

Politics of Post-Communism, Fall 2008, WH 305, TR 9:30 to 10:45 am

POLS 4360, 4830 H B , 6 credit hours

Jim Peterson, Office Hours, MW, 3-5 pm, phone 333-5771

WH 244, jpetersn@valdosta.edu, Department of Political Science

There is much of value in the dynamic politics within post-communist space today. Russia is on the rise in economic and political terms, and both its oil power and domestic markets are sources of real strength. With a new President Medvedev, it will be interesting to see how much power he possesses in relation to his predecessor and the current Prime Minister Putin. Russian and American interests in the post-9/11 world have sometimes meshed but more often clashed. It is difficult to describe accurately what kind of democracy Russia has become. On the surface, all the ingredients of democracy are there, but many outsiders worry about excessive centralization. Central Europe is a diverse region with much activity to report. The new nation of Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia earlier in the year. Last year Bulgaria and Romania gained admission to the European Union. Now, most of the key nations in the region are members of both NATO and the EU. Their troops play an important role in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and the American decision to place a radar defense system in the region adds spice to the mix.

There will be two exams during the term, a final exam, and a five-page paper. Students will choose either a change related theme or a country. In the paper they will analyze the key historical background, provide rich case study material, and generate independent conclusions. Each of the four pieces of work will count for 25% of the final grade. In calculating the final grade for students whose grade falls exactly between two levels, factors such as class participation, upward or downward progress in grades, and attendance will play a role. A good attendance record is one in which the student has missed five or fewer classes during the term. Valdosta State University complies fully with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you believe that you are covered under this act, and if you have need for special arrangements to allow you to meet the requirements of this course, please contact the personnel at the VSU Access Office for Students with Disabilities. Incompletes will be given only in situations of extreme personal hardship. Students in the honors section will write a five page paper, agreed upon with the instructor, as a substitute for each of the first two exams. They will take the same final exam and write the same research paper as students in the regular section.

The course will enable students to meet Departmental Degree Outcome # 2. "Political Science majors will demonstrate through both oral and written work that they are skilled in inquiry, logical reasoning, and critical analysis, thereby enabling arguments, synthesis of facts and information, and presenting logical arguments leading to creative solutions to problems." By the end of the course, students will use critical analysis to write research papers on topics of importance to both Russia and Central Europe. They will also synthesize information about both regions in order to develop conclusions about policy problems in the area. In addition, they will use critical analysis and information synthesis as they plan careers that will have a global dimension.

Books: Hesli, Vicki L. *Governments and Politics in Russia and the Post-Soviet Region*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2007.

Wolchik, Sharon L. and Jane L. Curry. *Central & East European Politics: From Communism to Democracy*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008.

<i>Week</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Topics</i>	<i>Readings</i>
1	Aug. 19,21	Comparing Post-Soviet States/Ideology	VH, 1-38
2	Aug. 26,28	Russian Historical Legacies/Ethnic Issues	VH, 39-107
3	Sept. 2,4	Russian Political Culture/Institutions	VH, 108-153
4	Sept. 9,11	Political Behavior in Russia	VH, 154-207
5	Sept. 16,18	Russia's Associational Groups/ Exam # 1 (18th)	VH, 208-231
6	Sept. 23,25	Russian Policy/Introduction to Central Europe	VH, 232-264, SW, 3-32
7	Sept. 30, Oct. 2	Political Transition in Central Europe/Markets	SW, 33-86
8	Oct. 7,9	Ethnicity/Nationalism in Central Europe	87-112
9	Oct. 16	Role of Women/EU Accession in Central Europe	113-146
10	Oct. 21,23	Security Issues and NATO/ Exam # 2 (23rd)	147-164
11	Oct. 28,30	Poland, Czech Republic, and Slovakia	165-214
12	Nov. 4,6	Hungary and the Baltic States	215-252
13	Nov. 11,13	Bulgaria	253-280
14	Nov. 18,20	The Former Yugoslavia/ Papers Due (20th)	281-316
15	Nov. 25	Romania	317-338
16	Dec. 2,4	Ukraine, Future of the Region	339-378
17	Dec. 11	Final Exam Thursday 10:15-12:15	