

# POLI 331: Politics in East Central Europe

POLI 331  
Winter 2018  
Wed/Fri 11:35-12:55  
Currie Gymnasium, 408/9

Prof. Maria Popova  
3438 McTavish, Rm 301  
Office hrs: Wed/Fri 10-11am  
maria.popova (at) mcgill.ca

## Course description

Nearly 30 years after the collapse of communism, the Central European countries, Slovenia, Croatia, Bulgaria, and Romania have completed their “return to Europe” by joining the European Union and NATO. The other Balkan countries (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, and Kosovo) are heading along the same trajectory, albeit at different paces. In this course, we will explore the unprecedented “triple transition” in national identities, political institutions, and economic systems that resulted from the breakdown of the Communist regimes in the Soviet Bloc. Some of the questions which this course will address include: Why did Communism collapse? What was the most effective way to transition from a command to a market economy? Why did inter-ethnic strife accompany the breakdown of Yugoslavia, but not Czechoslovakia? Have the transition and consolidation of democratic regimes in the region been completed? Did the EU play a decisive role in the consolidation of democracy in East Central Europe and the Balkans? Are Central European democracies backsliding into authoritarianism? The course will combine due attention to the milestones of post-communist trajectories in Eastern Europe and the Balkans and a survey of *theoretical* attempts to explain various facets of the “triple transition.”

## Course requirements

Students will be evaluated on the basis of four measures:

- Discussion participation (15%)
- Map & facts quiz (15%)
- In-class midterm (30%)
- Final (40%)

### *Map and facts quiz*

The quiz will be held in class on **February 7<sup>th</sup>**. It is worth 15% of your grade. Some tips on how to prepare for the quiz:

- 1) Make sure you know which countries the following terms refer to: Soviet Bloc, COMECON, Warsaw Pact, Balkans, East-Central Europe, Visegrad countries, South-Eastern Europe, post-Communist EU members/candidates, post-Communist NATO members/candidates. Also make sure you know the entire list of independent states that emerged from the collapse of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Mistakes on these very easy and predictable questions will be graded harshly!
- 2) You have to be able to recognize the names of important figures that we have discussed. Don't worry, you will not have to learn to spell Leszek Balcerowicz,

but you may need to answer who he was or what country's politics/economics he was active in. Of course, the readings mention more figures than one could possibly memorize. As a rule of thumb, focus on those figures who appear both in the readings and in lecture.

- 3) Memorize important dates and events. You may have to come up with the dates of a list of events, or order events according to the year they took place. Again, focus on those that are covered both in lecture and in the readings.

### *Conferences*

Conferences start during the third week of the semester. Participation in conference discussions will be the basis of your participation grade.

### *Midterm*

The midterm will be held in class on **March 14<sup>th</sup>**. The exam will be comprised of term IDs and/or a short essay question. You will be tested on the material covered in lecture and contained in the readings. The midterm is worth 30% of your grade.

### *Final*

The cumulative final will be held on a university selected date during exam period. It will include term IDs and a choice of essay questions. The essay questions will be theoretically-driven, so to best prepare for the exam, go over the major theories we have discussed in lecture and encountered in the readings. Of course, be prepared to back up your theoretical argument with some empirical facts as well. The final is worth 40% of your grade.

### **Grading scale**

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Range</i>
A	4.0	>3.85
A-	3.7	3.51-3.85
B+	3.3	3.16-3.50
B	3.0	2.86-3.15
B-	2.7	2.51-2.85
C+	2.3	2.16-2.50
C	2.0	1.86-2.15
D	1.0	1.0-1.85
F	0.0	<1.0

### **On Academic Integrity**

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see [www.mcgill.ca/integrity](http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity) for more information).

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site [www.mcgill.ca/integrity](http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity)).

### **Required readings**

All assigned articles are available through McGill Library's online resources. I have also included them in the course pack, which you can purchase from McGill Bookstore.

The following books are available at Paragraph Books, located at 2220 McGill College Avenue (corner of Sherbrooke Street):

1. Valerie Bunce, *Subversive Institutions: The Design and Destruction of Socialism and the State*, Cambridge UP, 1999 (this book is available as an e-book through the library, i.e. you can access it electronically for free)
2. Sabrina Ramet, ed. *Central and Southeast European Politics Since 1989*. Cambridge University Press, 2010.
3. Dorothee Bohle and Bela Greskovits, *Capitalist Diversity on Europe's Periphery*, Cornell University Press, 2012.

### **Lecture Schedule**

#### **PART I: What was Communism and why did it collapse?**

##### **What was communism/socialism? (Jan 10, Jan 12):**

- Katherine Verdery, *What Was Socialism and What Comes Next*, Princeton UP, 1996, pp. 19-38
- Andrew Janos, "What was communism: A retrospective in comparative analysis." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 29, no. 1 (1996), pp. 1-24.
- Valerie Bunce, *Subversive Institutions: The Design and Destruction of Socialism and the State*, Cambridge UP, 1999, 20-55
- Also read a series of op-ed/blogposts on "Sex under Communism", posted on MyCourses.

##### **Perestroika and 1989 (Jan 17, Jan 19):**

- Valerie Bunce, *Subversive Institutions: The Design and Destruction of Socialism and the State*, Cambridge UP, 1999, 56-164

##### **Why did socialism/communism collapse? (Jan 24):**

- Holger Lutz Kern, "Foreign Media and Protest Diffusion in Authoritarian Regimes: The Case of the 1989 East German Revolution," *Comparative Political Studies*, September 2011, 44: 1179-1205

#### **PART II: Post-Socialist Transitions**

**The “triple” transition (Jan 26)**

- Ramet and Wagner in Sabrina Ramet, pp. 9-37
- Jon Elster, Claus Offe, and Ulrich K. Preuss. *Institutional Design in Post-Communist Societies: Rebuilding the Ship at Sea*, Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 1-35
- Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*, Johns Hopkins UP, 1996, pp. 3-38
- Anna Grzymala-Busse and Pauline Jones Luong. "Reconceptualizing the state: lessons from post-communism." *Political Theory* 30.4 (2002): 529-554.

**Wars in Former Yugoslavia (Jan 31)**

- Sabrina Ramet, pp. 111-137, 235-377 (in the individual chapters on the former Yugoslav republics, pay close attention to the timeline and to the discussion of the war years)

**Why did the Yugoslavs fight each other? (Feb 2)**

- David Lake and Donald Rothchild, “Containing Fear: The Origins and Management of Ethnic Conflict”, *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (Autumn 1996), pp. 41-75
- Fotini Christia, “Following the Money: Muslim vs. Muslim in Bosnia’s Civil War,” *Comparative Politics*, Volume 40, Number 4 (July 2008), pp. 461-480.

**February 7<sup>th</sup>, IN CLASS MAP & FACTS QUIZ**

**Economic reforms (Feb 7)**

- David Lipton and Jeffrey Sachs, “Creating a Market Economy in Eastern Europe: The Case of Poland,” *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity*, 1990. Available [here](#).
- Juliet Johnson. *Priests of Prosperity: How Central Bankers Transformed the Postcommunist World*. Cornell University Press, 2016, pp. TBA

**Why did some countries reform their economies quicker/better than others? (Feb 9)**

- Bohle and Greskovits, pp. 7-96

**What happened to the Communists? Transitional justice and lustration (Feb 14)**

- Monika Nalepa, *Skeletons in the Closet: Transitional Justice in Post-Communist Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 1-29
- Stephen Holmes, “The End of Decommunization,” *East European Constitutional Review* 31 (Summer/Fall 1994), pp. 33-36.

**What happened to the Communist parties? Party systems and voting (Feb 16)**

- Anna Grzymala-Busse, "The Programmatic Turnaround of Communist Successor Parties in East Central Europe," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Volume 35, Issue 1, March 2002, pp. 51-66
- Herbert Kitschelt, "Formation of Party Cleavages in Post-Communist Democracies Theoretical Propositions," *Party Politics* Vol. 1 Issue 4 (1995), pp. 447-472.

**Democratization outcomes by late 1990s-early 2000s (Feb 21)**

- Gebert, Leff, Harris and Bozoki and Simon in Sabrina Ramet, pp. 139-233.
- Bohle and Greskovits, pp. 138-182
- Stan, Spirova and Fischer in Sabrina Ramet, pp. 379-445; also revisit the chapters on former Yugoslav republics (pp. 235-377), but this time pay attention to the post-war regime trajectories.
- Bohle and Greskovits, pp. 182-223

**Explaining democratization outcomes: legacies (Feb 23)**

- Keith Darden and Anna Grzymala-Busse, "The Great Divide: Precommunist Schooling and Postcommunist Trajectories," *World Politics*, Vol. 59, No. 1 (October 2006), pp. 83-115.
- Grzegorz Ekiert and Daniel Ziblatt, "Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe One Hundred Years On," *East European Politics & Societies*, Vol 27, Iss. 1 (2013), pp. 90-107.

**Explaining democratization outcomes: EU conditionality (Feb 28, Mar 2)**

- Milada Vachudova, "The Leverage of International Institutions on Democratizing States: Eastern Europe and the European Union", *EUI Working Paper*, 2001, available at: <http://cadmus.iue.it/dspace/handle/1814/1742>
- Sedelmeier in Sabrina Ramet, pp. 519-536
- Anna Grzymala-Busse and Abby Innes, "Great expectations: The EU and domestic political competition in East Central Europe," *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (2003), pp. 64-73.

**March 14<sup>th</sup>, IN CLASS MIDTERM**

**PART III: Post-socialist democracies: current challenges**

**Populism and democratic decline (Mar 16, Mar 21)**

- Jacques Rupnik, "Hungary's Illiberal Turn: How Things Went Wrong," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 23, iss. 3 (July 2012), pp. 132-137
- Miklos Bankuti, Gabor Halmai, Kim Lane Scheppele, "Hungary's Illiberal Turn: Disabling the Constitution," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 23, iss. 3 (July 2012), pp. 138-146

- Erin Jenne, Cas Mudde, "Hungary's Illiberal Turn: Can Outsiders Help?" *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 23, iss. 3 (July 2012), pp. 147-155
- Grigore Pop-Eleches, "Throwing out the Bums: Protest Voting and Unorthodox Parties after Communism," *World Politics*, vol. 62 (2010), pp. 221-260
- Béla Greskovits, "The Hollowing and Backsliding of Democracy in East Central Europe" *Global Policy*, Vol 6, Issue Supplement S1 (June 2015), pp. 28-37

#### **The radical right (Mar 23, Mar 28)**

- Cas Mudde, "Racist Extremism in Central and Eastern Europe," *East European Politics & Societies*, Vol. 19, No. 2, May 2005, pp. 161-184.
- Minkenberg, Michael. "From Pariah to Policy-Maker? The Radical Right in Europe, West and East: Between Margin and Mainstream." *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 21.1 (2013): 5-24.

#### **Corruption and the rule of law (Mar 30, Apr 4)**

- Rasma Karklins, "Typology of Post-Communist Corruption," *Problems of Post-Communism*, vol. 49, no. 4, (July/August 2002), pp. 22–32.
- Venelin Ganey, "The Dorian Gray effect: winners as state breakers in postcommunism." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* Vol. 34, No. 1 (2001), pp. 1-25.
- Maria Popova, "Why Doesn't the Bulgarian Judiciary Prosecute Corruption?." *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 59, No. 5, (2012), pp. 35-49.
- Martin Mendelski, "The EU's pathological power: The failure of external rule of law promotion in South Eastern Europe." *Southeastern Europe* 39.3 (2015): 318-346.
- Kim Scheppele, *First, Let's Pick All the Judges*, @Paul Krugman's NYT blog [here](#)

#### **EU leverage after accession (Apr 6, Apr 11)**

- Aneta B. Spendzharova, Milada Anna Vachudova, "Catching Up? Consolidating Liberal Democracy in Bulgaria and Romania After EU Accession," *West European Politics*, vol. 35, iss. 1 (January 2012), pp. 39-58
- Philip Levitz and Grigore Pop-Eleches, "Why No Backsliding? The European Union's Impact on Democracy and Governance Before and After Accession," *Comparative Political Studies*, April 2010, vol. 43, no. 4, pp. 457-485
- Ulrich Sedelmeier, "Anchoring democracy from above? The European Union and democratic backsliding in Hungary and Romania after accession." *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 52, no. 1 (2014), pp. 105-121.
- Connor O'Dwyer, "Does the EU help or hinder gay-rights movements in post-communist Europe? The case of Poland." *East European Politics* 28.4 (2012): 332-352.

#### **The post-Communist states and the future of the EU (Apr 13)**

- Rachel Epstein and Wade Jacoby, "Eastern Enlargement Ten Years On: Transcending the East–West Divide?" *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 52, no. 1 (2014), pp. 1-16
- Milada Vachudova, "EU leverage and national interests in the Balkans: The puzzles of enlargement ten years on," *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 52, no. 1 (2014), pp. 122-138.

**CUMULATIVE FINAL to be held on a university-selected date.**