

**PSCI 3022: Russian Politics**  
**Spring 2020, M/W/F 11am-11:50am, ARNT 207**  
**Professor Svet Derderyan, Ph.D.**

Office: ARNT 201C and Ketchum Hall 232  
E-mail: svde3789@colorado.edu  
Office hours: M, W, F 10:30-11am & by appointment  
Fellow/ Office Hours Rachel Froehlich M 6pm-8pm, 207



**Course Overview**

This class introduces students to the politics of Russia in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. We will explore the political, economic, and social transformations associated with both Soviet rule and post-Soviet reforms. In doing so, the class will search for connections between the Soviet experience of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the political challenges and opportunities for the Russia of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Throughout the course we will ask several key questions pertaining to these two eras of Russian development – the Soviet and the post-Soviet one – and we will review and analyze some of the theories and explanations behind them:

1. What was the Soviet Union, how did it become so powerful, and why did it eventually collapse?
2. How did its ideology (communism), geopolitical capabilities and aspirations (global superpower), economic inefficiencies (systemic shortages), and public-private relations (atmosphere of distrust and paranoia) affect its developmental trajectory from the turmoil at the end of Russia's Tsarist tradition and the onset of the Bolshevik Revolution, to its indispensable role in defeating Nazism and saving Europe at the end of WW2, to its unexpected (and perhaps unnecessary) dissolution in 1991, and to its rebirth as a key power in international politics under Vladimir Putin?
3. What kind of political regime took root in post-Soviet Russia after 1991?
4. Has economic reform been successful in Russia? How do ordinary Russians view and experience their political system?
5. What is the current and future role of Putin's Russia on the global stage?

We will examine the facts about Russian politics, as well as the ways that these facts are debated and interpreted by scholars and political leaders. By the end of the course, students will have developed the skill to think critically about current Russian politics and economics and to see developments in a broader context, one accounting for the larger forces and historical dynamics behind the evolution of a uniquely Russian psyche and a vast national potential for global influence and leadership, sometimes perhaps benevolent, and sometimes sadly not.

## Evaluation and Assignments

I expect that students come to class prepared to the extent that they can make substantial contributions to class discussions. I further expect students to show up to every session and on time.

If a student misses more than three days of classes, the final grade will be reduced by a full grade for every session missed after the initial three days.

Late submission of assignments will be accepted but with a penalty that will be determined by the instructor on a case-by-case basis. There are no make-up exams.

Exceptions to all rules are only made for health or disability reasons which must be documented in writing.

## Basis for Final Grade

Presentations: 10%

In-class Exam 1: 35%

Final Paper: 15%

Movie entries: 10%

Final: 20%

Participation and Attendance: 10%

Presentations:

In groups of 2, you will be expected to give one 10 min presentation in class on an issue of Russian politics that is viewed differently by the government and the opposition. The presentations will be 15% of your final grade. Sign- up sheet:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ORS8HrukMQjvhzSOFYZ5Z5YgcE5bnDtPDnpjKSleMhU/edit#gid=0>

Exams:

There will be a midterm and a final.

Final Paper:

You are expected to write one 6- page paper analyzing a current challenge to Russia's political situation and proposing a solution. This will be written as a white paper prepared by a government employee in a certain ministry, you, that you are sending to your boss, a senior Russian politician, who will present this report directly to President Putin. As you can imagine, this report will have not only implications on Russian politics in general, but also on your personal career trajectory. A smart piece that is in line with what President Putin likes to see and that can help him further his goals in a strategic manner will mean a possible promotion for you within the ranks of the Russian bureaucracy as well as a possible good grade in our class. Due last day of class.

### Movie Entries:

We will see a number of documentaries in this class. You are responsible to submit 3 short reactions (min ½ page; max 1 page single spaced) to 3 documentaries of your choice connecting your impressions with the class readings. These documentaries serve an important goal – to demonstrate the real world applications of the theories and concepts we will be discussing in class. You will submit these in a single word document whenever you have completed the two reaction entries but before Apr 10.

### Attendance and Participation:

Many of the lectures will be presented in a style that will give plenty of opportunities for in-class participation to the students. The frequency and quality of your comments, as well as your attendance, will shape your final participation grade. If we have one or several pop quizzes in class, those will also factor in your participation grade.

### Grading Scale

I will grade your work on the following (standard) scale.

		<b>B+</b>	87-89	<b>C+</b>	77-79	<b>D+</b>	67-69		
<b>A</b>	94-100	<b>B</b>	83-86	<b>C</b>	73-76	<b>D</b>	63-66	<b>F</b>	0-59
<b>A-</b>	90-93	<b>B-</b>	80-82	<b>C-</b>	70-72	<b>D-</b>	60-62		

### Required Texts and Materials

Mary McAuley. 1992. *Soviet Politics: 1917-1991*. New York: Oxford University Press

Stephen Wegren. 2019. *Putin's Russia*. Rowman and Littlefield. 7<sup>th</sup> ed.

The remaining readings are available as electronic copies on Canvas.

### Current Affairs: Read the News!

Current affairs will be regularly incorporated into class. In addition to the articles you are required to read and comment on, you should regularly look for news on current affairs in Russia.

- **Johnson's Russia List:** This is an excellent way to read articles (in English) about what is going on in Russia from a variety of Russian, international, and American news sources. You can sign up for free daily news from Russian and international news sources from "Johnson's Russia List" at [russialist.org](http://russialist.org). You can also just check this website instead of receiving the stories by e-mail. Johnson's Russia List includes articles from major news sources around the world and Russian newspapers. Russian-language articles have been translated into English which is a great advantage of this free service.
- **BBC:** The "Europe" web page of the *BBC* for news on Russia which can be found at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world/europe/>. Scan the *BBC* headlines for news on Russia and

read any relevant articles. You can also search “Russia” from the BBC web page to find the most relevant news.

- **RT:** Formerly called *Russia Today*, RT is available at [www.rt.com](http://www.rt.com) (click on the Russian Politics section). This is a Russian state-owned news sources which provides news in English. In particular, you should note how the perspective is the same or different for reporting on the same events when reading the *BBC* versus *Russia Today*. It is also interesting to take a look at US news reported in *Russia Today* at [www.rt.com/usa](http://www.rt.com/usa).
- **PONARS Eurasia:** At [www.ponarseurasia.org](http://www.ponarseurasia.org), you can find regularly find new commentary from academic experts about current events in Russia and other post-communist countries.
- **Public Opinion Polls:** Check out Putin’s approval ratings, and other important results of national polls (including attitudes towards the US) at Levada (a private polling company) (<http://www.levada.ru/en/>) and at the Russian Public Opinion Research center (a state-owned polling organization) (<https://www.wciom.com/>). Both have English versions of their websites.

### Course Schedule

#### ***From Kievan Rus (9th cen) to the Bolsheviks (1917), From Stalin (1918) to the End of History (1989)***

**Jan 13:** Introduction: What’s Going on in Russia Today? Why do we care?

Recommended: Sarah Wilson Sokhey, “Putin Has Options So Don’t Expect Change,” *Washington Post*, March 31, 2017.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/03/31/russians-are-protesting-why-part-3-putin-has-options-so-dont-expect-change/>

Christopher Jarmas, “Yes, the Kremlin is Worried—about Russia’s Own Presidential Elections,” *Washington Post*, December 6, 2017.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/12/06/yes-the-kremlin-is-worried-about-russias-own-presidential-elections/>

**Jan 15:** History and Geography of Russia

BBC Timeline - <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17840446>

A brief History - <http://www.russiatimes.org/brief-history-russia/>

Geography of Russia - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3C\\_5bsdQWg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3C_5bsdQWg)

History of Russia from the 9<sup>th</sup> cen. to 1917 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w0Wmc8COEq0>

**Jan 17:** Marxism and Leninism: The 1917 Revolution and Leninism in Practice

The political economy of Communism and the Post-communist transition O’Neill, P. 2010. Essentials, Chapter 8

**Jan 22-24:** Lenin’s dreams of state-building, the trauma and the triumph of WW2

McAuley, *Soviet Politics*. Introduction, Chapter 1, and Chapter 2 (p. 1-33)

Biography of Stalin (watch only the first 60 mins) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHfB3aP-pn4>

Recommended: Vladimir Lenin - The father of Communism (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-sSrghbzR80>)

**Jan 27-29-31:** WW2 victory and aftermath cont'd

CNN Documentary Comrades

**Feb 3-5-7:** High Stalinism

McAuley, *Soviet Politics*. Chapters 3 and 4 (p. 34-61).

William Henry Chamberlain, "Making the Collective Man in Soviet Russia," *Foreign*

*Affairs*, January 1932. (<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russian-federation/1932-01-01/making-collective-man-soviet-russia>)

Richard Ericson, "The Classical Soviet-type Economy," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 1991

<https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/jep.5.4.11>

Recommended: Janos Kornai, *Economics of Shortage*, see a short biography of Kornai at:

<http://www.economics.harvard.edu/faculty/kornai/cv/bio.pdf>

CNN Documentary Reds

**Feb 10-12-14-17:** Khrushchev and De-Stalinization

McAuley, *Soviet Politics*. Chapter 5 (p. 62-74).

Text of Khrushchev's Secret Speech:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/theguardian/2007/apr/26/greatspeeches2>

CNN Documentary After Stalin

**Feb 19-21-24:** Brezhnev: Stagnation, Corruption, and the Shortage Economy

McAuley, *Soviet Politics*. Chapter 6 (p. 75-88).

CNN Documentaries Red Spring

Recommended: Raleigh, *Soviet Baby Boomers*. Chapter 5: "Living Soviet during the Brezhnev-Era Stagnation" (p. 220-267).

**Feb 26-28, Mar 2-4-6:** The scent of freedom: Gorbachev's Reforms: Perestroika and Glasnost

McAuley, *Soviet Politics*. Chapters 7 and 8 (p. 89-106).

CNN Documentary StarWars

CNN Documentary Conclusions

Recommended: Raleigh, *Soviet Baby Boomers*. Chapter 6: "But then Everything Fell Apart" (p. 268-312).

And: Stoner Weiss and McFaul, 2009, ([https://fsi-live.s3.us-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/No\\_108\\_Stoner-Weiss\\_domestic\\_and\\_international\\_influences\\_on\\_collapse\\_of\\_USSR.pdf](https://fsi-live.s3.us-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/No_108_Stoner-Weiss_domestic_and_international_influences_on_collapse_of_USSR.pdf))

## ***The Politics of Post-Communism (1991 to today)***

**Mar 9-11:** The beginning of the end and the end of the beginning

Film, "My Perestroika"

Read: *Discussion Guide: My Perestroika*, published by PBS.

<https://pov-tc.pbs.org/pov/downloads/2011/pov-myperestroika-discussion-guide-color.pdf>

**Mar 13:** The 1990s: Democracy or Not? Privatization, Oligarchy and Corruption

Phillipe Schmitter, "What Democracy is...And Is Not," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Summer), 1991

<https://www.ned.org/docs/Philippe-C-Schmitter-and-Terry-Lynn-Karl-What-Democracy-is-and-Is-Not.pdf>

**Mar 16-18-20:** The 2000s: Political Leadership, Civil Society, and Protest Movements

Putin's Russia Ch 1

Putin's Russia Ch 4

Regina Smyth and Irina Soboleva, "Looking beyond the economy: Pussy Riot and the Kremlin's voting coalition," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 30:4, 2014, pp.257-275

<https://reginasmythnet.files.wordpress.com/2017/08/looking-beyond-the-economy.pdf>

*Washington Post*, "Russians are Protesting!" March 31, 2017, Read parts 1, 5, 7, and 8 which include the perspectives of Graeme Robertson, Dinissa Duvanova, Regina Smyth, and Tomila Lankina; (Available here: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/03/31/russians-are-protesting-why-part-1-putins-vulnerable/?tid=a\\_inl&utm\\_term=.a25d79414ec8](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/03/31/russians-are-protesting-why-part-1-putins-vulnerable/?tid=a_inl&utm_term=.a25d79414ec8))

**Mar 30:** Rule of law, identity, propaganda, and the smell of the 60s...

Putin's Russia Ch 3

Graeme Robertson, 2009. "Managing Society: Protest, Civil Society, and Regime in Putin's Russia," *Slavic Review* vol. 68, no. 3 (p. 528-547).

Andrew Kramer, "Boris Nemtsov, Putin Foe, is Shot Dead in Shadow of Kremlin," *New York Times*, February 27, 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/28/world/europe/boris-nemtsov-russian-opposition-leader-is-shot-dead.html>

Inside Putin's Russia PBS Doc - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AkAZIk73F0>

**Apr 1-3:** "The Vertical of Power"

Elections without Democracy: The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism

[https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/levitsky/files/SL\\_elections.pdf](https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/levitsky/files/SL_elections.pdf)

The Power of Putin - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZ-Kwr0VFUE>

The Rise of Putin - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1sZ5er60DY>

**Apr 8-10:** Economic Inequality and Social Policy

Putin's Russia Chapter 6

**Apr 13:** Paper Guidelines

**Apr 15:** Economic Policy

Putin's Russia Chapter 7

**Apr 17:** Presentations

**Apr 20:** Crime and Corruption

Putin's Russia Chapter 8

**Apr 22:** Presentations

**Apr: 24-27** Russia's relations with the US and the EU

Putin's Russia Chapter 10, 11

Hiski Haukkala, "From Cooperative to Contested Europe? The Conflict in Ukraine as a Culmination of a Long-Term Crisis in EU-Russia Relations," *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, 23:1

Michael McFaul, "To Beat Putin, Support Ukraine," *New York Times*, August 6, 2014.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/07/opinion/to-beat-putin-support-ukraine.html>

Michael McFaul, "The Myth of Putin's Strategic Genius," *New York Times*, October 23, 2015.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/23/opinion/the-myth-of-putins-strategic-genius.html>

Susan Glasser, "Trump, Putin, and the New Cold War," *Politico*, December 22, 2017. at:

<https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/12/22/donald-trump-vladimir-putin-cold-war-216157>

**Apr 29:** Review

**Final Exam Sunday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> 7:30pm-10pm**

**A few final points:**

#### [Accommodation for Disabilities](#)

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or [dsinfo@colorado.edu](mailto:dsinfo@colorado.edu) for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition or injury, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) under the Students tab on the Disability Services website.

#### [Classroom Behavior](#)

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. Class rosters are provided

to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

### Honor Code

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code ([honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu)); 303-492-5550). Students who are found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office website](#).

### Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering a positive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct (including sexual assault, exploitation, harassment, dating or domestic violence, and stalking), discrimination, and harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or [cureport@colorado.edu](mailto:cureport@colorado.edu). Information about the OIEC, university policies, [anonymous reporting](#), and the campus resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.

### Religious Holidays

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Please let me know as soon as possible whether arrangements along these lines are in order. See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.