Course Title: Political Changes in Post-Soviet Eurasia

Course description:
The course is focused on the emergence and development of political systems of post-Soviet countries within the context of regime changes and state-building. Starting with the Soviet system and collapse of the Soviet Union as a point of departure, the course traces making and unmaking of major political institutions in these newly-established states by examining the impact of various legacies of the past and the role of domestic and international political and economic actors. Special attention is devoted to patterns of political continuity and changes during the wave of so-called “color revolutions” and their aftermath. We will also discuss more recent developments with regards to current crisis over Ukraine and the role of Russia.

Requirements and grading:
Mid-term (1000-words book review, 25% of class grade) by March 24
Final (4000-words substantive text, 50% of class grade) by May 25
Course attendance: 25% of grade.

In order to receive a final grade, students are required to fill in the course evaluation form which will be distributed the last day of class.

Theme 1. Key concepts of Post-Communist political transformations

Studies of Russian and Eurasian politics in East and West. Approaches and theories of regime change and their applications to Russian and Eurasian politics in a comparative perspective. Models of post-Communist political transformations: democratization, new authoritarianism, or something else?

Theme 2. Dynamics of late-Soviet politics: issues in political history. The Soviet collapse and its political, economic, and social consequences


Theme 3. Dilemmas of transition: political and economic reforms, state- and nation-building

The problem of “triple transition” after the Soviet Union: hard political choices and their consequences. Russia after the Soviet Union: 1993 clash between President and parliament, its causes and consequences.

**Theme 4. The strong executive: presidents and governments in post-Soviet world**


**Theme 5. The weak legislature: parliamentary politics in post-Soviet Eurasia**

Institutional frameworks and political performance of legislatures in post-Soviet Eurasia. The evolution of the State Duma in Russia: law-making and/or political representation? Legislatues strikes back: institutional changes and their political consequences. “No site for discussions”: do parliaments matter in post-Soviet politics?

**Theme 6. The unrule of law: legal and judicial politics in post-Soviet Eurasia**


**Theme 7. Electoral politics in post-Soviet Eurasia**

The background of post-Soviet electoral reforms. Key elements of electoral system: electoral governance and electoral formula. The politics of electoral authoritarianism in Russia and beyond: institutional changes and their political consequences. Electoral fraud: business as usual?

**Theme 8. Political culture, mass participation and voting behavior in post-Soviet Eurasia**


**Theme 9. Post-Soviet political parties**

The legacies of Soviet one-party state. The emergence of political movements during perestroika period and the formation of post-Soviet political parties. The dynamics of party systems: impacts of institutions and electoral behavior. Parties in post-Soviet parliaments and outside. “Parties of power”, their satellites, and others.

**Theme 10. Interest groups in post-Soviet politics**

Concepts of interest groups of Soviet period. The late-Soviet “bureaucratic market” and its evolution. Transformation of organized interest groups in post-Soviet politics and their impact on economic policies. Key sectoral interest groups: the new business and its influence in Russian and post-Soviet politics: the rise
and fall of “oligarchs”. Trade unions in Soviet and post-Soviet politics: no organized labor movements. The politics of third sector: the role of NGOs. Is there a post-Soviet version of corporatism?

**Theme 11. The transformation of post-Soviet political elites**


**Theme 12. Federalism, regionalism and local government: sub-national authoritarianism, rent-seeking and “power vertical”**


**Theme 13. The politics of post-Soviet changes: revolutions, counter-revolutions and their political consequences**


Dilemmas of political changes: democratization, state-building, and elite reconciliation.

**Theme 14. Prospects for post-Soviet political transformations: domestic and comparative perspectives**

The final seminar will be focused on analysis of political dynamics and prospects of political development in post-Soviet Eurasia in a comparative perspective.
Readings

All readings (articles and book chapters) assigned for particular themes will be available on EUSP server (in electronic format), core books will be available either in EUSP library reserve collection or on EUSP server

Core books

V.Gel’man, Authoritarian Russia: Analyzing Post-Soviet Regime Changes (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015)
H.Hale, Patronal Politics: Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective (Cambridge University Press, 2015)
S.White et al. (eds.), Developments in Russian Politics 8 (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

Theme 1.


Themes 2-3.

M.McFaul. Russia’s Unfinished Revolution: Political Change from Gorbachev to Putin. (Cornell University Press, 2001), chapters 2-5.

Themes 4-5.


Theme 6.


Theme 7.

M.Myagkov et al., Fraud or Fairytales: Russia and Ukraine’s Electoral Experience, Post-Soviet Affairs, 2005, vol. 21, N2.

Themes 8-9.

Theme 10.


Theme 11.

A.Steen, V.Gel’man (eds.). Elites and Democratic Development in Russia (Routledge, 2003), chapters 2, 3.

Theme 12.

V.Gel’man, Leviathan’s Return? Recentralization Policy in Contemporary Russia, C.Ross, A.Campbell (eds.). Federalism and Local Politics in Russia (Routledge, 2009).
V.Gel’man. The Dynamics of Sub-National Authoritarianism: Russia in Comparative Perspective. APSA Paper, Toronto, 2009.

Theme 13.

Problems of Post-Communism, 2013, vol.60, N2 (special issue of the journal devoted to 2011-2012 mass protests in Russia)

Theme 14.

M.S.Fish, Democracy Derailed in Russia: The Failure of Open Politics. (Cambridge University Press, 2005), chapter 8.
Official Take on Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is the most serious case of academic dishonesty, and the International Programs department of EUSP takes it very seriously.

Acts of plagiarism include:

- Misappropriation of one's work by offering of the words, ideas, or arguments of another person without appropriate attribution by quotation, reference or footnote, whether intentionally or not;

- Submitting as one's own any theme, report, term paper, essay, other written work, speech, totally or in part by another author;

- Submitting of identical or in part identical assignments by two or more students;

- Submitting work that has been previously offered for credit in another course, except with prior written permission of the instructors of both courses.

- Submission of a thesis that has been previously submitted at another university/program, in English or in another language.

Plagiarism occurs both when the words of another are reproduced without acknowledgment, and when the ideas or arguments of another are paraphrased in such a way as to lead the reader to believe that they originated with the writer. It is the responsibility of all EUSP students to understand the methods of proper attribution and to apply those principles in all materials submitted.

Penalties for detected plagiarism in student coursework and theses may include automatic termination of the enrolment and/or course failure.