



CIEE St. Petersburg, Russia

Course name:	Comparative Cultural Studies: The United States and Russia
Course number:	POLI 3001 RLPR
Programs offering course:	Russian Language Program
Language of instruction:	Russian
U.S. semester credits:	3
Contact hours:	45
Term:	Fall 2019

Course Description

Through the introduction of key cultural, social and political issues and discussions based on texts and documentaries this course gives CIEE students the opportunity to learn more about the contemporary Russian political sphere. Topics include citizen and state, values and norms, political and social processes. Texts are primarily by Russian authors and include both academic secondary sources and articles from the mass media. The analysis of current political issues will provide students with the tools to understand contemporary Russia and give an outlook of future developments. Classes are conducted in Russian, though English is used for explanatory purposes.

Learning Objectives

After completing this course students will be able to:

- describe key sociopolitical and social-cultural developments in Russia and the former Soviet space since 1991;
- evaluate and describe key processes in the post-Soviet world and their challenges, including democratization and the development of a public sphere;
- analyze post-Soviet realities from an interdisciplinary perspective, employing concepts from disciplines of political science, history, sociology, and cultural studies;
- improve their ability to present their ideas in writing and verbally in front of their peers;
- compare the post-Soviet Russian experience to those of contemporary America to better understand global challenges and communication processes

Course Prerequisites

None

Methods of Instruction

The coursework will consist of lectures, seminars and site visits. Students are expected to come to class having completed their readings by the assigned date and to participate actively in the classroom discussions.

Assessment and Final Grade

Students will be assessed according to the following criteria:



Class participation	20%
Quizzes	20% (10% for each quiz)
Paper and presentation	30%
Final exam	30%
Total:	100%

Course Requirements

Two quizzes will be given during the semester. These quizzes will test your knowledge of the material acquired at the lectures and through the readings and will be a combination of multiple choice questions and several open questions.

Your presentation and your paper for this course will require you to apply some of the theoretical material from the readings in analyzing a contemporary Russian event, cultural or political phenomenon, meme, blog post, journalistic piece, speech, work of literature, movie etc. selected from societal perspective. Students chose the topic for their presentation and paper, based on their own interests and then discuss it with the instructor for final approval.

Your paper should be 7-10 page long, double-spaced between lines along with 1" margin on all sides and it should use 12-point Times New Roman font. Before submitting the paper to the instructor, each student will give an oral presentation on the chosen topic, as a way to share her/his findings with the rest of the class and receiving feedback from peers and the instructor. Your presentation should last 15 minutes. Supporting visuals in the form of handouts, PowerPoint or other forms are welcome.

The final in-class exam is given during the last week of the semester and it tests your knowledge of course concepts, theories and facts. It is a combination of multiple-choice questions, open questions and a short essay on a proposed topic.

Class Attendance

Attendance is crucial for successful completion of the class. Students are allowed to have two unexcused absences for each course for the whole semester program. These allowed unexcused absences should be used for situations such as minor illnesses without a doctor's note or personal situations that prevent the student from attending the class. Allowed unexcused absences should not be used in a planned way for travel or other activities. Unexcused absences beyond the limit of two will lower a student's grade by 2 points on the 100-point scale each. For example, if your overall score in the class is 90 (an equivalent of A-) and you have had three unexcused absences, your final score will be 88 (B+).

Weekly Schedule

Week 1.

Class 1. Introduction and introductions.

Lecture: 'Political Culture' concept and theoretical approaches to political culture studies.

Class 2.

Seminar: Development of Russian and US Political Culture.: comparative analysis



Readings:

Politicheskaya kultura sovremennoi Rossii. <https://psyera.ru/politicheskaya-kultura-sovremennoy-rossii_8679.htm>, assessed January 10, 2019

Политическая культура США Politicheskaya kultura

<https://studwood.ru/1056352/politologiya/politicheskaya_kultura_harakternye_cherty_tendentsii_evolyutsii>, assessed January 10, 2019

Vijay Kumar, "Political Culture and Democratization in Russia," pp 60-67

Week 2.

Class 1.

Lecture: "Perestroika" and fall of the USSR.

Class 2.

Seminar: The disintegration of the USSR.

Readings:

"The disintegration of the USSR." Sakwa, R. *Russian Politics and Society*, pp. 25-39.

.*Rossiia dvukhtysiachnykh*. M.,2011 <http://russiancouncil.ru/library/library_rsmd/rossiya-dvukhtysiachnykh-stereoskopicheskiy-vzglyad>, assessed January 10, 2019

Week 3.

Class 1.

Lecture: Russia in Transition. Yeltsin's domestic policy and liberal reforms of the 1990s.

Class 2. Seminar: Transformation of Russian political regime in the 1990s -2000s.

Democracy and Political Liberty: Russian and American approach.

Readings:

"The 1993 Constitution." Sakwa, R. *Russian Politics and Society*, pp. 63-69.

Constitution of the United States <<http://constitutionus.com>>, assessed January 10, 2019

Rossiia dvukhtysiachnykh. M.,2011 <http://russiancouncil.ru/library/library_rsmd/rossiya-dvukhtysiachnykh-stereoskopicheskiy-vzglyad>, assessed January 10, 2019

Week 4.

Class 1. Lecture: Putin's policy of "stabilization" and Medvedev's "modernization"

Class 2. Seminar: Russia "Special Path" concept and American Exclusiveness

❖ **Quiz 1**

Readings:

Desai, Padma, "Russian Retrospectives on Reforms from Yeltsin to Putin," pp. 87-106

Felix Krawatzek, "Modernisation and a new political game in Russia?"

Alexander Kubyshekin and Alexei Sergunin, "Problema osobogo puti vo vnrshnei politike Rossii," In *Ideologiya osobogo puti v Rossii I Germanii*, Moscow, 2011, pp. 159-169

Week 5.

Class 1.

Lecture: Structure of Russian Public Authorities.

Class 2.

Site visit: Museum of History of Russian Democracy, Saint Petersburg



Week 6.

Class 1.

Lecture: Federal and regional levels of governance; self-governance in Russian Federation

❖ **Your paper topic is due**

Class 2.

Seminar . Decision-making process in Russia. American Federalism and Federalism in Russia.

Readings:

Shirayev, Eric. *Russian Government and Politics*. Second Edition. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Chapter 4, "The Executive Branch," pp. 91-114; Chapter 7, "Political Parties," pp. 153-171; Chapter 8, "Presidential and Parliamentary Election," pp. 173-190

Week 7.

Class 1.

Lecture: Social stratification in Russian Federation. Social groups and social values in Russia and the US

Readings:

"Social structure and dynamics," in Sakwa, R. *Russian Politics and Society*, pp. 314-324

Class 2.

Seminar: Political culture of contemporary Russian society compared to American: participation, voting and absenteeism

Readings:

Mishler, William and John P. Willerton, "The Dynamics of Presidential Popularity in Post-Communist Russia: Cultural Imperative versus Neo-Institutional Choice?" pp. 111-141
David Remnick, "The Civil Archipelago: How far can the resistance to Vladimir Putin go?"

Week 8.

Class 1. Lecture: Party system and leadership: role of ideologies and rational choice in Russia and US

Readings:

Ostrow, Joel. *Politics in Russia: A Reader*. Chapter 6, "Political Parties," pp. 268-332
White, Stephen, Matthew Wyman and Sarah Oates, "Parties and Voters in the 1995 Russian Duma Election" (pp. 767-798).

❖ **Quiz 2**

Class 2. Seminar: Higher education in Russia and US: communication, civic society, academic freedom and democratic involvement..

Readings:

Anikina, E.A., Ivankina L.I. Krizis vysshego obrazovaniia v Rossii: Proyzvleniia, Prichiny, Sledstviia. <<https://www.science-education.ru/ru/article/view?id=24770>>, assessed January 10, 2019

Week 9.



Class 1.

Lecture: Press and media in modern Russia.

Class 2.

Seminar: Limitations and obstacles to freedom of speech in Russia and the US.

Readings:

"The media," in Sakwa, R. *Russian Politics and Society*, pp. 345-349.

Ostrow, Joel. *Politics in Russia: A Reader*. Chapter 9, "The Media." Pp. 444 – 485

Lane, David. *Soviet Society under Perestroika*. Chapter 9, "Glasnost and Mass Media," pp. 275-334.

Week 10.

Class 1.

Lecture: Political humor. Peculiarities of Russian and American types of political humor: anecdotes, caricatures, parodies.

V: Kukly [Puppets] TV Show

❖ **Student presentations**

Class 2.

Seminar: Role of stereotypes in attitude to foreign people: Russia and USA.

Readings:

Schneider, David. *The Psychology of Stereotyping* London and NY: The Guilford Press, 2004.

❖ **Student presentations**

Week 11.

Class 1.

Lecture: Foreign affairs: relations between Russia and other countries. Russia and US

❖ **Student presentations**

Class 2.

Seminar: Foreign affairs issues: Migrants and xenophobia

Readings:

Stent. *Pochemu Amerika i Rossiia ne slyshat drug druga*.M..2015

Woo, Pyung-Kyun, "Russia's National Interests and Foreign Policy: The Trends after the Collapse of the Soviet Union," pp. 83-108.

❖ **Your paper is due**

Week 12.

Class 1.

Seminar: Civil society and activism in Russia and the US

Readings:

Robertson, Graeme B. "Civil Society and Contentious Politics in Russia," pp. 117-129;

Rossiia "dvukhtysiachnykh": stereoskopicheskiy vzglyad. Moscow, pp. 163-178.

//http://russiancouncil.ru/library/library_rsm/rossiya-dvukhtysyachnykh-stereoskopicheskiy-vzglyad/

Class 2.

❖ **Final exam**



Course materials **Readings**

Desai, Padma, "Russian Retrospectives on Reforms from Yeltsin to Putin," in *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*. Vol. 19, No. 1 (Winter, 2005), pp. 87-106

Félix Krawatzek, "Modernisation and a new political game in Russia?" in CEPS Publications. August 10, 2010. <[https://www.ceps.eu/search?keywords=Krawatzek&type=All&f\[0\]=field_book_publication_date%3A2010-08](https://www.ceps.eu/search?keywords=Krawatzek&type=All&f[0]=field_book_publication_date%3A2010-08)>, assessed January 10, 2019

Kumar, Vijay, "Political Culture and Democratization in Russia" in *Comparative Politics*, 3 (17), 2014, pp 60-67.

Lane, David. *Soviet Society under Perestroika*. Boston: Unwin Human, 1990. Chapter 9, "Glasnost and Mass Media," pp. 275-334.

Mishler, William and John P. Willerton, "The Dynamics of Presidential Popularity in Post-Communist Russia: Cultural Imperative versus Neo-Institutional Choice?" in *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 65, No. 1 (Feb., 2003), pp. 111-141

Ostrow, Joel. *Politics in Russia: A Reader*. Los Angeles and London: Sage, 2013. Chapter 6, "Political Parties," pp. 268-332; Chapter 9, "The Media." 444-485.

Rossiiia "dvukhtysiachnykh": stereoskopichesky vzgliad. Moscow, pp. 163-178

Sakwa, Richard. *Russian Politics and Society*. Fourth Edition. London and NY: Routledge, 2008; Chapter 2, "The disintegration of the USSR," pp. 25-39; Chapter 4, "Constitutionalism and the Law," pp. 63 – 82; Chapter 14, "Society and Social movements," pp. 314 – 343; Chapter 15, "Cultural Transformation," pp. 345 – 362.

Schneider, David. *The Psychology of Stereotyping*. London and NY: The Guilford Press, 2004.
Shirayev, Eric. *Russian Government and Politics*. Second Edition. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Chapter 4, "The Executive Branch," pp. 91-114; Chapter 7, "Political Parties," pp. 153-171; Chapter 8, "Presidential and Parliamentary Election," pp. 173-190

White, Stephen, Matthew Wyman and Sarah Oates, "Parties and Voters in the 1995 Russian Duma Election," in *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 5 (Jul., 1997), pp. 767-798.

White, Stephen, Richard Sakwa and Henry E. Hale, eds. *Developments in Russian Politics* 8. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014. Chapter 7. In Robertson, Graeme B. "Civil Society and Contentious Politics in Russia," pp. 117 -129; Chapter 10. Slider, Darrel "A Federal State?" pp. 157 – 172; Chapter 12. Svetlana Stephenson, "Society and Social Divisions in Russia," 192-210

Woo, Pyung-Kyun, "Russia's National Interests and Foreign Policy: The Trends after the Collapse of the Soviet Union," in *Pacific Focus*, Volume 17, Issue 1, March 2002, pp. 83-108.



Online resources

Government of Russian Federation. Official site, <http://www.gov.ru>

Official site of Russian President, <http://www.president.kremlin.ru>

Official site of Presidential Administration, <http://www.kremlin.ru/mainpage.shtml>

Official site of the State Duma, <http://www.duma.gov.ru>

Official sites of Russia's political parties:

- United Russia: <https://er.ru>
- Communist Party: <https://kprf.ru>
 - Spravedlivaia Rossiia, www.spravedlivo.ru
 - LDPR, www.ldpr.ru
 - Yabloko, www.yabloko.ru

Russian Public Opinion Research Center, <https://wciom.ru>

Public Opinion Foundation, <http://fom.ru/>

World Values Survey, www.worldvaluessurvey.org/