



CIEE Warsaw, Poland

Course name:	Polish Society & Politics
Course number:	SOCI 3001 WRSW
Programs offering course:	Central European Studies
Language of instruction:	English
Contact Hours:	45
Credits:	3
Term:	Spring 2020

Course Description

The content of the course is focused on several problems:

- why Poland “lost” the II WW?
- why the communist system in Poland had different character, compared to other countries in the east block (e.g. Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania)
- why this system was shaken through so many crisis in Poland, in 1956, 1968/69, 1970, 1976, and 1980/81
- why Poland was the first country to get rid of the communist system
- what were the problems which arose in the process of building a new democratic system after 1989
- what is the political , social and economic system in Poland today.

Learning Objectives

Students are expected to learn important dates, facts and mechanisms, which shaped political and social systems in Poland and East – Central Europe in three different periods: 1918 – 1944, 1945-1989 and after 1989 – until today. They will learn about the main state institutions (parliament, president, government and supreme court) now and in the past. They will able to differentiate between political, social and economic systems in Poland, Germany, Czech and Russia, Ukraine, Belarus to day.

Course Prerequisites

Interest in politics.

Methods of Instruction

Lectures, class discussions

Assessment and Final Grade

The final course grade will be determined based on the following distribution:

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|------------------------|-----|
| • Final essay | 30% |
| • Active participation | 15% |
| • Presentations | 20% |
| • Written assignment | 20% |
| • Oral test | 15% |



Course Requirements

Final essay:

Each student will be required to write an extended final essay (ca. 4–6 pages, circa 10 000 words including footnotes) on one of the topics covered throughout the semester. They will be assessed on the basis of the relevance, use of appropriate quotes and theories as well as their individual approach and interpretation of the topic.

Presentations:

Each student is required to prepare at home and deliver in class one presentation on a given topic.

Written assignment:

Students are required to prepare a written self-characteristic survey consisting of 12 questions about their interests in literature, current political and cultural events they consider crucial, news channels they follow, etc.

Oral test:

At the end of the course each student will be asked to speak for 10 minutes about what they have learnt during the course and their stay in Warsaw in general, how it has changed their perspective on the discussed issues and world view, etc.

Active participation in class:

Students are expected to actively contribute to class discussions. You are also expected to attend guest lectures and panel discussions. In terms of class discussions, students are expected to maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect; however, they should feel free to disagree with the instructor and their classmates as long as the discussion is conducted in polite and scholarly manner.

Weekly Schedule:

Week 1

1.1. Topic of Class: Introduction

Description of content:

- Historical geography of Poland
- The modern Polish State (1918-1939)

1.2 Topic of Class: Introduction II

Week 2

2.1 Topic of Class: Poland in the Second World War 1939-1945

Description of content:

- The September campaign 1939 and its results
- Polish Government in exile (Paris-London)
- US, GB and their vision of Poland
- Stalin and his vision of Europe and the world
- Teheran and Yalta Conferences

Reading: Norman Davies: God's Playground

2.2 Topic of Class: Poland in the Second World War II

Week 3

3.1. Topic of Class: New political order in Poland 1944-1956

Description of content:

- The Polish Workers Party (PPR) and the Polish United Workers Party (PZPR)
- Referendum and election of January 19th 1947
- Constitution of 1952 and Stalinization of Poland

Oral test

Reading: Svetlana Allilueva: 20 letters to a Friend

Topic of Class: New political order in Poland II

Week 4

4.1 Topic of Class: Gomułka period: experience with national socialism

Description of content: Gomułka illusion. The end of Gomułka

Reading: Jakub Karpiński: Count-Down. The Polish Upheavals of 1956, 1968, 1970, 1980

4.2. Topic of Class: Gomułka period II

Presentations due on this day

Week 5

5.1 Topic of Class: Gierek Era

Description of content:

- Early promise
- The path to destruction
- Last phase

Reading: J.F. Brown: Eastern Europe and Communist Rule

5.2. Topic of Class: Gierek Era II

Week 6

6.1. Topic of Class: The Polish People's Republic (1952-1989). The structure of power

Description of content:

- State Authorities: Parliament, Government, Local Government
- Party System
- Nomenclature (party versus state)
- Censorship and Surveillance

Reading: Avraham Brunberg (ed): Poland. Genesis of Revolution

6.2. Topic of Class: The Polish People's Republic II

Week 7

7.1. Topic of Class: History of the Solidarity

Description of content:

- The crisis: 1956, 1968, 1970, 1976
- Gdańsk Events in 1980
- Martial law. Civil society versus state in the 80's

7.2. Topic of Class: History of the Solidarity II

Written assignment due on this day

Week 8

8.1. Topic of Class: Political system after 1989

Description of content:

- Free elections
- Political parties
- Constitution of 1997
- Poland in NATO and in the European Union
- Foreign policy
- Polish press
- Roman Catholic Church in Poland
- Culture and education

Reading: Additional Papers on Solidarity provided by the teacher

8.2. Topic of Class: Political system after 1989 II

Week 9

9.1. Topic of Class: Political system after 1989 III

9.2. Topic of Class: Political system after 1989 IV

Week 10

10.1 Topic of Class: Presidential Palace

Description of content: Visit to the Presidential Palace

10.2 Topic of Class: Presidential Palace – lecture

Description of content the role of the Polish President and foreign Policy

Final essay due date

Week 11

11.1 Topic of Class: Visit to the Polish Parliament

Description of content meeting with the member of the Parliament and discussion about the Civic Party as party in power

11.2 Topic of Class: Polish Parliament II



Week 12

12.1. Topic of Class: Final Class

Description of content: Summary, conclusions

Course Materials

Readings

Svetlana Allilueva: 20 letters to a Friend. Harper & Row, 1967

Michael Bernhard: Institutions and the Fate Democracy. Germany and Poland in Twentieth Century. University of Pittsburgh Press. 2005

J.F. Brown: Eastern Europe and Communist Rule. Duke University Press, Durham and London 1988

Avraham Brunberg (ed): Poland. Genesis of Revolution. Vintage Books. New York 1983

Norman Davies: God's Playground. Duke University Press, Durham and London, 1988

Jakub Karpiński: Count-Down. The Polish Upheavals of 1956, 1968, 1970, 1980. Karz-Cohl Publishers Inc, New York 1982

John S. Mogiel (ed.): Reflections of Polish Foreign Policy, 2005

Czeslaw Milosz: The Captive Mind. Vintage 1990

Additional handouts prepared by the teacher
