

POLI 419: Transitions from Communism

Fall 2017
Location RPHYS 118
W/F 4:05pm-5:25pm
Office Hrs: TBA

Prof. Simeon Mitropolitski

In December 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed, a few months short of its 75th anniversary. The Communist social and political experiment was over and many, both in the region and in the West, believed that the consequence would be “the end of history” and the triumph of liberal democracy. 25 years later, this expectation has been exposed as naïve. The 15 independent states that emerged from the Soviet collapse have evolved into vastly different polities. On one end of the spectrum, the Baltics have consolidated democratic regimes and have joined NATO and the European Union; at the other end of the spectrum, most Central Asian states and Belarus, have consolidated non-Communist, but just as repressive and closed authoritarian regimes. The rest of the FSU (former Soviet Union) states oscillate between semi-authoritarian and semi-democratic governance. In this course, we will explore the unprecedented “triple transition” in national identities, political institutions and economic systems that resulted from the systemic breakdown of the Soviet Union. We will examine and critically evaluate theoretical attempts to explain the different developmental trajectories upon which the post-Communist states have embarked.

Required Readings

This course requires a significant amount of reading, so be prepared. If you fall behind it will be difficult (perhaps impossible!) to catch up.

Henry Hale, *Patronal Politics: Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective*, Cambridge University Press, 2014

Eric McGlinchey, *Chaos, Violence, Dynasty: Politics and Islam in Central Asia*, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011

The books are available for purchase at Paragraphe Bookstore, 2220 McGill College Avenue (tel: 514 845 5811).

All other required readings (chapters and articles) are available online (through library).

Course Requirements

Students will be evaluated on the basis of four measures:

- Conference participation (10%)
- In-class midterm (20%)
- Term paper (40%)
- Final exam (30%)

Conference Participation (10%)

You should register for a conference time on Minerva as soon as possible. Conferences will begin during the third week of classes and attendance is mandatory. Your conference grade will be based on your attendance (5%) and on the quality of your participation in group discussions (5%). The discussion will be focusing on the readings for the week. Conferences will be led by a TA (name TBA).

Midterm (20%)

The in-class midterm will be on October 11th. The exam will include 20 term IDs and factual multiple-choice questions (20x1%=20%). You will be tested on the material covered in lectures, discussed in conferences, and contained in the readings.

Term paper (40%)

The paper will apply one of the theories that we cover in class to an empirical case of your choice. The goal is to provide evidence from one former Soviet republic's experience that either bolsters or challenges a given theory. The essay should cite at least one source from the required readings, and at least 5 academic sources on the country of choice. The essay should be 8-10 pages long, Times New Roman 12, double-spaced with standard margins. The deadline is November 17th. There will be no extensions. Late submissions will lose 4 out of 40 points for each business day of delay ((e.g. a perfect work graded 40 out of 40 submitted 1 business day beyond deadline (Nov 20th) will receive 36 out of 40)).

Final exam (30%)

The final examination will be held on a university-scheduled date during exam period. The exam will include 20 term IDs and factual multiple-choice questions (20x1%=20%) covering material *after* the midterm exam. In addition, there will be a short essay question (10%).

On Academic Integrity and Submitting Written Work in French

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offenses under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see <http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/> for more information).

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site <http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/>).

In accordance with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, you have the right to submit any written work that is to be graded either in English or in French.
(<http://www.mcgill.ca/tls/teaching/course-design/outline>)

Other issues

If you have a disability, please contact the Office for Students with Disabilities at 514-398-6009 with any questions.

End-of-term course evaluations are one of the ways that McGill works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the students' learning experience. You will be notified by e-mail when the evaluations are available on Mercury, the online course evaluation system. Please note that a minimum number of responses must be received for results to be available to students.

Additional policies governing academic issues which affect students can be found in the McGill Charter of Students' Rights (The Handbook on Student Rights and Responsibilities is available at <http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/>).

Lecture and Reading Schedule

Introduction (Sep 6)

The Soviet Communist Experience (Sep 8)

- Stephen White, "What Was Communism?" in *Communism and Its Collapse* (Routledge 2001), pp. 1-10 (ebook available online)
- Henry Hale, *Patronal Politics*, pp. 39-61

Gorbachev: Glasnost and Perestroika (Sep 13)

- Eric McGlinchey, *Chaos, Violence, Dynasty*, pp. 48-79
- Archie Brown, "Did Gorbachev as General Secretary Become a Social Democrat?" *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 65, Iss. 2, 2013, pp. 198-220 (available online)

Communist Collapse in the USSR: 1990-1991 (Sep 15)

- Mark Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*, pp. 320-443 (available online)

Conferences begin this week

Why did the USSR collapse? (Sep 20, Sep 22)

- Mark Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*, pp. 1-46, 147-199, 443-460 (available online)
- Martin Malia, "A Fatal Logic", *The National Interest*, No. 31 (Spring 1993): pp. 80-90 (available online)
- Myron Rush, "Fortune and Fate", *The National Interest*, No. 31 (Spring 1993): pp. 19-25 (available online)

- Peter Reddaway, "The Role of Popular Discontent", *The National Interest*, No. 31 (Spring 1993): pp. 57-63 (available online)
- Vladimir Kontorovich, "The Economic Fallacy", *The National Interest*, No. 31 (Spring 1993): 35(11), pp. 35-45 (available online)
- Leon Aron, "Everything You Think You Know About the Collapse of the Soviet Union is Wrong." *Foreign Policy* July-August 2011 (available online)

Nationalist violence (Sep 27, Sep 29)

- Svante E. Cornell, "Autonomy as a Source of Conflict: Caucasian Conflicts in Theoretical Perspective," *World Politics*, volume 54, number 2, (January 2002), pp.245-276 (available online)
- David Laitin, "Secessionist Rebellion in the Former Soviet Union," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 8, October 2001, pp. 839-861 (available online)

Nation-building (Oct 4)

- Oxana Shevel, "The Politics of Citizenship Policy in New States," *Comparative Politics*, Volume 41, Number 3, April 2009, pp. 273-291 (available online)

State-building (Oct 6)

- Gerald M. Easter, "Preference for Presidentialism: Postcommunist Regime Change in Russia and the NIS," *World Politics*, 49 (1997), pp. 184-211 (available online)
- Charles King, "The Benefits of Ethnic War: Understanding Eurasia's Unrecognized States," *World Politics*, Vol. 53, no. 4 (July 2001), pp. 524-552 (available online)
- Lucan Way "Authoritarian state building and the sources of regime competitiveness in the fourth wave: The cases of Belarus, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine," *World Politics* 57.2 (2005), pp. 231-261 (available online)

Midterm exam (Oct 11)

Constitutionalism and Regime Dynamics; Central Asian Authoritarianism (Oct 13)

- Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 3-36 (ebook available online)
- Henry Hale, *Patronal Politics*, pp. 66-122, 123-165
- Eric McGlinchey, *Chaos, Violence, Dynasty*, pp. 1-47; 80-172

Economic Reform and Corruption in Hybrid Regimes (Oct 18, Oct 20)

- Joel Hellman, "Winners Take All: The politics of Partial Reform in Postcommunist Transitions" *World Politics*, vol.50 (January 1998) p.203-34 (available online)
- Sergei Guriev and Andrei Rachinsky, "The Role of Oligarchs in Russian Capitalism," *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Winter, 2005), pp. 131-150 (available online)
- Keith Darden, "Blackmail as a Tool of State Domination: Ukraine Under Kuchma," *East European Constitutional Review*, Volume 10, Spring/Summer, 2001, pp.67-71 (available online)
- Henry Hale, *Patronal Politics*, pp. 165-174

Rule of law and Unfair Elections (Oct 25, Oct 27)

- Maria Popova, *Politicized Justice in Emerging Democracies*, pp. 128-167 (available online)
- Henry Hale, *Patronal Politics*, pp. 372-422

Colored revolutions (Nov 1, Nov 3)

- Henry Hale, *Patronal Politics*, pp. 178-307
- Joshua Tucker, "Enough! Electoral fraud, collective action problems, and post-communist colored revolutions," *Perspectives on Politics*, 5(3), (2007), pp. 535-551 (available online)
- Bunce, Valerie, and Sharon Wolchik. 2010. "Defeating Dictators electoral change and stability in competitive authoritarian regimes" *World Politics*. 62(1): 43-86 (available online)

After the Revolutions (Nov 8)

- Henry Hale, *Patronal Politics*, pp. 307-372; 422-489

Euromaidan (Nov 10, Nov 15, Nov 17)

- The Maidan and Beyond (All section articles!), *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 25, Number 3, July 2014 (available online)
- Maria Popova, "Why the Orange Revolution was short and peaceful and Euromaidan long and violent." *Problems of Post-communism* 61, no. 6 (2014): 64-70 (available online)

Comparing transitions from communism in FSU and in East-Central Europe (Nov 22, Nov 24, Nov 29)

- Steven Saxonberg, 2000, "Regime Behavior in 1989", *Problems of Post-Communism*, 47(4) pp.45-58 (available online)
- Sharon Wolchik, 1995, "The Politics of Transition in Central Europe", *Problems of Post-Communism*, 42(1) pp.35-40 (available online)
- Zoltan Barany, 1995, "The Return of the Left in Est-Central Europe", *Problems of Post-Communism*, 42(1) pp.41-45 (available online)
- Gale Stokes, 1999, "Containing Nationalism", *Problems of Post-Communism*, 46(4) pp.3-10 (available online)
- Marie Lavigne, 2000, "The Economics of the Transition Process: What have we learned?", *Problems of Post-Communism*, 47(4) pp.16-23 (available online)
- Mieczyslaw Boduszynski and Kristina Balalovska, 2004, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place", *Problems of Post-Communism*, 51(1) pp.18-30 (available online)
- Attila Agh, 2016, "The Decline of Democracy in East-Central Europe", *Problems of Post-Communism*, 63(5/6) pp.277-287 (available online)
- Simeon Mitropolitski, 2016, "Political leadership - the key for explaining post-communist diversity", *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 58(1): 49-67

Conclusion (Dec 1)

Final exam (TBA)