Course description and objectives

In this course, you will be studying one of the most important countries of the 20th century, the Soviet Union, and the states – the Russian Federation (Russia) and 14 others – that were formed from its collapse. Approximately one third of the course will be devoted to an overview of political, economic, and social structures that defined Soviet Communism. This historical overview will cover the time period from the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution through Gorbachev, “perestroika,” and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991.

In the remaining two-thirds of the course we will explore the unprecedented “triple transition” in national identities, political institutions and economic systems that followed the collapse of Soviet Communism, and will examine and critically evaluate theoretical attempts to explain the different developmental trajectories upon which the 15 successor states of the Soviet Union have embarked. While Russia will receive the most extensive consideration, we will cover the other successor states as well, paying particular attention to Ukraine, but also other states.

As we examine and compare developments in the region after 1991, we will consider topics such as state collapse and state formation, regime types, political and institutional changes, the politics of economic reform, the challenges of nationalism within the multinational state, electoral revolutions, and others.

Course requirements and policies

This course requires a significant amount of reading, so be prepared. If you fall behind it will be difficult (perhaps impossible!) to catch up. Final grade will be based on grades awarded for each of the following:

1) **Class attendance and active participation (15%)**. Regular attendance and active participation are crucial for success in this course. You should come to class having done the readings and having thought about them critically. I will be posting a study guide to course website on the Blackboard at the end of each week for the following week. The study guide will indicate what to focus on when you do the readings, and writing down answers to the study guide questions will be an excellent preparation for exams.

2) **Group presentations (10%)**. A key objective of this class is to examine and critically evaluate the different developmental trajectories upon which the post-communist states have embarked. Towards this goal, after we finish with the Soviet period and before we begin analyzing the post-Soviet developments, we will devote one class meeting (Thursday, October 14) to mapping the variations among post-Soviet countries. We will focus on four types of variation (democratic performance, economic performance, ethnic conflict, and membership in international organizations). The class will divide into four groups, and each group will prepare a 10-12 minute presentation summarizing how 15 post-Soviet states vary.
on a given dimension. On Blackboard there will be a list of online resources that you may use when preparing group presentations. Groups are encouraged to be creative in their presentations, and also to utilize additional resources.

3) **Midterm (30%)**. The in-class midterm will take place on **Tuesday, October 26**. The midterm will include identification questions on key concepts, events, people, and dates, essay questions, and a map component. Study maps will be posted on course website on the Blackboard.

4) **Research paper (30%)**. All students will write a paper applying one of the theories that we cover in class to an empirical case of your choice. The goal is to provide evidence from one (or more) post-Soviet countries’ experience that either bolsters or challenges a given theory. For example, if you would like to write about Armenia, you can look into how its experience with ethnic conflict in Nagorno Karabakh bears on the theories of ethnic conflict we will discuss in class – which theory does it support and which theory does it undermine. The paper should, of course, cite at least one source from the required readings, and at least 5 respectable sources on the country of your choice. The paper should be 10-12 pages long, Times New Roman 12 font, double-spaced with standard margins. A one-half to one page statement of the paper topic and preliminary bibliography is due in class on **November 23**. The final paper is due in my office by **5pm on Monday, December 13**, in hard copy only.

5) **Final exam (30%)**. The format of the final will be similar to the format of the mid-term. The final will not be cumulative; it will cover material from the mid-term only. Time and location as specified on the schedule of finals.

**On academic integrity**: Tufts University values academic integrity. All students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences by familiarizing themselves with *The Academic Integrity* booklet available at [http://uss.tufts.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/#academicintegrity](http://uss.tufts.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/#academicintegrity) and also on Blackboard. If a student’s work is suspected of not being original, Turn-it-in.com will be used to investigate the case. Per Tufts policy, any instance of suspected academic dishonesty will also be reported to the Dean of Student Affairs office.

**Late policy**: Extensions will be given and make-ups allowed only when a legitimate and documented excuse exists (such as serious illness, family or personal emergency, university business). Students experiencing such circumstances should inform the instructor as far as possible in advance.

**Special needs**: Please inform me in advance of any special needs.

**Possible changes to the syllabus**: This syllabus may change as the semester progresses. Any updates will be announced in class, and updated syllabus will be posted to the course website on Blackboard. Please treat the online syllabus on Blackboard as the most recent, most definitive version.

### Course readings

1. **Books**. We will be using the following books extensively in the course. They can be purchased at the campus bookstore. The books will also be placed on reserve at Tisch.

   - Paul D’Anieri, *Understanding Ukrainian Politics* (ME Sharp, 2007)
2. **Additional required readings** are posted on Blackboard course site. They are marked **BB** in the syllabus.

3. **Useful web sites.** Starting in October, we will analyze contemporary political, economic, and social developments in the newly independent countries that once were part of the Soviet Union. I will assume some basic familiarity with the current events on your part. To keep up with the news I recommend that you read either a daily paper with good foreign coverage such as *the New York Times* or the *Washington Post*, or a weekly magazine such as the *Economist*. In addition, you can follow current events in the region through one or several of the web sites that specialize in news and analysis of the former Communist states. I will post a list of suggested sites on the course website Blackboard under “External links” button.

### Schedule of topics, readings, and assignments

*Readings should be completed *before* the start of the class for which they are assigned.*

#### #1. Tue, Sept 7. Introduction to the course.

No readings assigned.

#### The Soviet experiment (1917-1991)

**# 2. Thur, Sept 9. The old regime, Marxism, and the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. [34pp]**

2. Suny, pp. 3-21 (“The Revolution of 1917.”) [18].

**# 3. Tue, Sept 14. The creation of party-state under Lenin and Stalin: from pluralism to totalitarianism. [23pp]**

1. McAuley, ch. 2, pp. 24-33 [9].
2. Suny, pp. 67-72 (The dissolution of the Constituent Assembly) [4].
3. Suny, pp. 82-83 (Lenin's letter to V.V. Kuraev et. al.) [1].
4. Suny, pp. 77-81 (Iulii Martov's letter to A.N. Stein) [5].


1. McAuley, ch. 3, pp. 34-49 [15].


1. McAuley, ch. 4, pp. 50-61; ch. 5, pp. 62-74 [23].
2. Suny, pp. 232-239 (Nadezhda Mandelstam, “A May Night.”) [7].
3. Suny, pp. 245-250; 447-452. (Nikolai Bukharin's letter to Stalin. Interview with Nikolai Bukharin's widow and Bukharin's last letter) [10].


1. McAuley, ch. 6, pp. 75-88 [13].
2. Kotkin, pp. 10-53 (until "The unavoidable generation shift") [43].


* In-class film “Little Vera.” *


#8. Thur, Sept 30. Gorbachev and reforms: the beginning of the end. [63pp].

1. McAuley, ch. 7, pp. 89-106 [17].
2. Kotkin, pp. 53-85 [32].
5. Suny, pp. 452-455 (Boris Yeltsin resigns from the Communist Party) [3].

#9. Tue, Oct. 5. The rise of nationalism in the republics [80pp].

3. McAuley, ch. 8, pp. 107-119 [12].


**Tue, Oct. 12 - No class (Monday schedule)**

*Approaches to understanding post-Soviet trajectories*


Group topics:
1. Variation in democratic performance.
2. Variation in economic performance.
3. Ethnic diversity and conflict (or lack thereof).
4. Membership in international organizations and foreign alliances (EU, NATO, CIS).


*Nation-building, nationalism, and ethnic conflict*

**#15. Thur, Oct. 28. Explaining war and peace in the former Soviet space. [69pp].**


#17. Thur, Nov. 4. Challenge of nation-building in Russia 2: inventing the nation. [79pp]


The politics of economic reforms.

#19. Thur, Nov. 11. Reform choices and strategies. [~100pp].

2. Kotkin, pp. 113-140 [27].

#20. Tue, Nov. 16. Economic reforms and democratization: the challenge of simultaneous transition. [74pp].


Post-communist regime types and trajectories of development

#22. Tue, Nov. 23. Explaining post-Soviet authoritarianism. [72pp].

Thur, Nov 25. NO CLASS – Thanksgiving break

#23. Tue, Nov. 30. Explaining post-Communist hybrid regimes. [83pp].
2. D’Anieri, ch. 2, pp. 23-37; ch. 10, pp. 215-240 [40].

* In-class film “Orange Revolution” *


3. D’Anieri, ch. 11, pp. 241-257 [16].
4. Analytical debate on whether Ukraine under Yanukovych is still a democracy. Read the first two articles and skim the rest of the debate (BB):
   e. Motyl, “Ukraine’s Leadership: Follow-up.”
   f. Hrytsak, “Ukraine Boosts State Control.”
   g. Shevel, “No Sympathy for Yanukovych.”

RESEARCH PAPER: DUE BY 5PM MONDAY, DECEMBER 13, IN MY OFFICE. Hard copy only, email submissions will not be accepted.

FINAL EXAM: TIME AND LOCATION AS SPECIFIED ON THE SCHEDULE OF FINALS (Monday, December 20, 3:30-5:30). The final exam is not cumulative, it will cover material after the mid-term only.