Special Topics in Comparative Politics - Eastern European Politics POLI 359
College of Charleston
Spring 2017

Instructor: Dr. Max Kovalov
E-mail: kovalovm@cofc.edu
Class time: TR 12:15 pm – 1:30 pm

Office: 284B King St., Room 303
Office hours: TR 10:45am-11:45am and by appointment. Please email me to schedule a meeting.
Classroom: Maybank Hall 111

Course Description
The course examines the developments of contemporary politics across Eastern and Central European countries. These states have undergone a dramatic transformation since World War II - politically, economically, and socially. In order to understand these developments, this course looks at how East Central European states came under the dominance of the Soviet Union, how the rebellious societies contested and resisted the communist regimes, and finally, how those regimes collapsed in the late 1980s. We will also examine the most recent transformations – the integration with the western world through memberships in NATO and the European Union, the “color revolutions” of the early 21st century, and recent tensions in relations between Russia and the West. The goal of the course is to introduce students to the major themes of totalitarianism, the “spheres of influence,” democratic transitions and its challenges, path dependence and importance of historical legacies in analyzing the post-communist regimes.

Expectations
I expect students to attend classes and participate in discussions. Each student's participation in this class is essential for its success, and good participation requires good preparation. All students are expected to read the assigned material prior to each class. Reading quizzes will be administered weekly to keep students accountable for the reading material.

Course materials
3. Other reading materials are available through OAKS.

Grading
1) Active participation in class discussions (15%).
2) Country reports + keeping up with current events in the country of choice (5%).
3) Reading quizzes (15%).
4) Paper proposal + annotated bibliography (10%). Due on March 3 in class + electronic copy should be uploaded to Dropbox.
5) Research paper (15%). Paper topics must be discussed and approved by the instructor. Due on April 19 in class. The paper should also be uploaded to Dropbox through OAKS.
6) Midterm exam (20%).
7) Final exam (20%). May 4, 12:00pm-3:00pm.

Grade scale
A =94-100; A- = 90-93; B+=87-89; B=83-86; B-=80-82; C+=77-79; C=73-76; C-=70-72;
D+=67-69; D=63-66; D-=60-62; F<60.

Assignments
1) Participation in class discussions
The success of this class depends on your active participation. Students are expected to read the assigned material prior to each class and be ready for active participation in discussions.
2) **Country reports + current events discussions**

During the first week of the semester each student will select one Eastern European and will follow current events in this country throughout the semester. Once or twice a semester each student will give a 5-minute presentation on current events in the selected country. You may report on political, economic, social developments or relations with other countries. You will be expected to have an in-depth knowledge of one recent event or phenomena rather than just a reporting a headline or give an overview of several events. You can select an event from the past 6 months. Be prepared to describe and explain what happened and why (remember 5-Ws: who, where, when, what, and why). Be ready for questions from other students. Use the following checklist to prepare for this assignment:

- Is my report based on a topic from a major newspaper?
- Did I explain why the topic is interesting and/or important?
- Is the topic/phenomenon clearly stated and explained?
- Did I cover the 5-Ws (who, where, when, what, and why)?
- Did my report focus on one topic or did I give an overview of several topics without providing depth?
- Am I reading from my notes? (hint: you can consult your notes but don’t read them).

3) **Reading quizzes**

Reading quizzes will be offered periodically throughout the semester.

4) **Paper proposal + annotated bibliography**

A 1-page description of the research topic must be submitted by March 3 in class and uploaded to Dropbox via OAKS. Topics for paper proposals must be discussed with and approved by the instructor. This description should clearly state:

- Your research question or puzzle;
- The cases (countries) you examine;
- The importance of the research question.
- Your expectations based on the reviewed literature.
- An annotated bibliography. See the template on the last page of the syllabus. Fill out the table for each of the 5 sources of annotated bibliography. The template is also saved in OAKS under Content.

5) **Research paper**

You need to pick a topic of interest and examine a particular issue in a country of Eastern Europe in a 7-8-page paper. You may develop a research topic as you read the weekly assignments. The topic of your interest does not have to include the most recent developments in your countries of choice. For example, you may choose to examine the choice of institutional arrangements in Eastern European states (presidential or parliamentary system design) or compare two similar (in most aspects) countries in order to explain differences in economic development, civic engagement, political outcomes, etc. Paper topics must be discussed with and approved by the instructor; You can find paper guidelines in OAKS under Content.

**Late submissions**

Late submissions will be penalized by 5% per day (including weekends). Assignments more than two weeks late will receive a “0.” Unexcused failure to show up for an exam will result in a grade of 0% on the exam.

**Course/University Policies**

Students with Disabilities: The College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students with disabilities must be registered with the Center for Disability Services / SNAP, located on the first floor of the Lightsey Center, Suite 104 prior to receiving accommodations in this course. Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent them from fully demonstrating their abilities should contact the instructor personally as soon as possible to discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate their educational opportunities.
Academic Integrity: Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved. Incidents where the instructor determines whether the student’s actions are related more to a misunderstanding will be handled by the instructor. A written intervention designed to help prevent the student from repeating the error will be given to the student. The intervention, submitted by form and signed both by the instructor and the student, will be forwarded to the Dean of Students and placed in the student’s file.

Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This grade will appear on the student’s transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the X to be expunged. The F is permanent. The student may also be placed on disciplinary probation, suspended (temporary removal) or expelled (permanent removal) from the College by the Honor Board.

Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration--working together without permission--is a form of cheating. Unless the instructor specifies that students can work together on an assignment, quiz and/or test, no collaboration during the completion of the assignment is permitted. Other forms of cheating include possessing or using an unauthorized study aid (which could include accessing information via a cell phone or computer), copying from others’ exams, fabricating data, and giving unauthorized assistance. Research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the instructor.

Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the Student Handbook at http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php

Avoiding Plagiarism

“Plagiarism falls into two categories: using someone else’s words or using someone else’s ideas as if they were your own. You must be scrupulous in avoiding both categories of plagiarism in your writing. Properly cite all quotations, paraphrases, and summaries of information from other sources. The only exception to this rule is common knowledge, or information commonly known and accessible to your audience… If you are unsure whether certain information constitutes common knowledge, document it. Collusion, a form of plagiarism, occurs when two or more people agree to devise a piece of writing that will be attributed to only one of them… For any individual writing assignment, the idea and the organization of ideas in your paper must be your own… You can incorporate into your writing ideas that have arisen from class discussion [and] lectures… You may revise and edit your writing with other people… but you should not have others do your writing or revising for you.”

Laptop and digital device policy

I request that students not use laptops, tablets, phones, or other digital devices in class, unless I ask to do so. If you need to use a laptop due to a medical condition, I will need a note from the SNAP center.

Changes to syllabus

I reserve the right to make minor changes to the syllabus during the semester. Any changes will be announced in class and via email.

Week 1

January 12. Introduction, description of the course

Week 2

January 17. Brexit, Trump, Russia, and Eastern Europe
Readings TBD

January 19. Cold War-2 and the Revival of Spheres of Influence

Week 3

January 24. History and background

January 26. World War II and its effects
Primary documents:
- Bohlen "Poland at the Teheran Conference" in Stokes (28-30)
- Churchill "The Percentages Agreement" in Stokes (30-31)
- Truman "The Truman Doctrine" in Stokes (33-37)
- Zhdanov "The Two-Camp Policy" in Stokes (38-42)

Watch film on OAKS: Comrades 1917-1945 (from CNN Cold War series)

Week 4

January 31. Life under Communism: the GULAG
Berman "The Case for Stalinism" in Stokes (44-50)
Watch film on OAKS: Iron Curtain (1945-47)

February 2. Life under Communism: the GULAG
Film: Eastern Europe & Marshall Plan - watch the first 30 minutes

Week 5

February 7. State Against Society: Early Revolutions
Brezhnev "The Brezhnev Doctrine" in Stokes (131-134)
Watch film on OAKS: Hungarian Revolution and Prague Spring
February 9.

Week 6
February 14. Solidarity and Revolutions of 1989

February 16. The Communist Collapse: Revolutions of 1989
Gorbachev "A Common European Home" in Stokes (265-267)
Revisit Verder, Katherine. 1996. “What Was Socialism, and Why Did It Fall?”

Watch film on OAKS: The Wall Comes Down (1989)
Online discussion on OAKS: Read the articles above and be ready for an online discussion

Week 7
February 21.
Finish the book (pp. 78-165) and review the whole book.

February 23. The Politics of Economic Reform: Gradualism vs Shock Therapy
Film: Commanding Heights: The Agony of Reform

Week 8
February 28. Midterm exam

March 2. Working with library resources
Bring your laptop computers.

March 5-11 Spring Break

Week 9
March 14. Minorities and discrimination

March 16. The Politics of Gender

March 16: 1-page research proposals+ annotated bibliographies are due. Bring hard copies of proposals to class on March 9 and upload an electronic version to Dropbox.
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Week 10

**March 21. Incomplete Democratization and Problems with Transitions**

**March 23. Derailed Democracy or Successful Competitive Authoritarianism in Russia**

Week 11

**March 28. Russian Oligarchs after Communism**

**March 30. Ukraine’s Euromaidan Protests**

Week 12

**April 4. Color Revolutions**

**April 6. Color Revolutions-2**

Week 13

**April 11. Civil Society**

**April 13. Civil Society**

Week 14

**April 18. Refugee crisis and Eastern Europe**

**April 20. Decommunization in Ukraine.**
Readings TBD
*Research Papers due. Upload an electronic version of the paper to Dropbox.*

Week 15

**April 25. Readings TBD**

*May 4, 12:00pm-3:00pm. Final exam*
Annotated Bibliography Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Citation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Research question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Findings (brief description)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
1) Use at least 5 sources for this assignment:
   a) 1 book, 2 academic articles, 2 news article from a major newspaper (such as New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal etc) or magazines (Newsweek, the Economist, the Atlantic)
   b) You can use primary sources (e.g., government documents, NGO reports, IGO policy assessments) in addition, rather than as a substitution to 5 sources listed above.
2) You should not use random websites
   a) Always use page numbers when you quote text. For example: Berman shows that “flourishing civil society does not necessarily bode well for the prospects of liberal democracy” (Berman 1997, p. 401).
   b) Use the author’s name and year when you paraphrase. Example: According to Berman, civil society and activism may lead to the breakdown of democracy (Berman 1997).
4) Use just two or three words. Examples: “immigration,” “European identity,” “European integration,” “minorities and discrimination,” “citizenship,” etc.
5) State briefly the central research question of the book chapter/article
6) List the countries studied. Examples: “Germany,” “Russia,” “Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary” “Slovakia and the Czech Republic.”
7) Write a short (3-5 sentences) summary of the most important findings of the research. What was learned from this study?