

The Government and Politics of Russia and the Former Soviet Union

Fall 2021, 21:790:379:01; Tuesday, Thursday, 2:30-3:50pm
Prof. Alexander J. Motyl; 728 Hill Hall; ajmotyl@rutgers.edu

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Learning Objectives

DEVELOP ARGUMENTS IN CLEAR AND COHERENT TEXTS AND ORAL COMMUNICATIONS; READ A VARIETY OF TEXTS FOR MEANING AND INFORMED ANALYSIS; EVALUATE INFORMATION CRITICALLY; PRODUCE IDEAS AND TEXTS CREATIVELY; UNDERSTAND AND USE METHODS AND FORMS OF INQUIRY SPECIFIC TO THE BROAD DISCIPLINARY CATEGORY (OR CATEGORIES) WITHIN WHICH THE COURSE FALLS; UNDERSTAND PAST AND PRESENT INTERRELATIONSHIPS AMONG DIVERSE POLITICAL, SOCIAL, CULTURAL, RACIAL, ETHNIC, AND/OR GENDER GROUPS; UNDERSTAND AND ADDRESS DEFINING SOCIAL, POLITICAL, CULTURAL, AND/OR INTELLECTUAL QUESTIONS IN CONTEMPORARY AND/OR HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

September 2, 7, 9: Introduction and Historical Background

History of the USSR

September 14, 16: Marxism and Leninism: Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*,
> http://www.slp.org/pdf/marx/comm_man.pdf <

September 21, 23: Revolution and Stalinism: “Seventeen Moments in Soviet History: 1917, 1921, 1924, 1929, 1934, 1936, 1939,” ><http://soviethistory.msu.edu/> <;
><http://vitacollections.ca/HREC-holodomorphotodirectory/search><

September 28, 30: World War II and Post-Stalinist Politics: “Seventeen Moments: 1943, 1947, 1954, 1956, 1961”.

October 5, 7: National Communism and Gorbachev: “Seventeen Moments: 1968, 1973, 1980, 1985”.

October 12, 14: The Collapse of Communism: “Seventeen Moments: 1991”.

After Communism

October 19, 21: Communist Party, Totalitarianism, and Democracy.
FIRST PAPER DUE October 19.

October 26, 28: Empire, State, and Nation.
SECOND PAPER DUE October 26.

November 2, 4: Central Planning and the Market.

THIRD PAPER DUE November 2.

November 9, 11: Culture, Civil Society, and Corruption.

FOURTH PAPER DUE November 9.

The Post-Communist States

November 16, 18: Central Europe, the Balkans, Central Asia, and the Caucasus: Henry Hale, “25 Years after the USSR: What’s Gone Wrong?”

><http://www.journalofdemocracy.org/sites/default/files/Hale-27-3.pdf><

November 23, 30, Dec. 2: The Ukrainian Revolutions of 2004 and 2014: David Marples, “Comparing Maidan 2004 with Euromaidan 2014,”

><https://ukraineanalysis.wordpress.com/2015/03/10/comparing-maidan-2004-with-euromaidan-2014/><; Serhiy Riabenko, “Ten myths about decommunization in Ukraine,”

> <http://euromaidanpress.com/2015/06/18/ten-myths-about-decommunization-in-ukraine/><

December 7, 9: Putin, Russia, and Ukraine: Vladislav Inozemtsev, “The Political Economy of a Zombie Nation,” ><https://www.the-american-interest.com/2018/10/29/the-political-economy-of-a-zombie-nation/><; Igor Torbakov, “Examining the origins of

Russians’ superiority complex vis-à-vis Ukrainians,” ><https://eurasianet.org/perspectives-examining-the-origins-of-russians-superiority-complex-vis-a-vis-ukrainians><

Requirements

Students must write four 1-page papers and complete one quiz, to be held toward the end of the semester. Each paper must be exactly one page long, double-spaced, 12-point font, regular margins. Name, date, and assignment topic on one line! No citations or footnotes! PAPERS THAT DEVIATE FROM THESE INSTRUCTIONS WILL BE PENALIZED BY 5 POINTS. PAPERS MUST BE SENT TO ajmotyl@rutgers.edu BY **2:30PM ON THE DUE DATE**; NO LATE PAPERS ACCEPTED.

In writing these papers, be sure to situate the text in the given time and place and avoid anachronistic language or arguments. Imagine that you are:

1. A Ukrainian peasant writing in 1934 about the impact of the Holodomor on his or her family and village. Due date: October 19.
2. An anti-communist Polish American émigré arguing in 1956 that Paul Robeson bears moral responsibility for Stalinism. Due date: October 26.
3. A Russian intellectual arguing in 1956 that Marx’s *Communist Manifesto* is irrelevant to the Soviet Union. Due date: November 2.
4. A dissident Belarusian historian arguing in 2021 that his country should be independent of Russia. Due date: November 9.

Grades

The four papers and quiz, graded on a 1-20 scale, will count equally toward the final grade. Papers will be graded on the basis of grammar, punctuation, spelling (4 pts) and the degree to which the person, place, and time of the argument (16 pts) are accurately and persuasively conveyed. NO EXTRA-CREDIT WORK. Absenteeism will lower the final grade.