Overview: One of the most powerful states in the history of the world, the Soviet Union disappeared rather suddenly, and rather quietly. In this course, you will be studying the Soviet Union and the states — particularly the Russian Federation (Russia) — that emerged from its collapse. POSC 4511 is a comparative politics course, and we will thus focus primarily on domestic politics and policy rather than international relations and foreign policy. I have also decided to change the focus of the course somewhat by using the concepts of regime types and regime transition to provide an anchor for our examination of the Russian and post-Soviet political landscape.

Readings: A number of the readings for the course are available through the “Content” page of the D2L site for the class. Go to https://d2l.mu.edu/ (or click on the D2L link at the bottom of Marquette University’s home page) and log in with your Checkmarq/eMarq user name and password. On your D2L home page, click on the link for the class (“POSC 4511/5511/4996 101 Russia & Pst-Sovt Politics - 1340_5842_101,”) under the “2010 Fall Term” tab and the “Political Science” sub-tab. Once you reach the course home page, click on the “Content” link on the taskbar at the top of the page. These readings will be .pdf files, so you will need a (free) version of Acrobat Reader to open them.

Requirements and Grading: Attendance is required. More than six absences will result in your final semester grade being lowered by one grade (B to BC, for example) for each additional absence. You will also be expected to have completed the assigned readings before class. There will be one in-class midterm and one final exam, as well as a number of writing assignments (this is a writing development course after all). The short writing assignments (due on October 8th and November 22nd) will account for 15% of your final semester grade total, the midterm (on October 15th) 20%, the short research paper (due December 6th) 20%, and the final exam (on December 13th) 35%. Attendance and class participation will make up the remaining 10% of your grade. In addition to its impact on your discussion grade, and its direct impact on your final semester grade if you miss more than six times, attendance will also be used to bump you up or down at the end of the semester if you are otherwise between two grades.

While generally a nice person, I take academic dishonesty very seriously. Academic dishonesty violates the principles of Marquette, and it is unfair to your fellow classmates. If you are caught copying during tests, plagiarizing on papers (representing someone else’s ideas as your own, including by not adequately citing them), or helping someone do either of these, I will make every effort to ensure that you receive an F in the class as well as any other punishments that are warranted. Don’t test me on this one!
Following Current Events: Those of you expecting a “current events” course will be somewhat, but hopefully only somewhat, disappointed. The first several weeks cover pre-Soviet and Soviet history. It continues to be impossible to understand the problems facing the successor states today without understanding the roots of those problems. Like it or not, history is the mother of political science, and Soviet legacies continue to affect the post-Soviet states. The added coverage of history is also important because of the emphasis in the course on using the past and present Russian political system to better understand regime types and regime transition more broadly. Say what you will about the current Russian government, but it is not (yet) governing over a totalitarian system.

That said, we will also spend time analyzing recent happenings in Russia and the other post-Soviet states. You should read newspapers like the *New York Times*, news magazines like the *Economist*, and take advantage of reputable online news outlets (such as msnbc.com). The following sites are a sample of additional places where you can follow events in the Eurasian region online:

- http://www.russiaprofile.org/
- http://www.einnews.com/russia/
- http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson/
- http://www.themoscowtimes.com/
- http://www.russiavotes.org/
- http://www.rferl.org
- http://www.eurasianet.org
- http://www.tol.cz

Finally, a professor (and occasional co-author of mine) at the University of Kansas also runs the most impressive list of Web links available on Eurasia at: http://web.ku.edu/~herron/

LECTURE AND READING SCHEDULE

* = Readings on reserve on the D2L site.

PART I: REGIME TYPES AND REGIME TRANSITION

Week 1 (Aug 30-Sep 3): INTRODUCTION: REGIME TYPES AND RUSSIAN POLITICS

Themes: Regime and Regime Types

Readings:

Recommended Readings:

September 3: No Class, Dr. B. at the American Political Science Association.
Week 2 (Sep 6-10): REGIME TRANSITIONS
Themes: Liberalization, Democratization, and Democratic Breakdown
Readings:

Recommended readings:

September 6: No Class, Labor Day Holiday.

PART II: REGIMES AND TRANSITIONS IN PRE-SOVIET AND SOVIET RUSSIA

Week 3 (Sep 13-17): PRE-SOVIET RUSSIAN POLITICS
Themes: Authoritarianism, Early Attempts at Totalitarianism, and More Authoritarianism
Readings:
Suny, ch. 1
Start reading ahead for next week.

Recommended readings:
James Cracraft, The Revolution of Peter the Great (Harvard University Press, 2006), ch. 5 (“Revolution and Resistance”).

Week 4 (Sep. 20-24): THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION AND EARLY SOVIET SYSTEM
Themes: Revolution, the Failure of Democracy, and the Resurrection of Dictatorship
Readings:
Suny, chs. 2-3, 5-6.

Recommended readings:
Suny, chs. 4, 7-8.
Week 5 (Sep. 27-Oct. 1): FROM LENIN TO STALIN

Theme: Totalitarianism.

Readings:
Suny, chs. 9, 11, and 13.

Recommended readings/viewings:
Suny, chs. 10, 12, 14-16.
The rest of Ginzburg (requires purchase of the book; it is not on reserve).
G. Orwell, Animal Farm; G. Orwell, 1984.
The film Closet Land (1991), with Madeleine Stowe and Alan Rickman. NOTE: Not a children’s film!

Week 6 (Oct. 4-8): KHRUSHCHEV TO GORBACHEV

Themes: Reform, Stagnation, and the Usefulness of the Concept of Quasi-totalitarianism.

Readings:
Suny, chs. 17-18, ch. 19 (pp. 479-495 only).
N. Khrushchev, “The Secret Speech,” available at:
http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1956khrushchev-secret1.html

Recommended Readings:

FIRST WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE, Friday, October 8, in class:
In one page (double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 pt. font), tell me what you plan to write your short research paper on, what this project will contribute to what we already know about the topic, and what data you will use that are not secondary-source data.

Week 7 (Oct. 11-15): THE AUGUST COUP AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION

Themes: Elite Splits, Coups, and Regime Collapse versus State Collapse.

Readings:
Shevtsova, Yeltsin’s Russia, ch. 1.
*Philip G. Roeder, Red Sunset: The Failure of Soviet Politics, ch. 1 (“Why Did Soviet Bolshevism Fail?”).

Recommended Readings:

OCTOBER 15 (FRIDAY): MIDTERM EXAM, IN CLASS.
PART III: REGIMES AND TRANSITIONS IN POST-SOVIET RUSSIA

Week 8 (Oct. 18-22): YELTSIN’S RUSSIA
Themes: Building Democracy in Undemocratic Ways, the Events of October 1993 (or Can There Be “Unconstitutional” Acts with No Functioning Constitution?)

Readings:
Shevtsova, Yeltsin’s Russia, chs. 2-7.

Recommended Readings:

Friday, October 22: No Class, Mid-semester Break.

Theme: Why Didn’t Russian Democracy Become Consolidated?

Readings:
Shevtsova, Yeltsin’s Russia, chs. 8-11.
Shevtsova, Putin’s Russia, ch. 2.

Recommended Readings:

Week 10 (Nov. 1-5): THE EARLY PUTIN YEARS

Readings:
Shevtsova, Putin’s Russia, chs. 3-5, 8-9.

Recommended Readings:
Week 11 (Nov. 8-12): PUTIN’S SEMI-AUTHORITARIAN RUSSIA
Readings:
Shevtsova, Putin’s Russia, chs. 9-12.

Recommended Readings:

Week 12 (Nov. 15-19): PUTIN AND MEDVEDEV’S TWO-RING CIRCUS
Readings:

Recommended Readings:
PART IV: REGIMES AND TRANSITIONS IN THE REST OF EURASIA

Week 13 (Nov. 22-26): CENTRAL ASIA
Themes: Cults of Personality, Clan Politics, and the Resource Curse.
Readings:

Recommended Readings:
*Kelly McMann, “New Presidents in Central Asia: Will Life Improve for the Average Person?” NewsNet, American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (May 2007).

SHORT WRITING ASSIGNMENT: Due Monday November 22, in class:
Write a letter to your US Congressional Representative or either of your US senators about a particular issue or problem in Russia. The issue or problem can be in the arenas of economics, the environment, domestic politics, or foreign policy. Discuss the issue or problem, what you think our government should do to help address this issue or problem, and why. The letter must be typed, single-spaced, and no more than two pages.

Wednesday-Friday, November 24-26: No Class, Thanksgiving Holiday.

Week 14 (Nov. 29-Dec. 3): THE CAUCASUS STATES AND WESTERN EURASIA
Themes: The Color Revolutions, Ethnic Democracy, and the Mess That is Ukrainian Politics.
Readings:

Recommended Readings:
My forthcoming Comparative Political Studies article (get from Dr. B.).
PART V: LOOKING AHEAD

Week 15 (Dec. 6-Dec. 10): CONCLUSION

Theme: The Malignant Effects of Corruption, the Failure to Consolidate the Semi-authoritarian System, Will Russia Ever be a Consolidated Democracy?

Readings:
Shevtsova, Yeltsin’s Russia, ch. 12.
Shevtsova, Putin’s Russia, ch. 13.

Recommended Readings:

SHORT RESEARCH PAPER: Due Monday December 6, in class:
Write a short (10-page, double-spaced) paper on one of the fourteen post-Soviet states (i.e., any of them other than Russia) that we did not focus on detail. In this paper, tell me what that country tells us about political regimes or regime transition that we did not already know. The paper will include a short literature review that provides an overview of existing works on the general topic of the paper and points to “gaps” in this literature that need to be addressed. It will also incorporate the analysis of some kind of primary data.

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, December 13, 1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.