

**Political Science 336 (3 Credits)**  
Spring 2017  
Class Meets: MWF 11:30-12:30

**Professor Michael Jasinski**  
Office Hours: Thursdays 11-2  
Sage 4624  
Email: [jasinskm@uwosh.edu](mailto:jasinskm@uwosh.edu)

### **Politics of Russia**

“Rus, whither are you speeding to? Answer me. No answer. The middle bell trills out in a dream its liquid soliloquy; the roaring air is torn to pieces and becomes wind; all things on earth fly by and other nations and states gaze askance as they step aside and give her the right of way.”

--Nikolai Gogol', *Dead Souls*, 1842

**Course Description:** The objective of the course is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the evolution and functioning of the contemporary Russian political system and culture, the influence of its interaction with foreign powers, particularly Western ones, on its political system, and the political dilemmas faced by past and current Russian political leaders.

This course carries the Global Scholar designation:

**Global Scholar** courses build upon the knowledge, skills and perspectives that students gain in their (required) **USP Global Citizenship** (GC) course. Together, GC and GS courses aim to provide students with the knowledge of nations, cultures or societies beyond the U.S.; the recognition of how interaction, interdependence and inequity among diverse geographical, social, political, or economic systems have shaped historical and contemporary global challenges and opportunities; and the skills needed to engage with the responsibilities of informed citizenship in a complex, interdependent and changing world.

#### **Global Scholar Learning Outcomes**

- Students will acquire knowledge of factors shaping Russia's unique political culture and appreciation for the political and economic institutions that were conditioned by Russia's history.
- Students will examine how diversity in value systems and cultures, specifically the differences between the fundamental political priorities of Russia and Western powers have influenced the interaction among these two sets of actors, shaping both past and contemporary challenges and opportunities in the bilateral relations.

#### **Political Science Student Learning Outcomes**

##### **1) Understand and apply history as a lens of inquiry**

*Political Science students should be able to*

- A. use history as a framework for understanding contemporary politics
- B. understand that discerning historical patterns and their disruption are critical parts of the discipline

## 2) Understand and explain contemporary politics

*Political Science students should be able to*

- A. demonstrate an understanding of current political debates and themes in the different subfields
- B. connect theory and history in the service of answering “big questions” facing contemporary polities

### Assessing the Student Learning Outcomes:

--**Three exams**, each 6 essay questions, of which you will answer 5.

--**Research Project**, which will count for 30% of your course grade.

### Pick one of the following options.

--**Option 1: “What If?”, or a Counterfactual Analysis.** One of the main political fallacies is the assumption if things turned out in a certain way, it was inevitable that they must have turned out that way. In actuality, politics is about choices and alternatives, and Russia’s political development could have taken a radically different course had certain events occurred, or not occurred. The objective of the paper is to identify one such “fork in the road”, an event that either happened but plausibly could have not happened, or an event that might have happened but did not, and attempt to assess how Russia’s political development might have proceeded had events proceeded differently. Here, you should draw not only on literature about Russia itself, but also relevant political science theories. You are highly encouraged to use the comparative approach, i.e., cite examples of other states’ political development to bolster your argument regarding the impact Russian leaders or the Russian people having chosen a different path at some point in history.

--**Option 2: The Most Interesting Man in the World.** While John Adams famously said America had a government of “laws, not men” (though the accuracy of that statement can be debated), Russian politics is a steady succession of strong (and not so strong) personalities, which leave their indelible mark on Russian politics for centuries to come. Using the analytical tools provided in this course, select a leader of the Russian/Soviet/Russian state and write a psychological biography outlining his early childhood and influences, key events exposing him to the world of politics, his/her apparent motivation, and operational code.

--**Option 3: Forecasting Exercise.** Describe the political system, society, economy, and international relations of the Russian state (the name to be determined by you) in the year 2050. Convincingly describe the process by which the Russian state of today evolves into the one you have described.

--**Option 4: East Meets West.** Russia is, at its core, a non-Western power whose domestic politics and international behavior have been shaped and/or influenced by the interaction with the West, which historically has taken the form of both conflict and cooperation. Therefore, pick a specific case or period of Russia-West cooperation, examine both the Western and

Russian motives and interests (in terms of both foreign and domestic politics), the influence this interaction had had on Russia's political institutions, and reasons it came to an end.

--**Option 5: 245 Quantitative Research Design**—open only to students taking PS245 this semester, and subject to approval by 245 instructor.

-- **Weekly reading summaries.** You are required to submit, by email to the address at the top of this page, weekly summaries of assigned readings. Each summary (which should be about **one page, single-spaced**) is to address, to the best of your ability, the key points raised in each of the readings. A list of issues to focus on will be posted on D2L not later than Friday of the preceding week. The posted discussion questions, by the way, will reappear once again. Readings summaries will be graded on a pass-fail basis. You may fail to submit one summary during the semester. Failure to submit each additional summary will lower your course grade by 2 points.

--**Participation in class discussion:** This accounts for the remaining 10% of your course grade.

Class participation grade will be assessed as follows:

Frequent and topical participation: 100%

Occasional participation: 85%

No participation, or very rare participation: 70%

All readings summaries submitted on time and to standard: +15% (not to exceed 100%)

**Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory. You are allowed **three** unexcused absences with no penalty. Each additional unexcused absence will reduce your final course grade by 1 point. Occasional lateness will not be penalized; however, frequent lateness may negatively affect your class participation grade.

**Grade Scale:** Final course grades will be assigned as follows: A: 92 and higher. A-: 90-91; B+: 88-89; B: 82-87; B-: 80-81; C+: 78-79; C: 72-77; C-: 70-71; D: 60-69; F: 0-59.

**Academic Honesty:** All work is to be your own. No notes, books, or other study materials will be permitted during exams. Violations of the academic honesty code will be pursued in accordance with university procedures. You may (in fact, you are encouraged to do so) work in groups on your readings summaries, however each member of the group should turn in his/her individual summary. Furthermore, if you so choose, you may team up with another student in the section to co-author the required research paper for this course.

**Week 1: "One like Putin."**

Goebbels on USSR

Michels "Political Parties" Part II

Walker, "Motivational Foundations of Political Belief Systems: A Reanalysis of the Operational Code Construct"

Klandermans, "Collective Political Action"

Nye, "Types and Skills"

Week 1 deals with the role of a state's political leadership and its preferences, which is crucial to understanding politics in a country governed more by men than laws.

**Week 2: *"International politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power."***

Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games"

Jervis, "Cooperation under the Security Dilemma."

Gilpin, "Hegemonic War and International Change"

Sobel, "Economic Liberalism and Market Exchange in the Global Arena"

Weber, "What is a State?"

Druckman, "Nationalism, Patriotism, and Group Loyalty"

Russian politics are shaped by its international environment and its geographical position to an extent that is rarely appreciated in the US, which enjoys a far more isolated location. This fundamental difference is to a large extent responsible for the differences between US and Russian political cultures.

**Week 3: *"Two Romes have fallen. The third stands. And there will be no fourth. No one shall replace your Christian Tsardom!"***

Riasanowski, "The Norman Theory of the Origins of the Russian State"

Ostrowski, "The Mongol Origins of Muscovite Political Institutions"

Hosking, "The Russian Empire: How and Why"

Hassell, "Implementation of the Russian Table of Ranks"

Continuing from week 2, the Russian state's "founding fathers" have had to deal with a very different set of conditions when crafting the institutions of the Russian state than US ones, which in both cases left a mark that is still evident centuries later.

**Week 4: *"The cadres decide everything"*.**

Lincoln, "What we want is a Great Russia"

Fitzpatrick, "NEP and the Future of the Revolution"

Kennan, "The Approach to Normal Relations"

Harris, "Stalin as General Secretary: The appointments process and the nature of Stalin's power"

Getty, "Stalin as Prime Minister: power and the Politburo"

The Russia-West relationship also conditions that country's regime changes, though not in ways most people assume. The key factors are the level of hostility between the West and Russia, and the perception of own sense of superiority or inferiority, which in turn determines whether Russian politics pursue a moderate, radical, or reactionary course.

**Week 5: *"2+2=5"***

Dyker, "Soviet Planning in Practice"

Gregory, "The Jockey or the Horse?"

Gregory, "Collectivization, Accumulation, and Power"

Harrison, "Providing for Defense"

Continuing from week 4, the Stalin years represent an extreme combination of characteristics: perception of dangerous falling behind combined with the sense of an imminent and existential threat, to which Stalin-era policies were a response.

**Exam 1 March 7, Weeks 1-5**

**Week 6: “A single death is a tragedy; a million deaths is a statistic”**

Kennan, “The Struggle Against Hitler, and the Purges”  
Kennan, “The Nonaggression Pact”  
Kennan, “Russia and the West as Allies”  
Kennan, “Russia and the War in Asia”  
Glantz, “The Parameters of the Soviet-German War”

The 1930s and 1940s show both the difficulty in establishing lasting Russia-West cooperation, but also show close cooperation is indeed possible.

**Week 7: “We will bury you”**

Hanson, “Khrushchev: Hope Rewarded”  
Ulam, “Neither Alliance nor Cold War”  
Ulam, The Perils of Khrushchev

One of the recurring problems with Russian politics is that its political culture and institutions make moderate reforms very difficult to pursue—radical or reactionary approaches are more likely to succeed. Khrushchev’s failure to reform the system is an example of obstacles faced by moderate Russian reformers.

**Week 8: “God will not forgive us if we fail”**

Kornai, “The Soft Budget Constraint”  
Lipset and Dobson, “Social Stratification and Sociology in the Soviet Union”  
Hauslohner, “Politics Before Gorbachev”  
Hanson, “The Soviet Economy in Retrospect”  
Wolfe, “Reflections on the Future of the Soviet System”

Gorbachev is the other example of failure to effectively deal with reactionary retrenchment that tends to characterize Russian politics.

**Week 9: “The market came with the dawn of civilization and it is not an invention of capitalism. If it leads to improving the well-being of the people there is no contradiction with socialism.”**

Smith, “Roots of Reform”  
Nogee and Mitchell, “Dissolution of the USSR”  
Aron, “Everything You Know About the Collapse of the Soviet Union is Wrong”

However, if the moderates fail to dislodge the reactionaries, they will inevitably give way to the radicals, which is also a recurring theme of Russian politics, this being the second time in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that pattern repeated itself.

**Week 10: “We hoped for the best, but it turned out as always.”**

Remington, “Russia’s Constitutional Order”  
Shevtsova, “The Farewell to Communism and the First Reforms”  
Shevtsova, “Boris Yeltsin and the Future of Democracy in Russia”

Aron, "The Search for Historical Yeltsin"

The post-Soviet political system was to a large extent intended to end the pattern of radicals vs. reactionaries that plagued earlier eras of Russian politics, and its institutional framework resembles that of Western states to a greater extent than ever before. But how fundamental was the change?

### **Exam 2 Weeks 6-10 Monday, April 18**

#### **Week 11: *And blood flowed in a stream that colder grew.*"**

Wood, "The Chechen Experience"

Cornell, "The War Against Terrorism and the Conflict in Chechnya"

Akhmadov, "The Killing of Maskhadov"

Akhmadov, "The North Caucasus Emirate and Beyond"

One of the similarities between the US and Russia is the diversity of their societies, which is also reflected in its political institutions and culture. The break-up of the Soviet Union and the end of the Soviet system also meant the end of one approach to managing diversity and the onset of another.

#### **Week 12: *"There is no such thing as a former KGB man"***

Putin, "First Person"

Shevtsova, "Kremlin Power Play"

Sakwa, "Political Leadership"

Remington, "Parliament and the Dominant Party Regime"

Aron, "The YUKOS Affair"

Aron, "Institutions, Restoration, and Revolution"

Navalnyy, "How to Punish Putin"

While the general trend for the past several centuries has been for Russia to trail the West, today it might actually be ahead of the game, if only because the neoliberal economic reforms that have been pursued in the West since at least the 1980s have been implemented in a more extreme way in Russia during the 1990s, leading to an inevitable backlash. Therefore Russian politics today may be seen as an effort to deal with the negative aspects of neoliberalism and globalization, with Western powers gradually moving in the same direction as they experience the same problems that Russia did in the late 1990s.

#### **Week 13: *"Aspire to expand the strength, riches, and size of the Ukrainian state, even by means of enslaving foreigners."***

Marples, "Stepan Bandera. In search of Ukraine for Ukrainians."

Ames, "Sorry America, Ukraine isn't all about you"

Klaus, "Let's Start a Real Ukrainian Debate"

Ukraine is both a problem for Russia-West relations which illustrates the clash of political preferences and interests, and also a reflection of a certain aspect of Russia's political culture.

**Week 14 *"Whoever does not miss the Soviet Union has no heart. Whoever wants it back has no brain."***

Averre, "Russian Foreign Policy and the Global Political Environment"

Aron, "The United States and Russia: Ideologies, Policies, and Relations"

Shevtsova, "Russia's Unfinished Story"

Tsygankov, "Conclusions and Lessons"

Orlov, "The Peculiarities of Russian National Character"

No matter how many transformations Russian institutions go through, its politics continue to be dominated by Russia's concern about its backwardness vis-à-vis the West, and the perception of the level of threat emanating from the West. Just as in the past, these two factors in combination represent the most effective way of predicting the future course of Russian politics.

**Exam 3 Friday**

**Papers due Friday**