



CIEE in 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:	Spring 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 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 and seminar discussions on the assigned readings and lecture material. Students are expected to come to class having completed the readings by the assigned date and to participate actively in classroom discussions.

Assessment and Final Grade

Students will be assessed according to the following criteria:



- Participation 20%
- Quizzes 30% (10% for each quiz)
- Paper (5 pages / 10 000-12 000 characters) 20%
- Student presentations?
- Final test 30%

TOTAL: 100%

Course Requirements

Three 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.

Paper. The goal and the format of the paper will be explained in a separate document, which I will distribute later during the semester

The final in-class test 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 the 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.

Introduction and introductions.

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

Seminar: Development of Russian Political Culture.

Reading material for discussion:

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

Week 2.

Lecture: "Perestroika" and fall of the USSR.

Seminar: The disintegration of the USSR.

Reading material for discussion:

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



Week 3.

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

Seminar: Transformation of Russian political regime in the beginning of 1990s.

Reading material for discussion:

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

Week 4.

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

Seminar: Russian politics in the 2000s

❖ **Quiz 1**

Video: Russia: facing the future (documentary by Carnegie corporation)

Reading material for discussion:

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

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

Week 5.

Lecture: Structure of Russian Public Authorities.

Site visit: Museum of Russian Political History

Week 6.

Lecture: Federal and regional levels of governance; self-governance in Russian federation; decision-making process in Russia.

Seminar: Structure, mechanics and efficiency of US and Russia's system of government.

❖ **Student presentations: Structure of the US public authorities.**

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.

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

Readings:

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

"Welfare and incomes," Sakwa, R. *Russian Politics and Society* pp. 325-329.

Svetlana Stephenson, "Society and Social Divisions in Russia," pp.192 – 210;



Handouts:

Sociological surveys by FOM (fom.ru), VCIOM (wciom.ru)

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.

Lecture: Party system and Leadership: role of ideologies and rational choice in Russia and US

Internet sources: Websites of political parties in Russia

Seminar: Political culture and modern types of political communication (e-government, networks, etc.).

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**

Week 9.

Lecture: Press and media in modern Russia.

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

Readings:

The media // Sakwa, R. *Russian Politics and Society* (pp. 345-349).

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

Lane, David. Soviet Society under Perestroika. Chapter 9, "Glasnost and Mass Media," (pp. 275 – 334).

Week 10.

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

Video: "Kukly" ("Puppets") TV Show

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

Handouts:

Sociological surveys by FOM (fom.ru), VCIOM (wciom.ru)

Readings:

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



Week 11.

Lecture: Foreign affairs: relations between Russia and other countries

Seminar: Foreign affairs issues: Migrants and xenophobia

Handouts:

Sociological surveys by FOM (fom.ru), VCIOM (wciom.ru)

Reading material for discussion:

Bahgat Gawdat, "Russia's oil and gas policy," in *OPEC Energy Review*, pp. 162–183.

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.

Seminar: Civil society and activism in Russia

Readings:

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

FINAL TEST

Course materials

Readings

Gawdat Bahgat, "Russia's oil and gas policy," in *OPEC Energy Review*," Volume 34, Issue 3-4 September/December 2010, pp 162–183.

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

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

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

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

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.

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

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.

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.

Félix Krawatzek, "Modernisation and a new political game in Russia?" in CEPS Publications. August 10, 2010. Stable URL:



[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)

White, Stephen, Richard Sakwa and Henry E. Hale, eds. *Developments in Russian Politics* 8. Durham: Duke University Press, 2014. Chapter 7. 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.
Schneider, David. *The Psychology of Stereotyping*. London and NY: The Guilford Press, 2004.

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/>
- The Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation: <http://www.ach.gov.ru/>
- Official sites of Russia's political parties:
- United Russia: <https://er.ru/>
- Communist Party: <https://kprf.ru/>
- Just Russia: 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 Value Survey www.worldvaluessurvey.org/