pp. 71-118

Recommended Reading:
Judith N. Shklar, Montesquieu

4. (Th., 1/20) A Review of Democratic Theory: The Long Shadow of Thermidor

Required Reading:
Dunn, pp. 119-148

Recommended Reading:
Judith N. Shklar, Montesquieu
Hannah Arendt, On Revolution

5. (T., 1/25) A Review of Democratic Theory: Tocqueville I

Required Reading:
Harvey Mansfield, Tocqueville: A Very Short Introduction, pp.1-56

6. (Th., 1/27) A Review of Democratic Theory: Tocqueville II

Required Reading:
Mansfield, pp. 57-114

PAPER DESCRIPTION DUE

7. (T., 2/1) A Review of Democratic Theory: Contemporary Theorists

Required Reading:
Dunn, pp. 149-188

DUNN BOOK CRITIQUE DUE
8. (Th., 2/3) Types of Democratic Governance

Required Reading:
Pauline Jones Luong, ed. *The Transformation of Central Asia: States and Societies from Soviet Rule to Independence*, pp. 1-58

Recommended Reading:

9. (T., 2/8) The Socio-Economic Underpinnings of Democracy

Required Reading
Luong, pp. 59-155

Recommended Reading:
Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*
Paul Collier, *Wars, Guns, and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places*

10. (Th., 2/10) The Impact of Political Culture

**PRELIMINARY OUTLINE AND BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE**

Required Reading:
Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*, pp. 161-217

Recommended Reading:
Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture; Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations.*

11. (T., 2/15) Civil Society

Required Reading:
Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*, pp. 218-260

Recommended Reading:
Adam B. Seligman, *The Idea of Civil Society*
12. (Th., 2/17)  Democracy vs. Authoritarianism for Development I

**Library Visit – Orientation to Sources and Research Strategies**
Led by Ms. Terri Miller, Slavic, Eastern European and Central Asian Librarian – Meet at Basement Instruction Room, Main Library

Required Reading:
Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*, pp. 3-86

13. (T., 2/22)  Democracy vs. Authoritarianism for Development II

Required Reading:
Sen, pp. 87-159

14. (Th., 2/24)  Democracy vs. Authoritarianism for Development III

Required Reading:
Sen, pp. 160-226

15. (T, 3/1)  Democracy vs. Authoritarianism for Development IV

**SEN BOOK CRITIQUE DUE**

Required Reading:
Sen, pp. 227-298

16. (Th., 3/3)  The Lee Hypothesis

Required Reading:
Lee Kuan Yew, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story – 1965-2000*

SPRING BREAK 3/7 – 3/11
17. (T., 3/15) Central Europe

Required Reading:
Nations in Transit 2010 –Poland
Luong, pp. 59-92


See also the recent country reports of the Economist Intelligence Unit collected by and made available to the MSU community at the MSU Library.

Paper Discussant: __________

Recommended Reading:
Mitchell A. Orenstein, Out of the Red: Building Capitalism and Democracy in Postcommunist Europe

18. (Th., 3/17) Central Europe

Required Reading:
Nations in Transit 2010 –Hungary
Luong, pp. 93-158

Recommended Reading:

Paper Discussant: __________

19. (T., 3/22) South Eastern Europe

Required Reading:
Nations in Transit 2010
20. (Th., 3/24) Southeastern Europe

Required Reading:
Nations in Transit 2010
Luong, 213-245


LUONG BOOK CRITIQUE DUE

Required Reading:
Nations in Transit 2010
Luong, pp. 246-281

22. (Th., 3/31) Russia

Required Reading:
Nations in Transit 2010

23. (T., 4/5) Ukraine

Required Reading:
Nations in Transit 2010

24. (Th., 4/7) Belarus and Moldova

Required Reading:
Nations in Transit 2010
25. (T., 4/12) Georgia

Required Reading:
Nations in Transit 2010

Recommended Reading:
Irakly Areshidze, Democracy and Autocracy in Eurasia: Georgia in Transition

26. (Th., 4/14) Azerbaijan and Armenia

Required Reading:
Nations in Transit 2010

27. (T., 4/19) Kazakhstan

Required Reading:
Nations in Transit 2010

Recommended Reading:
Martha Brill Olcott, Kazakhstan: Unfulfilled Promise?

28. (Th., 4/21) Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan

Required Reading:
Nations in Transit 2010
29. (T., 4/26) Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan

Required Reading:
- Nations in Transit 2010

30. (Th., 4/28) Summary and Conclusion

FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE

Required Reading:
- Joshua Cohen, “Is There a Human Right to Democracy?”
  [http://iis-db.stanford.edu/pubs/21328/is_there_a_human_right_to_democracy.pdf](http://iis-db.stanford.edu/pubs/21328/is_there_a_human_right_to_democracy.pdf)

Recommended Reading:
- Mark Palmer (Ambassador), Breaking the Real Axis of Evil: How to Oust the World’s Last Dictators by 2025.

FINAL EXAM PERIOD: Monday, May 2, 3:00-5:00pm