The Government and Politics of Russia and the Former Soviet Union

Fall 2020, 21:790:379:01; Tuesday, Thursday, 2:30-3:50pm
Prof. Alexander J. Motyl; 728 Hill Hall; ajmotyl@rutgers.edu

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

Syllabus

September 1, 3: Introduction and Historical Background
September 8: No class

History of the USSR


>http://vitacollections.ca/HREC-holodomorphotodirectory/search<


After Communism

October 20, 22: Communist Party, Totalitarianism, and Democracy.
FIRST PAPER DUE October 20.

October 27, 29: Empire, State, and Nation.
SECOND PAPER DUE October 27.

November 3, 5: Central Planning and the Market.
THIRD PAPER DUE November 3.

November 10, 12: Culture, Civil Society, and Corruption.
FOURTH PAPER DUE November 10.
The Post-Communist States

November 17, 19: Central Europe, the Balkans, Central Asia, and the Caucasus: Henry Hale, “25 Years after the USSR: What’s Gone Wrong?”

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

December 8, 10: Putin, Russia, and Ukraine: Vladislav Inozemtsev, “The Political Economy of a Zombie Nation,”

Requirements

Students must write four 1-page papers. 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 20.
2. A Russian writer arguing in 1952 that Paul Robeson should be awarded the Stalin Peace Prize. Due date: October 27.
3. A Hungarian intellectual arguing in 1956 that Marx’s Communist Manifesto is irrelevant to the Soviet Union. Due date: November 3.
4. A Belarusian historian arguing in 1991 that Russia is not superior to the other nations of the Soviet Union. Due date: November 10.

Grades

The four papers, graded on a 1-20 scale, will count equally toward the final grade. NO EXTRA-CREDIT WORK. Absenteeism will lower the final grade.