

The Soviet Successor States (130AA)

UCSD Summer Session I – 2013



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 Meetings Mondays and Wednesdays – 08:00-10:50
 Location SSB 102

Introduction

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the creation of fifteen separate successor states, academic and political observers have focussed their attention on the challenges of post-communist transformation in the post-Soviet space with specific interest paid to the prospects for democratisation and the development of civil society, economic reform and the development of a functioning and stable economy, and integration into the emerging global order. Upon successful completion of this course, you will have a basic critical appreciation of the:

- historical context of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the political development of the fifteen post-Soviet states;
- political issues and debates surrounding the process of post-communist transformation;
- challenges facing the fifteen post-Soviet states in their interaction with other significant regional actors.

General Learning Resources

There is no one text that I am able to recommend for this course. It is therefore suggested that you make use of general learning resources available in the library and on the internet. You are in particular recommended to make use of the following websites:

- Eurasia Daily Monitor
- Eurasia Energy Observer
- EurasiaNet

- International Crisis Group
- Johnson's Russia List
- Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty
- Russian Information Agency - Novosti

A word of warning! While the internet is a fantastic place to conduct research, be careful about the sites you use and always evaluate what you are reading with a critical eye. Who or which organisation wrote what you are reading and for what purpose? This is true for anything on the internet but particularly so when studying post-Soviet Politics. Be mindful too that Wikipedia is not an academic resource and nor was it ever intended to serve such a purpose.

Support

I can be contacted via internet and my e-mail address is at the top of the syllabus. I will attempt to get back to you as soon as possible. If at any time you require assistance or would like to speak with me about the course outside of class, please let me know and we will arrange a time for us to meet.

Course Programme

Class will begin promptly at 8.00am so please be there on time. The first part from 8.00 till 9.30 will be a lecture. There will then be a break from 9.30 till 9.50. The second part will be a discussion based around student presentations linked to the case studies. Please note too that if you are to obtain maximum benefit from class, it is essential that you have done the preparatory reading.

Mon 1 July

Session 1: Understanding the Post-Soviet Space

Wed 3 July

Session 2: The Collapse of the Soviet Union

Reading

- BBC News Video (19 August 1991) 'The Moscow Coup, 19 August 1991'.
- Financial Times (19 August 2011) 'Last Days of the USSR'.
- Kathryn Stoner-Weiss and Michael McFaul (2009) 'Domestic and International Influences on the Collapse of the Soviet Union (1991) and Russia's Initial Transition to Democracy', Stanford: Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law.

Mon 8 July

Session 3: The Domestic Politics of Russia

Case Study (Comment 1) – Pussy Riot and the Politics of Dissent

Reading

- BBC News (17 Aug 2012) 'Pussy Riot members jailed for two years for hooliganism'.
- Pussy Riot (official website).
- Sabine Fischer (2012) 'Russia – Insights from a Changing Country', Paris: EU Institute for Security Studies.

Wed 10 July

Session 4: Russia and the World

Case Study (Comment 2) – Russia and the Syrian Crisis

Reading

- Andrew Monaghan (2013) 'The New Russian Foreign Policy Concept: Evolving Continuity', London: Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House).
- Edward Burke (2012) 'Let Russia Show the Way on Syria', London: Centre for European Reform.
- Margarete Klein (2012) 'Russia and the Arab Spring – Foreign and Domestic Policy Challenges', Berlin: German Institute for International and Security Affairs.

Mon 15 July

Session 5: The Post-Soviet Space

Case Study (Comment 3) – Energy and Geopolitics

Reading

- Dmitri Trenin (29 January 2013) 'Revising the Concept of Eurasia', Russia beyond the Headlines.
- Dmitri Trenin (2008) 'Energy Politics in Russia-EU Relations' in Katynka Barysch (ed.), Pipelines, Politics and Power: The Future of EU-Russia Energy Relations, London: Centre for European Reform.
- BBC News (2 June 2010) 'Struggle for Central Asian Energy Riches'.

Wed 17 July

Session 6: The Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus

Case Study (Comment 4) – The Rise and Fall of the Orange Revolution

Reading

- The Orange Chronicles (2012) (tv documentary about the Orange Revolution).
- James Sherr (2010) Ukraine's Elections: Watershed or New Stalemate?, London: Royal Institute for International Affairs (Chatham House).
- Susan Stewart (2010) 'Blue Overshadows Orange – The New President of Ukraine will put domestic policy first', Berlin: German Institute for International and Security Affairs.

Mon 22 July

Session 7: The Baltic States - Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania

Case Study (Comment 5) - The Bronze Soldier of Tallinn

Reading

- The Telegraph (5 Feb 2007) 'War of Words over Bronze Soldier'.
- The Guardian (16 May 2007) 'Russia accused of unleashing cyberwar to disable Estonia'.
- Agnia Grigas (2012) 'Legacies, Coercion and Soft Power: Russian Influence in the Baltic States', London: Royal Institute for International Affairs (Chatham House).

Wed 24 July

Session 8: The Caucasus States – Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia

Case Study (Comment 6) – The Georgian War in Context

Reading

- European Union (2009) Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia.
- Caucasus Analytical Digest (2009) 'The EU Investigation Report on the August 2008 War and the Reactions from Georgia and Russia'.
- Ekaterina Stepanova (2008) 'South Ossetia and Abkhazia: Placing the Conflict in Context', Stockholm: International Peace Research Institute.
- International Crisis Group (2013) Abkhazia: The Long Road to Reconciliation, Brussels: ICG (Europe Report No.224).

Mon 29 July

Session 9: Central Asian States (Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Tadjikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgystan)

Case Study (Optional Comment) – The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

Reading

- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (official website).
- BBC News (6 June 2012) 'Russia and China eye role in Afghanistan and Pakistan'.
- Alyson J.K. Bailes and Pal Dunay (2007) 'The Shanghai Cooperation Organization as a regional security institution' in Bailes et al (eds.) The Shanghai Cooperation Organization, Stockholm: International Peace Research Institute.
- Ruslan Maksutov (2006) 'The Shanghai Cooperation Organization: A Central Asian Perspective', Stockholm: International Peace Research Institute.

Wed 31 July

Session 10: Assessing the Post-Soviet Space Experience

Reading

- Jana Kobzova and Tomas Valasek (2012) 'What Putin's return means for the former Soviet republics', London: Centre for European Reform.
- Uwe Halbach (2012) 'Vladimir Putin's Eurasian Union – A New Integration Project for the CIS Region?', Berlin: German Institute for International and Security Affairs.
- Freedom House (2013) – 'Nations in Transit 2013'.

Course Assessment

Course assessment will comprise six discussion comments, a presentation and a seen examination question.

Discussion Comments

You will be required to submit by e-mail attachment a 500-word analysis on six discussion topics. The deadline for submissions will be 12 noon on the Friday in which the class takes place. No submission extensions will be granted. Should you not submit all six comments, you will have the option to submit a comment on one or both of the final two classes. Each comment will carry 10 per cent of the total grade for this course = 60 per cent in total.

Presentation

Each student will be required to present on one of the case studies, and the presentation will should be approximately ten minutes in duration. You will be working with other students and should agree how best to organise your presentations in order that you do not duplicate

the content. You may make use of powerpoint slides and other audio-visual material. The presentation will comprise 10 per cent of your final grade.

Seen Examination

The question for the seen examination will be distributed by e-mail on Friday 26 July and you will have one week to prepare your response, which should be approximately 1,500 words in length and must be submitted to me by e-mail no later than 12 noon on Friday 2 August. Please note that unlike the discussion comments, this response should be fully and properly referenced. The seen examination question will comprise 30 per cent of the total grade.

I will complete the grading process on the weekend of 3/4 August and will issue notification of final grades by e-mail on Monday 5 August.

Course Advice

If you can accept that there are no short cuts to the acquisition of knowledge, you will already be on the way to obtaining a good grade for this course. But, in more specific terms, the following advice may be useful:

- attend all class sessions and listen to what points are being highlighted;
- do the recommend reading and come prepared with questions;
- do additional reading when preparing the class comments and do not leave your work until the last minute;
- when writing your class comments and the seen examination, concentrate on explaining rather than describing events and issues;
- remember, although your opinions may be of interest, I would prefer to find out what you have learned;
- spend time organising your thoughts for the examination – a seen question is not an easy option as I will be expecting a higher level of knowledge and analysis than would be expected from an unseen question;
- if there is anything that you do not understand about this course, ask me and I will do my best to assist.

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