

Politics of Post-Soviet Eurasia
IAFF 6338 Section 12
Wednesdays, 5:10-7:00 PM, 1957 E Street, Room 303A

Prof. Cory Welt
Associate Director and Research Professor
Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies (IERES)
E-mail: cwelt@gwu.edu; tel: 202-994-8362
Office hours: By appointment (1957 E Street, Ste. 412)

Overview:

This course is a seminar on comparative politics and state building in the *non-Russian* successor states of the USSR – a region often referred to as post-Soviet Eurasia. The course is structured by topic, not subregion, and addresses the following issues: the concept of political “transition”; historical legacies and the construction of political institutions; democracy, authoritarianism, and hybrid regimes; informal practices; popular mobilization; economic foundations of power; and the “new” post-Soviet politics.

The course is not a comprehensive survey of politics in the region, although it includes case studies of political developments in several states (including Ukraine, Georgia, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and others). Readings have been selected on the basis of a combination of empirical research and comparative value, as well as the extent to which they are in dialogue with each other.

While no previous knowledge is required, a background in regional and/or comparative politics will be very helpful.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course, students will have a comparative understanding of state building processes and politics in post-Soviet Eurasia; structure, critique, and support arguments about political outcomes and processes in the region; and establish linkages between the development of area-studies knowledge and theoretical frameworks that improve our understanding of politics in other regions of the world and at other times.

Requirements:

Reaction Papers (4-5 pages, Times New Roman, 12 pt., double-spaced): 20% each

Paper One – on readings from Session 2-7, *no later than* October 8

Paper Two – on readings from Session 8-13, *no later than* November 19

Research Paper (22-25 pages, Times New Roman, 12 pt., double-spaced): 45%

Abstract – *no later than* October 29

Final Paper – December 12 (Friday, 5PM)

Participation: 15%

The reaction papers are responses to a reading or set of readings from one week or theme of the course. You should use the reaction papers to assess one or more of the arguments presented in the readings: their logic, the evidence they employ, and/or their scope (i.e., does the author make explicit claims to generalization that are defensible? If the author does not, could s/he have?). While not required, explicit comparisons of two or more arguments are welcome (e.g., do authors present complementary or alternative explanations for a certain outcome, or are explanations incompatible?)

You may choose the sessions for which you write reaction papers, which will be due in class that day, but one paper must be on readings from Sessions 2-7 and one paper must be on readings from Sessions 8-13.

The research paper will be on a topic of your choice and may be comparative (within post-Soviet Eurasia) or on a single country. More information on developing a research paper will be provided in class.

University Resources and Policies:

University Policy on Religious Holidays:

1. Students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance;
2. Faculty should extend to these students the courtesy of absence without penalty on such occasions, including permission to make up examinations;
3. Faculty who intend to observe a religious holiday should arrange at the beginning of the semester to reschedule missed classes or to make other provisions for their course-related activities

Academic Integrity: Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information. For the remainder of the code, see:

<http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html>

Support for Students Outside the Classroom

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS)

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to:

<http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/>

UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTER (UCC) 202-994-5300

The University Counseling Center (UCC) offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include:

- crisis and emergency mental health consultations
- confidential assessment, counselling services (individual and small group), and referrals
- <http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/CounselingServices/AcademicSupportServices>

Security

In the case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If the building that the class is in is affected, follow the evacuation procedures for the building. After evacuation, seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous location.

Readings:

Readings are primarily available via university-accessible databases, with links available via Blackboard.

The following books are recommended *but not required* for purchase:

Valerie J. Bunce and Sharon L. Wolchik, *Defeating Authoritarian Leaders in Postcommunist Countries* (Cambridge, 2011)

Henry E. Hale, *Patronal Politics: Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge, forthcoming October 2014)

Alena V. Ledeneva, *Can Russia Modernize? Sistema, Power Networks and Informal Governance* (Cambridge, 2013)

Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War* (Cambridge, 2010)

The following journals, among others, are recommended for final paper research:

Central Asian Survey

Communist and Post-Communist Studies

Demokratizatsiya

East European Politics

Eurasian Geography and Economics

Europe-Asia Studies

Journal of Democracy

Nationalities Papers

Post-Soviet Affairs

Problems of Post-Communism

Schedule:

1. Aug. 27: Overview

2. Sept. 3: Transition

Stephen Kotkin, "Mongol Commonwealth? Exchange and Governance across the Post-Mongol Space," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 8, 3 (Summer 2007): 487-498, 503-514, 519-531.

Charles King, "Post-post Communism: Transition, Comparison, and the End of 'Eastern Europe'," *World Politics* 53, 1 (2000): 143-160, 166-172.

Thomas Carothers, "The End of the Transition Paradigm," *Journal of Democracy* 13, 1 (2002): 5-21.

Thomas Carothers, "The 'Sequencing' Fallacy," *Journal of Democracy* 18, 1 (2007): 12-27.

Cheng Chen and Rudra Sil, "Stretching Postcommunism: Diversity, Context, and Comparative Historical Analysis," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 23, 4 (2007): 275-301.

3. Sept. 10: Legacies

Grigore Pop-Eleches and Joshua A. Tucker, "Associated with the Past? Communist Legacies and Civic Participation in Post-Communist Countries," *East European Politics & Societies* 27, 1 (2013): 45-68.

Sarah Birch, "Post-Soviet Electoral Practices in Comparative Perspective," *Europe-Asia Studies* 63, 4 (2011): 703-725.

Gerald M. Easter, "Preference for Presidentialism: Postcommunist Regime Change in Russia and the NIS," *World Politics* 49, 2 (1997): 184-211.

Keith Darden and Anna Grzymala-Busse, "The Great Divide: Literacy, Nationalism, and the Communist Collapse," *World Politics* 59, 1 (2006): 83-115.

R. A. Panagiotou, "Estonia's success: prescription or legacy?" *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 34 (2001): 261-277.

4. Sept. 17: Democracy

Michael McFaul, "The Fourth Wave of Democracy and Dictatorship: Noncooperative Transitions in the Postcommunist World," *World Politics* 54, 2 (2002): 212-244

Anna Grzymala-Busse, "Introduction," *Redeeming the Communist Past: The Regeneration of Communist Parties in East Central Europe* (Cambridge, 2002), 1-18.

Anna Grzymala-Busse, "Introduction," *Rebuilding Leviathan: Party Competition and State Exploitation in Post-Communist Democracies* (Cambridge, 2007), 1-28.

Milada Anna Vachudova, "Democratization in Postcommunist Europe: Illiberal Regimes and the Leverage of the European Union," in Valerie Bunce, et al, eds., *Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Postcommunist World* (Cambridge, 2010), 82-104.

Steven Roper, "From Semi-Presidentialism to Parliamentarism: Regime Change and Presidential Power in Moldova," *Europe-Asia Studies* 60, 1 (2008): 113-126.

5. Sept. 24: Competitive Authoritarianism

Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War*, Chapters 1, 2 and 5, 1-83, 183-235.

6. Oct. 1: Popular Mobilization

Valerie J. Bunce and Sharon L. Wolchik, *Defeating Authoritarian Leaders in Postcommunist Countries* (Cambridge, 2011), 19-22, 61-75, 289-321, 328-355, 370-398.

Joshua Tucker, "Enough! Electoral Fraud, Collective Action Problems, and Post- Communist Colored Revolutions," *Perspectives on Politics* 5 (3): 537–53.

Lucan Way, "The Real Causes of the Color Revolutions," *Journal of Democracy* 19, 3 (2008): 55-69.

RECOMMENDED:

"Debating the Color Revolutions," *Journal of Democracy* 20, 1 (2009): 69-97.

7. Oct. 8: Informal Politics

Alena V. Ledeneva, "What is *sistema*?" in *Can Russia Modernise? Sistema, Power Networks and Informal Governance* (Cambridge, 2013), 19-49.

Henry Hale, "Regime Cycles: Democracy, Autocracy, and Revolution in Post-Soviet Eurasia," *World Politics* 58 (2005): 133-65.

Jessica Allina-Pisano, "Social Contracts and Authoritarian Projects in Post-Soviet Space: The Use of Administrative Resource," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 43 (2010): 373-382.

Keith Darden, "The Integrity of Corrupt States: Graft as an Informal Political Institution," *Politics and Society* 36:1 (March 2008), 35-59.

İdil Tunçer Kılavuz, "Political and Social Networks in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan: 'Clan,' 'Region,' and Beyond," *Central Asian Survey* 28, 3 (2009): 323-334.

8. Oct. 15: Authoritarianism

Vitali Silitski, "Preempting Democracy: The Case of Belarus," *Journal of Democracy* 16, 4 (2005): 83-97.

Rodger Potocki, "Belarus: A Tale of Two Elections," *Journal of Democracy* 22, 3 (July 2011), 49-63.

Scott Radnitz, "Oil in the Family: Managing Presidential Succession in Azerbaijan," *Democratization* 19, 1 (2012): 60-77.

Shahla Sultanova, "Challenging the Aliyev Regime: Political Opposition in Azerbaijan," *Demokratizatsiya* 22, 1 (2014): 15-37.

Rico Isaacs, "Bringing the 'formal' back in: Nur Otan, informal networks and the countering of elite instability in Kazakhstan," *Europe-Asia Studies* 65, 6 (2013): 1055-1079.

9. Oct. 22: NO CLASS

10. Oct. 29: The Political Economy of Control (ABSTRACT DUE)

Farid Guliyev, "Oil and Regime Stability in Azerbaijan," *Demokratizatsiya* 21, 1 (2013): 113-147.

Matthew Rojansky, "Corporate Raiding in Ukraine: Causes, Methods, and Consequences," *Demokratizatsiya* 22, 3 (2014): 411-443.

Sumie Nakaya, "Aid and Transition from a War Economy to an Oligarchy in Post-war Tajikistan," *Central Asian Survey* 28:3 (2009): 259-273.

Scott Radnitz, "The Color of Money: Privatization, Economic Dispersion, and the Post-Soviet 'Revolutions'," *Comparative Politics* 42, 2 (2010): 127-146.

Barbara Junisbai, "Improbable but Potentially Pivotal Oppositions: Privatization, Capitalists, and Political Contestation in the Post-Soviet Autocracies," *Perspectives on Politics* 10, 4 (2012): 891-916.

11. Nov. 5: The Cycle Continues? Theory and Kyrgyzstan

Katya Kalandadze and Mitchell A. Orenstein, "Electoral Protests and Democratization Beyond the Color Revolutions," *Comparative Political Studies* 42 (2009): 1403-1425.

Grigore Pop-Eleches and Graeme Robertson, "After the Revolution: Long-Term Effects of Electoral Revolutions," *Problems of Post-Communism* 61, 4 (2014): 3-22.

Erica Marat, "Kyrgyzstan: A Parliamentary System Based on Inter-Elite Consensus," *Demokratizatsiya* 20, 4 (2012): 325-344.

Andrew Wachtel, "Kyrgyzstan Between Democratization and Ethnic Intolerance," *Nationalities Papers* 41, 6 (2013): 971-986.

12. Nov. 12: The Cycle Continues? State Building and Democratization in Georgia (ABSTRACT DUE)

Cory Welt, "Still Staging Democracy: Contestation and Conciliation in Postwar Georgia" *Demokratizatsiya* 17, 3 (Summer 2009): 196-226.

Alexander Kupatadze, "Explaining Georgia's Anti-Corruption Drive," *European Security* 21, 1 (2012): 16-36.

Gavin Slade, "Georgia's War on Crime: Creating Security in a Post-Revolutionary Context," *European Security* 21, 1 (2012): 37-56.

Christopher Berglund, "Georgia Between Dominant-Power Politics, Feckless Pluralism, and Democracy," *Demokratizatsiya* 22, 3 (2014): 445-447, 452-470.

13. Nov. 19: The Cycle Continues? From Orange to Maidan and Beyond

Henry E. Hale, "Formal Constitutions in Informal Politics: Institutions and Democratization in Post-Soviet Eurasia," *World Politics* 63, 4 (2011): 598-612.

"The Maidan and Beyond," multiple authors, *Journal of Democracy* 25, 3 (2014): 17-89.

Nov. 26: NO CLASS

14. Dec. 3: Conclusion

Final Papers Due: Friday, December 12, 5PM.