FOREIGN POLICIES OF RUSSIA AND EURASIA

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND DESIGN

Transformation of the foreign and security policies of the Soviet successor states over the past 25 years reflects fundamental changes to the international system and the ways that we analyze it. In addition to altering the global balance of power and contributing to the end of the Cold War, the foreign policy revolution(s) in the post-Soviet space catalyzed ethnic, national, and resource disputes between and among the successor states, sub-national actors, and the outside world. Moreover, the fluid change in Russian and Eurasian foreign and security policies created new opportunities for international cooperation to resolve global problems—such as nuclear nonproliferation, energy security, terrorism, environmental security—as well as generated new risks of international instability and conflict, as evidenced by the ongoing crisis in Ukraine and Syria and political outrage over Russian meddling in Western elections.

The purpose of this course is to examine the many dimensions to the foreign and security policies of Russia and the other new post-Soviet states in Eurasia. The approach is analytical, as each student will be required to read and think rather than memorize and regurgitate. Accordingly, specific emphasis is placed on understanding the:

• continuities and discontinuities in the overall Imperial/Soviet/post-Soviet foreign policy agendas;
• systematic influence of geostrategic, regional and sub-national factors on the international behavior of Russia and its neighbors throughout Eurasia; and
• critical contemporary U.S. foreign policy challenges and opportunities presented by Russian foreign policy in Eurasia, Europe, and beyond.

Another goal of this course is to strengthen your skills for thinking practically but systematically about the dynamic transformation underway in Eurasia and international affairs in general. For example, is Russia today a “rising” or “declining” great power? What are the implications of this assessment for the U.S.? Answers to such questions require the ability to identify, critically analyze, and apply distinguishing traits/perspectives/formulations/institutions in comparative, strategic, and policy issue contexts. Consequently, there will be strong emphasis placed on teasing out logically consistent policy implications from alternative theoretical explanations and inventive problem solving. In pursuit of these goals, the class will engage in interactive discussions (with each other and prominent guest speakers), as well as structured, policy analytical debates. To free up time for these activities, the course will de-
emphasize detailed historical description, rote memorization, and lengthy research papers.

The course will begin with a review of the historical record and accompanying analytical debates surrounding the different phases of Imperial Russian/Soviet/post-Soviet foreign policy. The focus will shift to a discussion of alternative conceptual frameworks and approaches for explaining the post-Soviet international behavior of Russia and the other newly independent states. This part of the course will analyze systematically the impact of geostrategic, regional, national, and sub-national pressures on the formulation and implementation of contemporary Russian and Eurasian foreign and security policies. Emphasis will be placed on studying these approaches as alternative explanations for various trends in international behavior, discerning the relative significance of different arguments. The final section of the course will integrate conceptual understanding of the sources of international behavior in prominent policy issue areas that preoccupy the contemporary foreign and security agendas of Russia and the other Soviet successor states. The latter will be capped by a set of in-class group deliberations and individual policy memos.

**Learning Outcomes**

Students will demonstrate proficiency at critiquing alternative explanations for the sources and consequences of Russian/Eurasian foreign and security policies. By embracing comparative perspectives, they also will become more aware of the diversity of strategic, regional, institutional political, historical/cultural, and normative approaches to Russian international behavior. In addition, students will enhance their professional development by learning to communicate effectively in applying critical analysis to generate concrete policy recommendations on international security issues at the nexus of U.S./European and Russian relations at various levels.

**REQUIRED READING**

This class will use a combination of articles and books. Selected articles are available in electronic form via t-square or the Internet.

The following 7 books (required) are available for purchase at GT *Barnes & Noble Bookstore*:


Alexander Cooley, *Great Games, Local Rules: The Great Power Contest in Central Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); and

Readings are intended to complement lectures, and lectures will not simply reformulate material in the readings. Therefore, all reading is mandatory, unless otherwise indicated, and should be completed by the assigned date.

Given the highly fluid nature of the subject matter, there is no substitute for keeping abreast of the news. Therefore, it is expected that each student will read regularly either a daily newspaper, such as the *New York Times* ([www.nyt.com](http://www.nyt.com)), *Washington Post* ([www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)), or a weekly newsmagazine like the *Economist*. There are also extensive Internet resources on political developments in Russia and Eurasia, such as the RFE/RL Daily Report that can be received free of charge by sending an e-mail to: *newsline-request@list.rferl.org* with the word *subscribe* as the subject of the message. Similarly, students are encouraged to read on a regular basis short analytical pieces and commentaries available on *Russia Matters* ([https://www.russiamatters.org/](https://www.russiamatters.org/)). In addition, students are encouraged to peruse *Russia Today* to compare/contrast reporting of the same events by U.S. and Russian media sources. For RT, see [www.rt.com](http://www.rt.com); for reporting on US news see [www.rt.com/usa](http://www.rt.com/usa). Throughout the course there will be discussion of contemporary events in Russia and across the former Soviet space, and basic familiarity with ongoing international events and foreign policy developments will be assumed.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

The course will consist of lecture and discussion. There will be five sets of graded assignments.

First, students will be expected to attend and participate actively in all class sessions. This will include informal *discussion, occasional preparatory assignments, and group deliberations.*

Second, all students will write an *8-10 page (double-spaced) critical essay* that assesses alternative sources and implications of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Specifically, which conceptual lens offers the most logically and empirically compelling explanation for the Soviet collapse, and what has been the respective legacy for contemporary
Russian and Eurasian foreign policy. The essay is due at **5:00pm on October 16th**.

Third, each student will write a *6-8 page (double-spaced) critical review* of an article either assigned for Part II or III of the course or otherwise approved. The assignment seeks to prepare students for critical thinking by honing skills related to succinctly summarizing the argument and where it is situated within contending debates, deconstructing and critiquing the assumptions and logical inconsistency of the argument, and teasing out the conceptual and practical implications of the critique for assessing Russian/Eurasian contemporary foreign polices. All essay are due in class by **November 20th**.

*Fourth*, each graduate student will be expected to probe and critique the undergraduate group presentations on respective topics during PART III.

Finally, each student will write an *individual policy memo*. This paper (12-15 pages, double-spaced) will address a contemporary policy debate of each student’s choosing. Each paper will require sections devoted to a) succinctly describing the issue at hand; b) summarizing contending debates over respective policy response(s); c) distilling and critically assessing the conceptual foundations of at least two rival perspectives on related Russian/NIS foreign policies; and d) presenting logically-consistent policy recommendations to target audiences (government, non-governmental agency, firm). Footnotes are not required, but all sources must be included in the bibliography. Topics must be approved. **Final policy memos are due by 5:00pm on December 11th**. Late papers will not be accepted without prior approval.

**Websites of Interest**

[https://www.brookings.edu/topic/russia/](https://www.brookings.edu/topic/russia/)
[http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/](http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/)
[http://chathamhouse.org](http://chathamhouse.org)
[http://economist.com](http://economist.com)
GRADING

10%  Class Participation & In-Class Assignments
25%  Critical Essay
25%  Policy Critical Review
5%   Commentary on Group Presentations
35%  Individual Policy Memo

Decorum & Integrity

Learning together requires that everyone must feel welcome and able to trust others in the class. A central aim of the course is to encourage students to think and be critical. Accordingly, all students are expected to exchange freely ideas while respecting the opinions of each other. Similarly, each student must recognize that academic dishonesty (such as cheating on a test/quiz or plagiarism on a paper) completely undermines the mission of this course, is surprisingly easy to detect, and is taken very seriously by the Institute. Do not be tempted to take a short cut to complete an assignment—consult the GT honor code/Honor Advisory Council (http://www.honor.gatech.edu/index.php)--if there are any questions.

All lectures and discussions are not to be taped or recorded, unless approved by the professor. Students must turn off cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices that could be distracting during class. Exceptions in certain situations can be made upon prior approval of the professor.
# COURSE SCHEDULE

## PART I: The Historical and Analytical Legacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUGUST 21</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
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<tr>
<td>AUGUST 23</td>
<td>The Imperial Legacy: Historical Trends and Political Culture</td>
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<td>Donaldson, Nogee, and Nadkarni Chps. 1 (peruse) and Chap. 2</td>
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<td>AUGUST 28-SEPTEMBER 4</td>
<td>Lenin &amp; Stalin: From Revolution to Breathing Space to Cold War</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Donaldson, Nogee, and Nadkarni, Chp. 3 &amp; pp. 72-76.</td>
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<td>Sudaplatov (t-square).</td>
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<td>Kennan’s “Long Telegram” (t-square).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Soladatov &amp; Borogan, Chp. 1</td>
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<td>SEPTEMBER 6</td>
<td>Khrushchev: Postwar Peaceful Coexistence</td>
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<td>Donaldson, Nogee &amp; Nadkarni, pp. 76-89.</td>
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<td>“Soviet Perspective on the Cuban Missile Crisis from Nikita Khrushchev’s Son,” <a href="https://news.usni.org/2012/10/24/soviet-perspective-cuban-missile-crisis-nikita-khrushchevson">https://news.usni.org/2012/10/24/soviet-perspective-cuban-missile-crisis-nikita-khrushchevson</a></td>
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SEPTEMBER 11, 13  
Brezhnev: From Detente to Confrontation  
Donaldson, Nogee & Nadkarni, pp. 89-100.  
Savel’yev & Detinov, pp. 31-54 (t-square).  

SEPTEMBER 18- OCTOBER 4  
Gorbachev: From New Thinking to Collapse  
Donaldson, Nogee, Nadkarni, pp. 100-113; Stent, Prologue.  
Soldatov & Borogan, Chp. 2  
Stephen F. Cohen, Soviet Fates and Lost Alternatives (New York: Columbia University, 2009), Chp. 5 (t-square).  
Tsygankov, Chp. 2.

*Recommended

SEPTEMBER 20  
IN-CLASS VIDEO LECTURE  
William Taubman, “Why Did the Soviet Union Collapse”

OCTOBER 9  
NO CLASS- FALL RECESS

OCTOBER 11  
NO CLASS
# PART II: Sources of Post-Soviet Foreign Policies

### OCTOBER 16-18

**Russian/NIS Foreign Policy Overview**
- Donaldson, Nogee & Nadkarni, Chp. 7; Stent, Chp. 1.
- Cooley, Chp. 2.
- Tsygankov, Chps. 3-5.
- McFaul, Part 2: Reset


### OCTOBER 23-25

**Geostrategic Impulses**
- Donaldson, Nogee & Nadkarni, Chps. 8 & 9.
- Cooley, Chps. 3-5.
- Stent, Chps. 2, 4, 6, 9, 10.
- Soldatov & Borogan, Chp. 10, 16-Epilogue
- Tsygankov, Chp. 6.


### OCTOBER 30-

**Eurasian Security Dilemmas**
- Donaldson, Nogee, Nadkarni, Chp. 6.
- Stent, Chps. 5, 7, 12.
- Cooley, Chps. 7, 8 & 10.
- Tsygankov, Chp. 8

NOVEMBER 6-20

Domestic Context of Foreign Policy

*The Institutional (formal & informal) Context*
Donaldson, Nogee & Nadkarni, Chp. 5.
Cooley, Chp. 9.
Soldatov & Borogan, Chps. , 3, 5-9.

NOVEMBER 8

Guest Lecture- Professor Charles Ziegler (University of Louiville)

*Democratization/Modernization and Foreign Policy*
Tsygankov, Chp. 7.
Taylor, Chp. 2, 4.

*The Putin Factor*
Taylor, Chps. 1, 6-7
McFaul, Part III: Reaction

*Russian Public Opinion & Foreign Policy*

“The Russian Elite 2016: Perspectives on Foreign and Domestic Policy,” 2016 Hamilton College Levitt Poll


**Nationalism and Islam**


**NOVEMBER 22 NO CLASS- THANKSGIVING**
PART III: Special Topics/Student Policy Testimonies

NOVEMBER 27

Russia and the Ukraine Crisis: How Did We Get Here, Where Do We Go, and What are the Implications for US/NATO Policies?

Stent, Chp. 12.
Soldatov & Borogan, Chps. 11-15 (peruse)

Andrei Tsygankov, “The Sources of Russia’s Ukraine Policy,” Russian Analytical Digest 158 (December 18, 2014), pp. 2-5. (t-square).


NOVEMBER 29
Russia, Counter-terrorism and the Syrian Crisis: War by Proxy, Playing with Fire, or Opportunity for Constructive Engagement?

Or

Russia and Western Elections: Spy-Games, Opportunistic Meddling, or Strategic Red-line

Reading TBA

DECEMBER 4
CONCLUSION

DECEMBER 11
FINAL POLICY MEMOS DUE (5:00pm)