Attempts to build market economies and democratic governments provide a great opportunity to study central issues in social science: What is the relationship between democracy and the market? How does private property emerge? Do states undermine or underpin markets? They also provide insight into a fascinating region. Where are the postcommunist countries headed? Has Russia “left the West”? Will Ukraine become a stable democracy? To gain a better understanding of these and other questions, this course examines developments in Soviet and post-Soviet politics. It focuses primarily on the former Soviet Union, but comparisons will also be made to the former communist countries of Eastern Europe.

This course will require students to learn the recent history of the post-communist world, but given the difficulty of keeping up with the rapidly unfolding events in the region, the course is designed primarily to help students develop tools for interpreting and understanding economic and political events in the region. The course will introduce students to the major debates on economic and political reform and try to help students make sense of them.

**Requirements for undergraduates**

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<th>Requirement</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam During Exam Week</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>One Research Paper due in class on December 2</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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**Requirements for M.A. and Ph. D. Students**

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<th>Requirement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>One Research Paper due on or before Dec. 17th at noon</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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</table>

More information on the research paper will be made available early in the semester. Research papers typically require you to compare at least two postcommunist countries on some dimension of economic or political reform and to assess competing arguments for the variation observed. For undergraduates, papers are due at the beginning of class on December 2 and for graduate students they are due during exam week. Papers turned in late will lose one letter grade for each day they are overdue. Brevity and originality are prized.

Each class is an opportunity to have a discussion about the material that we are studying. You are encouraged to bring questions to class based on the readings for that day. If terms or concepts are unclear, please ask me to clarify. This is essential for a successful class. The participation component of the grade is based on discussion in class. Before each class I will select students at random and during lecture I will ask them questions about the readings. Your class participation grade is based on the quality of your participation in class discussions. If I call on you three times and you are absent without a legitimate excuse, your final grade will be lowered by 1/3 of a letter, e. g, from “B” to “B-.” The only legitimate excuses are a death in the family or illness supported by a note from a doctor. Feel free to ask how you are doing on the participation grade at any point in the semester.

**Required Readings**

The following books should be purchased at Book Culture, 536 W 112th, 212 865-1588. www.bookculture.com


Recommended:

*Current History*. October 2010. Available from Current History Website. Also in the Library.

Readings with an * available on Courseworks. JSTOR readings are available electronically via the Columbia University library.

**Cross-Country Comparisons.** This is a course in comparative politics, so comparison is necessary. Students are required to follow the economic and political development of a postcommunist country in Europe (not Russia). You can choose from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaidzhan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, or Uzbekistan. Students may also follow a postcommunist country of Eastern Europe: Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia. The latter group of countries will be discussed less frequently, but there is more secondary literature available. In the paper you will have to compare the economic and political development of the country that you are studying with Russia. Other topics are permitted, but clear them with me first.

**Special Needs:** Students with disabilities or special needs will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs.

**Academic Honesty:** All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. No cheating or plagiarism (using someone else’s words or ideas without proper attribution). Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be handled according to university policy and, when appropriate, reported to the university Committee on Academic Misconduct. If you have questions, please let me know.

The complete text of the GSAS statement on academic honesty is at [http://www.columbia.edu/cu/gsas/rules/chapter-9/pages/honesty/index.html](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/gsas/rules/chapter-9/pages/honesty/index.html). It includes the following definition of plagiarism: “Plagiarism includes buying, stealing, borrowing, or otherwise obtaining all or part of a paper (including obtaining or posting a paper online); hiring someone to write a paper; copying from or paraphrasing another source without proper citation or falsification of citations; and building on the ideas of another without citation.”

There is a fine line between sloppy citations and punctuation and intentional plagiarism. It is your responsibility to learn and use proper attribution and citation. Be safe and determine in advance that you are being both ethical and orderly so as to avoid questionable work that could create an accusation of academic misconduct. You are responsible for asking questions about policies and about my expectations for your work. If you are not certain you are doing the right thing.
You also are violating the GSAS academic integrity policy if you self-plagiarize, i.e. if you turn in for this course a paper that you already have written for another course. Although scholars do build on their early ideas as they advance their scholarship, I expect that written work you do for this course does not duplicate your earlier work. Please talk to me if your paper for this course pursues a topic on which you have written and submitted a paper for another course.”

There are many websites that address academic integrity. The comprehensive “Avoiding plagiarism, self-plagiarism, and other questionable writing practices: A guide to ethical writing” by Miguel Roig is at http://ori.hhs.gov/education/products/roig_st_johns/index.html; it includes samples of illustrative good and bad practices as well as a useful and detailed table of contents.

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/ is a relatively brief overview of academic integrity, written for students, with sections on originality and reliance on earlier work, when and when not to include citations, and how to write so as to avoid unintentional plagiarism.

**Week 1.**

**Introduction**

September 9


Irfan Nooruddin. “A Note on Methods in Political Science.”*

**Week 2.**

**What Was Communism and Why Did it Collapse?**

Sept. 16.


Seweryn Bialer, *Stalin’s Successors,* chap. 8.*


Recommended: Stephen Kotkin 2010. *Uncivil Society*


**Week 3.**

**Studying Postcommunism**

Sept. 23.


Katherine Verdery, 1996. What Was Socialism and What Comes Next, pp. 204-234.*


Week 4.
September 30--- missed class

Week 5.


Timothy Frye, Building States and Markets After Communism, 2010. introduction and chapter 1, 2.


Aslund, How Capitalism Was Built, 29-53


Week 6.
October 14. Economic Reform: Data


Aslund, How Capitalism Was Built, 104-181.

Frye, Building States and Markets, chapters 3, 4 and 5.

Marek Dabrowski, Stanislaw Gomulka and Jacek Rostowski
“Whence Reform?: A Reply to Stiglitz.”*


DATA SOURCES: EBRD Transition Report, Annual Report. Great source of data on each country for each year of the transition. World Bank, World Development Indicators,

**Week 7.**
**October 21.**

**Democracy: Theories and Concepts**


Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market,* Chapter 1.


**Week 8.**
**October 28**

**Democracy: Evidence**


DATA SOURCES: Take a look at http://www.freedomhouse.org/ for articles and data on democracy in the postcommunist region and across the globe. Also see Nations in Transit. Freedom House. Various years. Library Reserve. POLITY IV is a good website for Political variables as is the World Bank’s Data-Base of Political Institutions.

Week 9.
November 4

Mid-term Exam

Week 10
November 11

State-Building: Data

Max Weber. “What is a State?” 38-41*


http://www.law.nyu.edu/eecr/vol11num1_2/features/frye.html

Thomas Carothers, “The Rule of Law Revival” and the “Problem of Knowledge” from Promoting the Rule of Law Abroad: In Search of Knowledge, pages. 9-28.*


**Week 11.**

**November 18.**

**Transition in Russia: Success or Failure**


**Recommended:**

Vladimir Putin. 2000 and 2006 Addresses to the Federal Assembly.  


**November 25**  
No Class

**Week 12.**  
**December 2.**  
**Are Natural Resources a Curse?**


**Recommended:**  
TBA

**Week 13.**  
**December 9.**  
**Colored Revolutions and the Future of the Region**


**Recommended:**  