

# Post-Soviet State and Market Building

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The break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991 provoked far more than the foundation of 15 new states and regime change. The demise of the centralized Soviet bureaucracy broke up established governmental authority, forcing the new states to establish new institutions and authority structures. At the same time, the collapse of the Soviet planned economy simultaneously caused one of the largest economic declines in modern history and deprived the government of the resources to deal with it. How did the 15 Post-Soviet countries build functioning states and markets, establish property rights, and navigate the process of replacing Soviet authoritarian governments? To what extent were they successful and what was the human cost of these reforms? What lessons can be drawn from their experience? To answer these and other important questions, this course examines developments in Soviet and Post-Soviet politics through the lens of comparative political economy. It also touches on fundamental topics in history, sociology, and cultural studies, including state-building, the process of reform, popular opinion and interpretations of these reform, democratization (and its inverse), the welfare state, and business-state relations.

While the focus of this course is on the recent political and economic history of post-communist countries, as we shall see one of the few constants in the region is rapid change. Events such as fall of the Soviet Union, the depth of the region's post-Soviet economic collapse, colored revolutions, and the rise of competitive, albeit authoritarian, regimes have surprised many. The dizzying pace of change makes it difficult to understand the region based purely on historical events and trends. As a consequence, the primary goal of this course is to introduce and develop more general tools to put that history – and future developments – into perspective. By the end of the course, students should have the historical background and analytical tools needed to understand major political and economic events in the region, as well as to critically evaluate and develop explanations for them.

## **Requirements**

Two Critical Briefs	20% (10% each)
Mid-term Exam	20%
In-class Simulation	25%
Final Research Paper	25%
In-class participation	10%

**Critical Briefs:** In order to hone analytical skills, students will be asked to write two short (2 – 3 pages) briefs critiquing any of the reading assignments for the course. Each brief should primarily tackle one of the course readings and should contain three elements:

- A very brief (one paragraph) summary of the main research question, the main argument, and the types of evidence that the author presents to defend their position.
- An evaluation of the argument and the evidence. This can be approached through a number of different questions. Does the logic behind the argument make sense? Does the evidence the author presents match the argument (i.e. do they prove what they say they will)? Are you aware

of different sources of evidence that could contradict or support the argument? How could the author have made the argument more convincing? Finally, how does the piece compare to others assigned for the topic? Are there major disagreements, or does there appear to be consensus? For each of these questions, it is important to explain why you answer the way you do and to carefully lay out the logic of your objections and suggestions.

- Do you find the argument convincing? Why or why not?

We will spend a portion of the first week of the course discussing the briefs and talking through some basic strategies for dissecting and critiquing both the arguments and the evidence presented in academic and policy articles, book chapters, and policy briefs. Students should turn in one brief before the mid-term exam on week 7 and a second by week 15. Briefs for a given week's readings are due before the first class of that week. Each report constitutes 5% of the final grade (10% all together).

**In-class Simulation:** Students will be split into small teams and assigned to represent various ministries, business associations, and the presidential administration of a fictitious Post-Soviet government shortly after the collapse of Communism. With their team, students will develop and present a set of reform proposals to be negotiated with the other groups over two class sessions. Students should make sure that their plan addresses questions related to state-building, economic reform, and the nature of the political regime that we will be studying throughout the semester. They should also make sure their plan conforms to the interests represented by the group they represent. Before the first in-class simulation session, each group will be responsible for turning in a short 5 page brief explaining their initial position and how it relates to the goals of the group they represent. Overdue papers will result in a one letter grade deduction for the entire group for each day they are late. More information and ministry assignments will be provided after the mid-term. The paper and participation during the simulation activity are worth 25% of the final grade.

**Research Paper:** More details on the research paper will be provided early on in the semester. In the research paper, students will be asked to compare at least two post-communist countries along some dimension of political or economic reform and to assess competing arguments for the variation observed in these countries. Students with a particular interest that diverges from this are welcome to propose their own ideas, so long as the proposed topic falls under the rubric of political economy and deals with at least one Post-Soviet state. Papers are due during the scheduled final exam period and will lose one letter grade for each day overdue. The paper is worth 25% of the final grade.

**Participation:** Classes will be conducted in a hybrid lecture/discussion format. As such, each is an opportunity to have a discussion about the material. It is important to complete all readings for each week before the first class of the week, as well as to have questions on unclear terms, concepts, or events ready for class. As a general rule, if something is confusing for one member of the class, many other students will also find it confusing. Asking questions is therefore critical for a successful class.

The participation component of the final grade is based on our in-class discussions. I will select students at random before each class and will ask them questions about the readings. Each student's grade will reflect the quality of their answers to these questions and attendance. Students who are absent two times when I call on them will have their final grade lowered by 2/3rds of a letter grade (i.e. A+ to A-). Students

who expect to be absent during class for a legitimate reason should contact me prior to class to make arrangements and will be accommodated according to university policies. Only absences due to medical or family issues (with appropriate documentation) will be accommodated after the fact. Please feel free to ask about your participation grade at any point in the semester or approach me with any questions related to it. Participation is worth 10% of the final grade.

**Special Needs:** Students with special needs of any type should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange for necessary accommodations. These will be handled on a case-by-case basis according to university policy.

**Academic Integrity:** All work for this course is expected to be students' own and cheating on exams or the use of other's work (words or ideas) without acknowledgement (plagiarism) will not be tolerated. Cases of either will be handled according to university policy and, where appropriate, referred to the relevant university authorities. When in doubt about whether conduct will violate university policy, please do not hesitate to ask me first. The complete text of the university's policy can be found online at: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/gsas/rules/chapter-9/pages/honesty/index.html>. Please be aware that it is often hard to tell the difference between sloppy punctuation or citation practices and intentional plagiarism. It is the responsibility of every student to be aware of proper citation procedures. For students with little experience writing course papers, or those that want to brush up on academic integrity, I would recommend the following resources:

- Roig, Miguel. "Avoiding plagiarism, self-plagiarism, and other questionable writing practices: A guide to ethical writing". Available at: [http://ori.hhs.gov/education/products/roig\\_st\\_johns/index.html](http://ori.hhs.gov/education/products/roig_st_johns/index.html).
- Stolley, Karl, Allen Brizee, and Joshua M. Paiz. "Avoiding Plagiarism". Available at: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>

Again, I am more than happy to answer any and all topics related to academic integrity. Instructions on preferred citation format, etc. will be provided during the first week of class.

**Required Readings:** The following books are required for the course. Please be advised that in some cases e-books are available and can be a considerable cost savings compared to other options.

- Mary Macauley (1992). *Soviet Politics, 1917-1991*. Oxford University Press.
- Linda Cook (2007). *Postcommunist Welfare States: Reform Politics in Russia and Eastern Europe*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Timothy Frye (2010). *Building States and Markets After Communism: The Perils of Polarized Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Scott Radnitz (2010). *Weapons of the Wealthy: Predatory Regimes and Elite-Led Protests in Central Asia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

All other required readings will be posted online on the university's Courseworks system or will be placed on reserve at the library. Should there be any technical issues with retrieving the readings, please do not hesitate to write.

#### Week 1

#### **Introduction to Post-Soviet Studies and Critiquing Research**

Herbert Kitschelt (2002). "Accounting for Postcommunist Regime Diversity: What Counts as a Good Cause?", in Gregorz Ekiert and Stephen Hanson, eds. *Capitalism and Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 49 – 86.

Timothy Frye (2012). "In From the Cold: Causal Inference and Postcommunism." *Annual Review of Political Science* 15: 245 – 263.

John Gerring, et al. undated "Advice on Essay Writing." Manuscript.

#### Week 2

#### **The Soviet Union and the Communist System**

Mary Macauley (1992). *Soviet Politics, 1917-1991*. Oxford University Press. Ch. 1 - 6

Richard Ericson (1991). "The Classical Soviet-Type Economy." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. 5 (4): 11-27.

#### Week 3

#### **The Communist Collapse and its Causes**

Mary Macauley (1992). *Soviet Politics, 1917-1991*. Oxford University Press. Ch. 7 and Conclusion.

Steve Kotkin (2003). *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970-2000*. Ch. 1 and 2.

Martin K. Dimitrov (2013). "Understanding Communist Collapse and Resilience", in Martin Dimitrov, ed. *Why Communism Did not Collapse: Understanding Authoritarian Regime Resilience in Asia and Europe*. Ch. 1.

#### Week 4

#### **The Economic Challenges of Transition**

Gerald Roland (2000). *Transitions and Economics*. Cambridge: MIT Press. Ch. 1

Anders Aslund (2007). *Russia's Capitalist Revolution: Why Market Reform Succeeded and Democracy Failed*. Washington: Peterson Institute for International Economics. Ch. 3

Joel Hellman (1998). "Winners Take All: The Politics of Partial Reform in Postcommunist Transitions". *World Politics* 50 (2): 203-234.

Adam Przeworski (1991). *Democracy and the Market*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 4

#### Week 5

#### **The Problem of State Building and Democratization in Transition**

Timothy Frye (2010). *Building States and Markets After Communism: The Perils of Polarized Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Introduction and Ch. 1.

Claus Offe (1991). "Capitalism by Democratic Design? Democratic Theory Facing the Triple Transition in East Central Europe." *Social Research* 58: 865 – 92.

Venelin Ganey (2001). "The Dorian Gray Effect: Winners as Statebreakers in Postcommunism." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 34: 1 – 25.

Timothy Frye and Andrei Shleifer (1997). "The Invisible Hand and the Grabbing Hand" The

*American Economic Review Papers and Proceedings* 354 – 358.

Venelin Ganey. (2005). “Post-Communism as an Episode of State-Building.” *Communist and Post-Communist Politics* 38: 425 – 445.

Week 6 **(Re)Building the State (or Not)**

Scott Gehlbach (2008), *Representation Through Taxation: Revenue, Politics, and Development in Postcommunist States*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 1 – 2.

Keith Darden and Anna Grzymala-Busse (2007). “The Great Divide: Pre-Communist Schooling and Post-Communist Trajectories.” *World Politics* 59 (1): 83 – 115.

Joel Hellman, Geraint Jones, and Daniel Kaufman (2003). “Seize the State, Seize the Day.” *Journal of Comparative Economics* 31 (4): 751 – 773.

Brian Taylor (2013). *State Building in Putin’s Russia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 1 and 8.

Michael Rochlitz. 2014. “Corporate Raiding.” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 30 (2-3): 89 – 114.

Week 7 **Post-Soviet Economic Reform**

Timothy Frye (2010). *Building States and Markets After Communism: The Perils of Polarized Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 7 – 10.

Andrei Shleifer and Daniel Treisman (2000), *Without a Map: Political Tactics and Economic Reform in Russia*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1-38, 175 – 185.

Joseph Stiglitz (1999). “Whither Reform?” *Annual Bank Conference on Development*. Washington D.C.

Marek Dabrowski, Stanislaw Gomulka, and Jacek Rostowski (1999) “Whence Reform?; A Reply to Stiglitz.”

Week 8 **Mid-Term Exam**

Week 9 **A Case Study in Reforms: Russia’s Welfare State**

Linda Cook (2007). *Postcommunist Welfare States: Reform Politics in Russia and Eastern Europe*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Introduction, Ch. 2 – 4.

Thomas Remington (2010). *The Politics of Inequality in Russia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 2.

Week 10 **Identity and the Politics of Secession**

David Laitin (1998). *Identity in Formation: The Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, Chapters 1-3.

Elise Giuliano (2006), “Secession from the Bottom Up: Democratization, Nationalism, and Local Accountability in the Russian Transition”, *World Politics* 58: 276 – 310.

Henry Hale (2004). "Divided We Stand: Institutional Sources of Ethnofederal State Survival and Collapse". *World Politics* 54 (2): 165 – 193.

Week 11 **Democracy and Democratic Outcomes**

Philippe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl (Summer 1991). "What Democracy is ...and is Not." *Journal of Democracy* 2 (3): 75 – 88.

Przeworski, Adam (1991). *Democracy and the Market*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 1

Henry Hale (2004). "Regime Cycles: Democracy, Autocracy, and Revolution in Post-Soviet Russia." *World Politics* 58 (1): 133 – 165.

Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan (1996). *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. pp. 401-433.

Marc Morje Howard (2002), "The Weakness of Postcommunist Civil Society" *Journal of Democracy* 13 (1): 157 – 169.

Week 12 **Autocratic Consolidation and Politics in the Post-Soviet World**

Lucan Way (2005). "Authoritarian State Building and the Sources of Regime Competitiveness in the Fourth Wave: The Cases of Belarus, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine". *World Politics* 57: 231 – 261.

Steve Levitsky and Lucan A. Way (April 2002). "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism" *Journal of Democracy*. 13 (2): 51 – 65.

Ora John Reuter and Thomas Remington (2009). Dominant Party Regimes and the Commitment Problem: the Case of United Russia. *Comparative Political Studies* 42 (4): 501 – 526.

Timothy Frye, Ora John Reuter, and David Szakonyi (2014). "Political Machines at Work: Electoral Subversion and Workplace Mobilization in Russia." *World Politics* 66 (02): 194 – 228.

Week 13 **Protest and Mass Mobilization**

Lucan Way (July 2008), "The Real Causes of the Color Revolutions" *Journal of Democracy* 19 (3): 55-69.

Lucan Way (2009). "Debating the Color Revolutions: A Reply to My Critics". *Journal of Democracy* 20 (1): 90-97.

Josh Tucker (2007). "Enough! Electoral Fraud, Collective Action Problems, and Post-Communist Colored Revolutions," *Perspectives on Politics*, 5(3): 537-553.

Scott Radnitz (2010). *Weapons of the Wealthy: Predatory Regimes and Elite-Led Protests in Central Asia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Introduction, Ch. 1, Ch. 6, Conclusion.

Week 14 **In-Class Simulation**

Week 15 **Putting Postcommunism into Perspective**

Andrei Shleifer and Daniel Treisman (Winter 2005). "Russia: A Normal Country: Russia After Communism." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 19 (1): 151-174.

Dmitrii Trenin. "Reading Russia Right." Carnegie Endowment Policy Brief. 2005.

Valerie Bunce (1995). "Should Transitologists Be Grounded?" *Slavic Review* 54 (1): 111-127.