INTA 3221 / 8803 Syllabus Fall 2023

Post-Soviet Politics, 3 credits

Monday and Wednesday, 2:00-3:15 PM, Ivan Allen College (Habersham 136)

Instructor Information

Instructor: Evgeny Tikhonravov
Email: evgeny@gatech.edu
Drop-in Hours & Location: Habersham 150, by appointment M&W 3:20–4:20 PM

General Information

Description

This course provides an introduction to the government and politics of Russia, other post-Soviet states, and those communist states of Central and Eastern Europe that were within the Soviet-influence space. Throughout the course, we will explore intriguing questions, including: Why do certain former Soviet republics rank at the top in terms of democratic quality, while others remain at the bottom? How has the Soviet past been manipulated and exploited to serve dubious purposes, including justifying armed conflicts and suppressing opposition? Why do countries’ approaches toward Soviet and communist symbols vary from prohibition to indifference? What are the reasons behind the swift integration into NATO and the European Union for some countries, while others struggle to join these international organizations?

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
• understand the governmental structures and political systems of post-Soviet countries;
• develop awareness of the political processes influenced by cultural, historical, and social factors in post-Soviet states;
• analyze fictional portrayals of actual institutions, roles, and people within the context of post-Soviet politics.

Course Requirements & Grading

Undergraduate students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>Throughout the semester</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>Sep 27</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>Oct 30</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>Dec 13</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graduate students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two short essays</td>
<td>Sep 27, Oct 30</td>
<td>15% each, 30% in total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>Nov 29</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>Dec 1</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Extra Credit Opportunities

No extra credit will be offered in this course.

Description of Graded Components

Undergraduate students

Presentations (10%)

Select one of the countries listed in the table below and deliver an eight-to-ten-minute analysis of a significant event, moment, or action that occurred in the internal or foreign politics of that country within the past 32 years. Your presentation should illustrate the significance of the chosen event and its impact on the selected country’s political landscape. Additionally, provide an explanation of the reasons behind and consequences stemming from the event, moment, or action. Please inform me about your chosen presentation topic at least three weeks before the class in which it will be delivered. The presentations will be followed by a brief discussion.

Important Notes

- One Presentation Per Class: Each class will feature only one presentation, even if multiple countries are covered on the same day. For instance, on November 8, there will be a presentation either on Estonia or on Latvia, depending on a student’s choice.
- Collaborative Selection: In case the total number of undergraduate students exceeds the available presentation slots, some presentations will be prepared and delivered in pairs. Please collaborate with your colleagues when selecting your topic to ensure that the country you have chosen is not already selected by another student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>10.04 Kazakhstan OR Uzbekistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>10.11 Kyrgyzstan OR Tajikistan OR Turkmenistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>10.16 Azerbaijan OR Belarus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>10.18 Armenia OR Moldova</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>10.23 Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>10.25 Lithuania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>11.06 Poland OR Hungary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>11.08 Estonia OR Latvia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>11.13 Bulgaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>11.15 Ukraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>11.20 The new states of Germany (the five re-established states of the former German Democratic Republic)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exams (90%)

Throughout the semester, there will be three exams to assess your understanding of the course material.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Exam 1</th>
<th>Exam 2</th>
<th>Final Exam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
<td>September 27</td>
<td>October 30</td>
<td>December 13, 2:40–5:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weight</strong></td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coverage</strong></td>
<td>Material from August 21 to September 25</td>
<td>Material from October 2 to October 25</td>
<td>The final exam will cover all course material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Format</strong></td>
<td>The exams will consist of short answer, matching, and identification questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Graduate students

Two short essays (15% each)

Throughout the semester, you will be tasked with writing two essays based on questions provided by the instructor. For each essay, you will have the opportunity to select one question to answer from a set of at least two questions provided by the instructor. The questions for each essay will align with the material covered in the respective parts of the course. Specifically, the question on September 27 (worth 15%) will cover material from August 23 to September 25, and the question on October 30 (worth 15%) will cover material from October 2 to October 25.

Essay Guidelines

- Essay Length: The length of each essay should be between 650–800 words.
- Open Book Assignments: These essay assignments will be open book, allowing you to utilize course materials and external sources to support your arguments.
- Preferred Electronic Submission: While handwritten essays are acceptable, I strongly encourage electronic submission using laptops or tablet computers.
- Submission Details: At the end of the class, please submit your essays via email to evgeny@gatech.edu. If you choose to手write your essays, kindly ensure your writing is legible for evaluation.

The short essays will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- The essay is well-organized and logically structured, with a clear introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion. Ideas are presented in a cohesive manner, with smooth transitions between paragraphs.
- The essay exhibits critical thinking skills and supports arguments with relevant evidence, examples, or references from the course materials. It demonstrates the ability to integrate and apply knowledge to support the main points.

Research paper (55%) and presentation (15%)

The objective of the research paper is to examine a political, economic, or societal problem within one of the countries studied in the course,* directly stemming from the Soviet past of that particular country. You are expected to analyze the implications of the identified problem for the country under study and propose potential solutions.

* The countries studied in the course are the following: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, the new states of Germany (the five re-established states of the former German Democratic Republic), Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan.

As the semester unfolds, you should make progress on the research to the point where you can present your findings in a ten-minute presentation. The presentations will be held in class on November 29.

The research papers are due at 11:59 PM on December 1, and they should be submitted via email to the instructor at evgeny@gatech.edu. The paper’s length should range between 5,000–6,500 words (excluding the title page, footnotes, and literature list).

For the research paper assignment, you will have the opportunity to formulate a research question based on your interests. Once you have chosen the topic of the paper, please inform me via email at evgeny@gatech.edu.

The research papers will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- Organization and Structure: The paper should demonstrate a well-organized and logically structured approach, with a clear introduction, well-defined sections, coherent body paragraphs, and a concise conclusion. Transitions between sections and paragraphs should be smooth, enhancing the flow of the paper.
• Depth of Analysis: The paper should delve into the topic with sufficient depth, providing a comprehensive analysis within the given word limit. It should showcase a strong grasp of the academic literature by incorporating relevant citations. I will appreciate it if you refer to academic literature not only in the English language but also in other relevant languages.

• Writing style and format: you are free to choose any major writing style and format for academic documents (e.g., APA, MLA, CMS), but it is crucial to maintain consistency in style and usage throughout the text. The paper should exhibit correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Please note that a research paper is not expected to meet the same level of originality as a submission to a prestigious academic journal. The emphasis should be on demonstrating solid research skills, critical thinking, and engagement with the topic.

Grading Scale

Your final grade will be assigned as a letter grade according to the following scale:

A 90-100%
B 80-89%
C 70-79%
D 60-69%
F 0-59%

Course Materials

Course Text


Course Website

The Canvas site will contain important material for the course, including country-specific reading.

Course Expectations & Guidelines

Academic Integrity and Collaboration

Cheating, plagiarism, and all forms of academic dishonesty are expressly forbidden in this class, and by the university’s Honor Code (http://honor.gatech.edu/content/2/thehonor-code). Any form of cheating will immediately earn you a failing grade for the entire course, and I will pursue further disciplinary actions according to Georgia Tech’s policies and procedures (see http://honor.gatech.edu/plugins/faq/ for more information on this). Here are the things you need to know to ensure that you are working within the constraints of both the university’s policy, and my expectations for this course:

1. Research Paper

Your research paper should be crafted and written on your own. You may talk with others about your ideas, but you should be working by yourself on the actual outline and content. If you need further assistance with your paper please consider joining me during my office hours, or making an appointment with the Communication Center (http://www.communicationcenter.gatech.edu/).
In addition, you are required to cite all sources you use in your paper. This includes both direct quotations and cases where you use someone else’s ideas. “Sources” include papers, journals, anything found on the internet, and so on. Basically, if the thought did not originate with you, you should provide a source. If you need some guidance on the mechanics of citing your sources, please see the “Citing Your Sources” document on our course website.

2. Campus Resources

You are permitted (and even encouraged) to make use of the academic support services offered by The Center for Academic Success (http://www.success.gatech.edu/) and the Communication Center (http://www.communicationcenter.gatech.edu/).

Accommodations for Learning Needs

If you have learning needs that require some adaptations for you to succeed in this course, please contact the Office of Disability Services on campus (http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/). I am happy to arrange to accommodate your learning needs based on their recommendations.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is not required in this course.

Late/Missed Assignments and Exams

Your research papers are due at 11:59 PM on December 1. They may be turned in after the deadline, but you will be eligible for fewer points once the deadline has passed: you will only be eligible for 90% of the total grade if it is submitted by 3 AM that night, and you will lose an additional 10% from the total you are eligible to earn for every 12-hour period it is late thereafter. Research papers more than 3 days late will earn a grade of 0. Short essay 1 submitted later than 3:20 PM September 27 and short essay 2 submitted later than 3:20 PM October 30 will earn a grade of 0. Make-up exams will be given only for documented reasons of illness, family emergency, or participation in approved Institute activities (such as field trips and athletic events, see http://catalog.gatech.edu/rules/12/ for more information).

Re-grading and Re-submission

Requests for regrading of exams, short essays, and research papers may be submitted in writing within one week of the day you received the grade. You must justify in writing the technical basis for the regrade. If the regarding request is accepted, your entire exam, short essay, and research paper may be regarded (your grade may decrease after regarding). Please do not assume that your grade will always go up after regrading.

Student-Faculty Expectations

At Georgia Tech we believe that it is important to continually strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgment, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. See http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/22.php for an articulation of some basic expectations – that you can have of me, and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. In other words, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech, while in this class.

Use of Mobile Devices, Laptops, etc. During Class

As research on learning shows, unexpected noises and movement automatically divert and capture people’s attention, which means you are affecting everyone’s learning experience if your cell phone, laptop, etc. makes
noise or is visually distracting during class. That said, many students find it useful to have a mobile device on hand to access course materials.

With this in mind, I allow you to take notes on your laptop, but request that you turn the sound off so that you do not disrupt other students’ learning. In addition, if you are doing anything other than taking notes or looking at course materials on your laptop, please sit in the back row so that other students are not distracted by your screen.

**Food and Drink**

Given that our class meets mid-day, please feel free to bring your lunch with you to class. However, please be mindful of your setting: avoid strong smells, food that is likely to make a mess, and food that makes it difficult to engage in class discussion and/or taking notes. In addition, please be sure to clear your garbage when you leave, and wipe your desktop for the next student sitting in your seat.

**Recording Classroom Activities**

In order to preserve class integrity, student privacy, and a safe environment to express opinions, recording of our classes using digital, tape, or audio devices is not allowed. This policy can be waived for students with accommodations upon explicit recommendation from the Office of Disability Services. You are welcome to take notes and photos of the board.

**Guest Lectures**

Throughout the course, several guest professors will deliver online lectures. To facilitate engaging discussions, you are kindly requested to prepare one or two questions related to the topic of each guest lecture. Please send these questions at evgeny@gatech.edu at least one week prior to the scheduled lecture. All guest lectures will be conducted in classroom 136, where we have installed the necessary equipment to facilitate remote participation.

**Development of this course**

Learning should not happen in a vacuum. To help ensure the best chance for success for the students of this course, this course draws on the format, syllabus, and materials from similar successful courses. I am incredibly thankful to Mikulas Fabry, Natalia Lamberova, Eliza Markley, Alexander Sergunin, and Vince Pedicino for their gracious help.

**Final Caveat**

This syllabus is to be considered a living document and therefore subject to change. Any major changes will be discussed with the class and posted to Canvas. If you have any questions about what you see on the syllabus, please email me to discuss.
## Course Schedule (short overview)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08.21 (M)</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08.23 (W)</td>
<td>Boris Yeltsin and the 1990s – a brief era of democracy? 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08.28 (M)</td>
<td>Boris Yeltsin and the 1990s – a brief era of democracy? 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08.30 (W)</td>
<td>Prof. Alexander Sergunin, Saint Petersburg State University, “The Russian foreign policy decision-making system” (Guest Lecture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.04 (M)</td>
<td>Official School Holiday (Labor Day), No Classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.06 (W)</td>
<td>Prof. Natalia Lamberova, UT Dallas, “Economy as a source of power” (Guest Lecture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.11 (M)</td>
<td>Putin’s Consolidation of Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.13 (W)</td>
<td>Dr. Ilya Yablokov, University of Sheffield, “How the Kremlin’s propaganda machine works: Russian journalists and Kremlin’s conquest for power” (Guest Lecture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.18 (M)</td>
<td>The Opposition and Civil Society in Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.20 (W)</td>
<td>Russia’s Periphery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.25 (M)</td>
<td>Tracing the Soviet Footprint in Modern Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.27 (W)</td>
<td><strong>Exam 1 (Undergraduate Students) / Short Essay Assignment 1 (Graduate Students)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.02 (M)</td>
<td>The Dissolution of the Soviet Union: Causes and Consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.04 (W)</td>
<td>Central Asian States 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.09 (M)</td>
<td>Fall Break, No Classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.11 (W)</td>
<td>Central Asian States 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.16 (M)</td>
<td>Azerbaijan, Belarus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.18 (W)</td>
<td>Armenia, Georgia, Moldova</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.23 (M)</td>
<td>Mariam Pipia, MA Command and Staff College (Tbilisi, Georgia), “From Pathos to Logos: Understanding Ethnopolitical Conflicts in Georgia” (Guest Lecture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.25 (W)</td>
<td>Prof. Donatas Murauskas, Vilnius University, “Transitional justice in Lithuania: How does the democratic state re-evaluate its past?” (Guest Lecture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.30 (M)</td>
<td><strong>Exam 2 (Undergraduate Students) / Short Essay Assignment 2 (Graduate Students)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.01 (W)</td>
<td>Central and East European Countries: Soviet Legacy and the First Decades of Independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.06 (M)</td>
<td>Miroslaw M Sadowski, DCL, University of Strathclyde, “Poland and Hungary after 1989: From Liberalism to Illiberalism” (Guest Lecture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.08 (W)</td>
<td>Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.15 (W)</td>
<td>Ukraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.20 (M)</td>
<td>Prof. Thomas Lundmark, University of Hull, “East Germans’ Conversion to Democracy” (Guest Lecture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.22 (W)</td>
<td>Student Recess, No Classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.27 (M)</td>
<td>The Impact of the War in Ukraine on the Post-Soviet Sphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.29 (W)</td>
<td><strong>Graduate Students’ Research Paper Presentation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.04 (M)</td>
<td>Final Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.13 (W)</td>
<td><strong>Final Exam (Undergraduate Students)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Course Schedule (extended overview)

Week 01, 08/21 – 08/23

**Monday:** Course Introduction

**Wednesday:** Boris Yeltsin and the 1990s – An Era of Democracy? 1

Readings


Week 02, 08/28 – 08/30

**Monday:** Boris Yeltsin and the 1990s – An Era of Democracy? 2

Readings


**Wednesday:** Guest Lecture Prof. Alexander Sergunin, Saint Petersburg State University, “The Russian foreign policy decision-making system”

Readings


Week 03, 09/04 – 09/06

**Monday:** Official School Holiday (Labor Day)

**Wednesday:** Guest Lecture Prof. Natalia Lamberova, UT Dallas, “Economy as a source of power”

Readings

The New Autocracy, Ch. 5.


**Week 04, 09/11 – 09/13**

**Monday:** Putin’s Consolidation of Power

Readings


**Wednesday:** Guest Lecture Dr. Ilya Yablokov, University of Sheffield, “How the Kremlin’s propaganda machine works: Russian journalists and Kremlin’s conquest for power”

Readings


**Week 05, 09/18 – 09/20**

**Monday:** The Opposition and Civil Society in Russia

Readings


**Wednesday:** Russia’s Periphery

Readings


The New Autocracy, Ch. 5.

**Week 06, 09/25 – 09/27**

**Monday:** Tracing the Soviet Footprint in Modern Russia

Readings


**Wednesday:** Exam 1 (Undergraduate Students) / Short Essay Assignment 1 (Graduate Students)
Week 07, 10/02 – 10/04

**Monday:** The Dissolution of the Soviet Union: Causes and Consequences

Readings


**Wednesday:** Central Asian States 1

Readings


Week 08, 10/09 – 10/11

**Monday:** Fall Break, No Class

**Wednesday:** Central Asian States 2

Readings


Week 09, 10/16 – 10/18

**Monday:** Azerbaijan, Belarus

Readings


**Wednesday:** Armenia, Georgia, Moldova

Readings


**Week 10, 10/23 – 10/25**

**Monday**: Guest Lecture Mariam Pipia, MA Command and Staff College (Tbilisi, Georgia), “From Pathos to Logos: Understanding Ethnopolitical Conflicts in Georgia”

Readings


**Wednesday**: Guest Lecture Prof. Donatas Murauskas, Vilnius University, “Transitional justice in Lithuania: How does the democratic state re-evaluate its past?”

Readings


**Week 11, 10/30 – 11/01**

**Monday**: Exam 2 (Undergraduate Students) / Short Essay Assignment 2 (Graduate Students)

**Wednesday**: Central and East European Countries: Soviet Legacy and the First Decades of Independence

Readings

Central and East European Politics. Ch. 3. (In Canvas).

**Week 12, 11/06 – 11/08**

**Monday**: Mirosław M Sadowski, DCL, University of Strathclyde, “Poland and Hungary after 1989: From Liberalism to Illiberalism” (Guest Lecture)

Readings


**Wednesday**: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania

Readings


**Week 13, 11/13 – 11/15**


Readings

Central and East European Politics. Ch. 15. (In Canvas).

**Wednesday**: Ukraine

Readings

Central and East European Politics. Ch. 19. (In Canvas).

**Week 14, 11/20 – 11/22**

**Monday**: Guest Lecture Prof. Thomas Lundmark, University of Hull, “East Germans’ Conversion to Democracy”

Readings


**Wednesday**: Student Recess, No Classes

**Week 15, 11/27 – 11/29**

**Monday**: The Impact of the War in Ukraine on the Post-Soviet Sphere

Readings


**Wednesday**: Graduate Students’ Research Paper Presentation

**Week 16, 12/04**

**Monday**: Final Review