

INTA 3121 / 8803 Syllabus Spring 2025

Russia and Eurasia, 3 credits

Tuesday and Thursday, 5:00 PM – 6:15 PM, Skiles 171

Instructor Information

Instructor

Dr. Evgeny Tikhonravov

Email

evgeny@gatech.edu

Drop-in Hours & Location

Habersham 150, by appointment
T&R 3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help students master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social, or geographic relationships develop, persist, or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion

General Information

Description

This course provides an introduction to the government and politics of Russia and other post-Soviet states. 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 towards 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

Assignment	Date	Weight	
		Undergraduate students	Graduate students
Midterm 1*	02.18	25%	13%
Midterm 2*	04.03	25%	12%
Presentation	04.08, 04.10	30%	—
Research paper presentation	04.15, 04.17	—	20%
Research paper	04.24 (8:50 PM)	—	55%
Final Exam*	04.24	20%	—

Description of Graded Components

Midterm (undergraduate and graduate students)

The midterm exams will be closed-book and will consist of various question types, including short answer, multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, multiple answer, and matching questions. Midterm 1 will cover material from the first part of class, and midterm 2 will cover material from the second part of the class. Practice tests will be provided for each midterm to help students prepare. This assignment will require the use of Respondus LockDown Browser.

Presentation (undergraduate students)

Choose one of the countries studied in this course, excluding Russia, and deliver a 20-minute analysis of a significant event, moment, or action that occurred in that country's domestic or foreign politics within the past 35 years. Your presentation should highlight the significance of the chosen event, its impact on the country's political landscape, and provide an analysis of the reasons behind the event and its consequences. Each presentation will be followed by a brief class discussion.

Please inform me of your chosen topic via email. Upload your draft presentation to Canvas no later than four days before your scheduled presentation. Late submissions will incur a 10% grade deduction. The presentation should be created using PowerPoint or similar software. Please note that each country can only be selected once. If a country has already been chosen by another student, it will no longer be available. In our class on March 27, I will provide practical advice on preparing a high-quality

* This assignment will require the use of Respondus LockDown Browser. It is your responsibility to ensure that Respondus LockDown Browser is installed on your device and functioning properly. If you do not have a device compatible with Respondus LockDown Browser, you can borrow a laptop from the library where Respondus LockDown Browser is pre-installed.

presentation. For additional support, feel free to schedule an appointment with me or reach out via email.

Final exam (undergraduate students)

Students will select one question from a list provided by the instructor and answer it in the form of a short essay. The questions will draw on material covered in class. The final instructional class will be held prior to the exam to help students prepare. This closed-book assignment must be completed using Respondus LockDown Browser. The use of artificial intelligence tools to complete the short essay is prohibited.

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 and examples; the essay does not exceed 500 words.

Research paper and research paper presentation (graduate students)

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.

There is no predefined list of questions for the research paper assignment. Students are encouraged to formulate their own inquiries based on their interests. Upon selecting a paper topic, please inform me via email.

Students will deliver a 20-minute research paper presentations, showcasing their research paper results. Research paper presentations should be prepared using PowerPoint or a similar software. Upload your draft presentation to Canvas no later than four days before your scheduled presentation. Late submissions will incur a 10% grade deduction.

The entire paper must not exceed 4,000 words. Each paper should present a clearly defined thesis. All papers must adhere to the Chicago Manual of Style. Direct quotations are preferred over paraphrasing. The bibliography should list only those sources that are cited in the paper. You will receive brief feedback explaining the reasons for your paper's grade (I will write comments in the margins electronically, as well as summary comments). Your research paper is a graded substitute for a final exam. The use of artificial intelligence tools to complete the research paper is prohibited.

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. It should include the following elements: a title page, a table of contents, a clear introduction outlining the paper's structure, well-defined sections, coherent body paragraphs, a concise conclusion, and a bibliography. Transitions between paragraphs should be smooth, enhancing the flow of the paper.
- **Depth of Analysis:** The paper is not expected to meet the same level of originality as a submission to an academic journal. The emphasis should be on demonstrating research and analytical skills, critical thinking, and engagement with the topic. The paper should delve into

the topic with sufficient depth, providing a comprehensive analysis within the given word limit. It should showcase a good 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.

Penalty policy:

- Late submissions: Research papers submitted after the deadline will receive a grade of zero. Papers must be submitted via Canvas; emailed submissions will not be accepted or graded.
- Exceeding the word limit: Papers with a total length between 4,001 and 5,000 words will lose 10% of the grade. Papers exceeding 5,000 words will receive a grade of zero.
- Any other weaknesses, flaws, or mistakes in your paper—such as issues with formatting, style, spelling, grammar, structure, or violations of the requirements specified in this syllabus—will be penalized at the instructor’s discretion.

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 received any help with your writing, you must also acknowledge this assistance. 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.

In our class on March 27, I will offer practical advice on writing a high-quality research paper, with an emphasis on avoiding common pitfalls. For additional support, feel free to schedule an appointment with me or reach out via email.

Before the submission deadline, you may upload your research paper to Canvas as many times as needed. Please ensure that the document you upload retains its original formatting. I will download and review your research papers only after the submission deadline.

Lecture Slides

Lecture slides will be posted on the Canvas website in the Files tab by the end of each week. These slides are for your educational use only and should not be shared in any form. Please be aware they may not fully reflect the content of the lectures.

Grading Scale

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

A	90-100%
B	80-89.99%
C	70-79.99%
D	60-69.99%
F	0-59.99%

Course Materials

Since no single textbook or monograph fully covers this course, I will assign readings from various sources. Additionally, I have included links to ten-minute BBC Witness History podcasts, which I

believe will enhance your learning experience. The assigned readings and podcasts are listed in the extended course schedule. Please skim the assigned readings and/or listen to a BBC Witness History podcast before each class, and prepare at least one question for me to address during the session. Some readings are hyperlinked and will direct you to the hosting websites. Please note that access to certain materials may require your Georgia Tech credentials and/or VPN.

Course Website and Communications Policy

The Canvas site will provide essential course information, including the syllabus, reading materials, and announcements. Throughout the semester, I will communicate important updates and information via Canvas announcements. Please ensure that you have enabled notifications for all course-related communications and review them promptly. A note on email: I will respond to email within 48 hours except on weekends.

Academic Integrity

Cheating, plagiarism, and all forms of academic dishonesty are expressly forbidden in this class, and by the university's Honor Code (<https://policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-life/academic-honor-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.

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.

Class Presence and Make-up Exams

Attendance will be taken at every class meeting. However, there are no penalties for unexcused absences. Please do not email to notify me of or explain absences.

Please ensure you are familiar with the course schedule well in advance and plan accordingly, including any travel arrangements, to avoid scheduling conflicts with the course schedule. Make-up exams will be given only for documented reasons of illness, family emergency, or participation in approved Institute activities (see <http://catalog.gatech.edu/rules/12/> for more information).

Re-grading and Re-submission

Requests for regrading may be submitted in writing within two days of the day you received the grade. You must justify in writing the technical basis for the regrade. If the request is accepted, your assignment may be regarded.

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. 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

Please feel free to bring your food and drink 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 with 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

Recording of our classes 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.

Office Hours

Please email me to schedule an appointment during office hours. My final office hours of the semester will be held on April 22.

Statement on Inclusion

The Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts supports the Georgia Institute of Technology's commitment to creating a campus free of discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or veteran status. We further affirm the importance of cultivating an intellectual climate that allows us to better understand the similarities and differences of those who constitute the Georgia Tech community, as well as the necessity of working against inequalities that may also manifest here as they do in the broader society.

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)

Week	Date	Topics
	January	
1	01.07 (T)	Course Introduction
	01.09 (R)	The Dissolution of the Soviet Union 1
2	01.14 (T)	The Dissolution of the Soviet Union 2
	01.16 (R)	Boris Yeltsin and the 1990s 1
3	01.21 (T)	Boris Yeltsin and the 1990s 2
	01.23 (R)	Putin's Consolidation of Power
4	01.28 (T)	The Opposition and Civil Society in Russia
	01.30 (R)	Russia's Periphery
	February	
5	02.04 (T)	Tracing the Soviet Footprint in Modern Russia
	02.06 (R)	Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania 1
6	02.11 (T)	Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania 2
	02.13 (R)	Practice test for midterm 1 (undergraduate and graduate students)
7	02.18 (T)	Midterm 1 (undergraduate and graduate students)
	02.20 (R)	Central Asian States 1
8	02.25 (T)	Central Asian States 2
	02.27 (R)	The Russian Foreign Policy Decision-Making System (guest lecture)
	March	
9	03.04 (T)	Azerbaijan, Belarus
	03.06 (R)	Armenia, Georgia, Moldova 1
10	03.11 (T)	Armenia, Georgia, Moldova 2
	03.13 (R)	Ukraine
11	03.18 (T)	Spring Break
	03.20 (R)	Spring Break
12	03.25 (T)	The Impact of the War in Ukraine on the Post-Soviet Sphere
	03.27 (R)	Guidance for Research Papers and Presentations
	April	
13	04.01 (T)	Practice test for midterm 2 (undergraduate and graduate students)
	04.03 (R)	Midterm 2 (undergraduate and graduate students)
14	04.08 (T)	Presentation 1 (undergraduate students)
	04.10 (R)	Presentation 2 (undergraduate students)
15	04.15 (T)	Research paper presentation (graduate students)
	04.17 (R)	Research paper presentation (graduate students)
16	04.22 (T)	Final Instructional Class — Feedback and CIOS assignment (not for a credit)
	04.24 (R)	Final Exam (undergraduate students), 6:00 PM - 8:50 PM

Course Schedule (extended overview)

Week 1, 01.07 – 01.09

Tuesday: Course Introduction

Thursday: The Dissolution of the Soviet Union 1

Treisman, D. (2011). *The Return: Russia's Journey from Gorbachev to Medvedev*. Free Press. Ch. 5. (Available on Canvas in the Files tab).

BBC Witness History, "[Mikhail Gorbachev: Perestroika](#)"; "[The first democratic elections in the USSR](#)"

Week 2, 01.14 – 01.16

Tuesday: The Dissolution of the Soviet Union 2

Treisman, D. (2011). *The Return: Russia's Journey from Gorbachev to Medvedev*. Free Press. Ch. 5. (Available on Canvas in the Files tab).

BBC Witness History, "[The Moscow Coup](#)"; "[The demise of the Soviet Union](#)"

Thursday: Boris Yeltsin and the 1990s 1

Treisman, D. (2011). *The Return: Russia's Journey from Gorbachev to Medvedev*. Free Press. Ch. 2. (Available on Canvas in the Files tab).

BBC Witness History, "[Russia' bitter taste of capitalism](#)"; "[Grozny siege](#)"

Week 3, 01.21 – 01.23

Tuesday: Boris Yeltsin and the 1990s 2

Treisman, D. (2011). *The Return: Russia's Journey from Gorbachev to Medvedev*. Free Press. Ch. 2. (Available on Canvas in the Files tab).

BBC Witness History, "[Irina Ratushinskaya](#)"; "[Putin's war in Chechnya](#)"

Thursday: Putin's Consolidation of Power

Åslund, A. (2019). *Russia's Crony Capitalism: The Path from Market Economy to Kleptocracy*. Yale University Press. Ch. 2.

BBC Witness History, "[When Russia's Richest Man Was Jailed](#)"; "[The Takeover of NTV in Russia](#)"

Week 4, 01.28 – 01.30

Tuesday: The Opposition and Civil Society in Russia

Mersianova, I. (2018). Russian Civil Society. In I. Studin (Ed.), *Russia: Strategy, Policy and Administration* (pp. 113–119). Palgrave Macmillan.

BBC Witness History, “The ‘Snow Revolution’ against Vladimir Putin”; “Pussy Riot’s cathedral protest”

Thursday: Russia’s Periphery

Busygina, I. (2018). Russian Federalism. In I. Studin (Ed.), *Russia: Strategy, Policy and Administration* (pp. 57–64). Palgrave Macmillan.

Week 5, 02.04 – 02.06

Tuesday: Tracing the Soviet Footprint in Modern Russia

Drezner, D. W. (2022, May 3). The re-Sovietization of Russia. *The Washington Post*.

Юркова, О. (2022). Putin’s nasty Soviet nostalgia. Ukraine: Newstex.

Юркова, О. (2021). Pro-kremlin media uses 30th anniversary of USSR collapse to ignite nostalgia towards the Soviet era. Ukraine: Newstex.

BBC Witness History, “Battling Soviet psychiatric punishment”

Thursday: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania 1

Csergő, Z., Eglitis, D. S., Pickering P. M. (Eds.). (2022). *Central and East European Politics: Changes and Challenges* (5th ed.). Rowman & Littlefield. Ch. 14. (Available on Canvas in the Files tab).

BBC Witness History, “The ‘Barricades’ of Latvia”; “The Baltic chain protest”

Week 6, 02.11 – 02.13

Tuesday: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania 2

Fijalkowski, A. (2018). Historical Politics and Court Redress in the Baltic States. In C. M. Horne, L. Stan (Eds.), *Transitional Justice and the Former Soviet Union: Reviewing the Past, Looking toward the Future* (pp. 216–240). Cambridge University Press. (Available on Canvas in the Files tab).

Thursday: Practice test for midterm 1

Week 7, 02.18 – 02.20

Tuesday: Midterm 1

Thursday: Central Asian States 1

Blackmon, P. (2021). After Karimov and Nazarbayev: Change in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan? *Central Asian Survey*, 40(2), 179–196.

BBC Witness History, "The oilfield that changed Kazakhstan"

Week 8, 02.25 – 02.27

Tuesday: Central Asian States 2

Horák, S. (2022). Turkmenistan's 2022 Leadership Change through the Personalist Paradigm. *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization*, 30(1), 463–472.

BBC Witness History, "Jaslyk – Uzbekistan's infamous prison"

Thursday: Guest Lecture Prof. Alexander Sergunin, Saint Petersburg State University, "The Russian Foreign Policy Decision-Making System"

Week 9, 03.04 – 03.06

Tuesday: Azerbaijan, Belarus

Alieva, L., Pikulik A. (2022). Rent Distribution Modes in Azerbaijan and Belarus: Implications for the Opposition. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 75(7), 1170–1193.

BBC Witness History, "Changing the alphabet in Azerbaijan"; "Resisting 'Europe's Last dictator in Belarus"

Thursday: Armenia, Georgia, Moldova 1

Stefes, C. H., Paturyan, Y. J. (2021). After the Revolution: State, Civil Society, and Democratization in Armenia and Georgia. *Frontiers in Political Science*, 3.

BBC Witness History, "Georgia's political crisis"; "The Rose Revolution in Georgia"

Week 10, 03.11 – 03.13

Tuesday: Armenia, Georgia, Moldova 2

Stefes, C. H., Paturyan, Y. J. (2021). After the Revolution: State, Civil Society, and Democratization in Armenia and Georgia. *Frontiers in Political Science*, 3.

BBC Witness History, "The war in Transnistria"; "Russia's war in Georgia in 2008"

Thursday: Ukraine

Csergő, Z., Eglitis, D. S., Pickering P. M. (Eds.). (2022). *Central and East European Politics: Changes and Challenges* (5th ed.). Rowman & Littlefield. Ch. 19. (Available on Canvas in the Files tab).

BBC Witness History, "Ukraine's 'Maidan Revolution'"; "Ukraine's 'museum of corruption'"

Week 11, 03.17 – 03.19: Spring Break

Week 12, 03.25 – 03.27

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

Petrovich-Belkin, O., Bokeriya, S., Eremin, A. (2019). The Problem of Russia's Declining Influence in the Former Soviet Union: Why Are the CIS Countries Drifting Toward Multilateralism? *International Organisations Research Journal*, 14(1), 94–112.

Thursday: Guidance for Research Papers and Presentations

Weeks 13–16: see p. 7.