

**GLB/Politics of the Former USSR**  
**PSCI 504**  
**Fall 2018**  
**Wednesdays (6:00pm-8:40pm)**  
**SS 143**

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**Office Hours: Tu/Th 10:30am-12:30pm; Tu/Th 3:30pm-5:00pm; W 5:00-6:00pm**  
**and 8:40pm-9:10pm; or by appointment**  
*The BEST way to contact me is via email.*

*This syllabus is subject to change at any time at the professor's discretion.*

**Course Description:**

Welcome to *The Politics of the Former USSR*! In this course, we will study the major political, economic, social, military, and cultural policies and conditions in the Former Soviet Union since its last days and collapse in 1991 to the present. This course will have a specific focus on Russia and U.S.-Ukraine Relations in the post-Soviet period. We will have ample discussions on the transitions from one-party Communist rule to democracy and we will explore the concepts of elections, revolutions, nationalism, the media, social change, foreign policy, and the changing relationship between the former USSR and the United States.

**Format:**

Each class will involve a round-table discussion about the assigned readings. Each student will be responsible for presenting assigned readings on a rotating basis (see Requirements/Assignments). In addition, we will use videos and may invite guest speakers to further our understanding of the former USSR.

**Learning Outcome:**

Students will understand the dominant issues in the politics of the former Soviet Union (specifically Russia and Ukraine) since the collapse of the USSR in 1991, including important concepts, theories and debates in the field.

**Global Learning Objectives:**

**Learning Outcome 1:** Students will be able to demonstrate *knowledge* of the interconnectedness of global dynamics (issues, processes, trends, and systems).

**Learning Outcome 2:** Students will be able to *apply* knowledge of the interconnectedness of global dynamics.

**Learning Outcome 3:** Students will be able to view themselves as *engaged* citizens within an interconnected and diverse world.

***NO PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES ARE ALLOWED IN CLASS AT ANY  
TIME.***

***THIS INCLUDES (BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO):***

***CELL PHONES,***

***LAPTOPS,***

***iPADS,***

***iPODS,***

***MP3 Players/Recorders,***

***Translation Devices***

***VIDEO CAMERAS***

***OR ANY OTHER AUDIO AND/OR VIDEO RECORDERS OF ANY KIND***

***IF ANY OF THESE DEVICES ARE PRESENT IN CLASS THE ENTIRE CLASS  
WILL HAVE A POP QUIZ AND THE INDIVIDUAL(S) RESPONSIBLE MAY BE  
DIRECTED TO LEAVE THE CLASSROOM IMMEDIATELY.***

### **Requirements/Assignments**

#### **Research Paper:**

You must produce **ONE** research paper (*exactly 15 full pages*- not including bibliography, typed 12-point Times New Roman font, double spaced, 1in margins all around), worth a total of **25%** of your grade. The paper **MUST** be a case study of a former Soviet republic (*other than* Russia or Ukraine) in the post-soviet period. The purpose of this requirement is for you to construct your own comparative politics case study. Each student must select a different case. Papers must be submitted in electronic form (as an email attachment) **AND** as a hard (printed) copy on the due date. You will be provided with specific guidelines to complete the paper when the semester begins.

Note: Your research paper cannot be the same nor similar to papers submitted for another course. Likewise, you cannot use the research paper you write in this course for another class without the expressed permission of the other professor. ***Late papers will NOT be accepted for ANY reason.***

**Take-Home Examination:** There is one take-home exam in this course, worth **30%** of your grade. The exam requires you to answer three questions (*exactly 2 pages each*, typed, double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, 1-in margins all around). The purpose of this requirement is to prepare you for comprehensive master's degree exams in political science. You will be provided with specific guidelines to complete the take-home exam late in the semester. **Late exams will NOT be accepted for ANY reason.**

**Attendance:** **10%** of your grade is based on your class attendance. Students are required to attend class and attendance will be taken at the end of each class session using a sign-in sheet. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they have signed in. Arriving late and/or leaving early will negatively impact your attendance grade. *Attendance is critical, discussions are irreplaceable, and course sessions cannot be "made up."* ***I will not be managing any excuses for absences. You can miss up to ONE class session without penalty for any reason. More than one absence will result in a reduction in your grade, REGARDLESS of the reason (excused OR unexcused).***

*The attendance grade scale appears below.*

- *0 absences = you will get a bonus of 2% added to your grade*
- *1 absence= no penalty*
- *2 absences= -2% from your grade*
- *3 absences= -4% from your grade*
- *4 absences= -6% from your grade*
- *5 or more absences= -10% from your grade*

**Participation:** Your participation in this class is worth up to **8%** of your grade.

Your contributions to the class discussions are highly desirable and will make class sessions more interesting. Positive participation includes responding to my questions, asking your own questions, and contributing to class discussions. All of these activities will *positively* impact your participation grade.

Negative participation includes: sleeping in class, side-talk with your neighbors, coming to class late, and any other class disruptions- any of these activities will *negatively* impact your participation grade, even if you contribute to class discussions. If you use personal electronic devices in class that will result in a pop quiz for the entire class and your removal from the classroom, and it will negatively impact your participation grade. Also, if you misbehave in class or disrupt class in any way you may be directed to leave the classroom and your participation grade will be negatively impacted.

**Your participation grade will be calculated as follows:**

- Never Contributes to Class Discussions: 0%
- Rarely Contributes to Class Discussions: 2%
- Sometimes Contributes to Class Discussions: 4%
- Often Contributes to Class Discussions: 6%
- Almost Always Contributes to Class Discussions: 7%
- Always Contributes to Class Discussions: 8%

**Pop Quizzes:** These will be assigned randomly throughout the semester and will count for a total of **2%** of your grade. If you are *absent* when a pop quiz is given, you **cannot** make it up, irrespective of the circumstances. Pop quizzes will be graded on the basis of the content and clarity of your answers.

**Readings Presentations:** Each student will be assigned to **present readings** and help lead the discussions throughout the semester on an equitable and rotating basis. *These presentations **must be accompanied by a summary handout** to be distributed to all of the students in the class. Each presentation will be strictly limited to 25 minutes (for longer chapters- shorter chapters will result in shorter presentations).* Your presentations are worth **25%** of your grade.

**Grades:** Your grade in this course will be determined by the criteria listed below. Specifically, the following scale will be used to determine your grade:

- Research Paper (October 17): 25%
- Take-Home Exam (Week of December 10-14): 30%
- Readings Presentations: 25%
- Attendance: 10%
- Participation: 8%
- Quizzes: 2%

**A 90-100%; B 80-89.9%; C 70-79.9%; D 60-69.9%; F Below 60%**

## **COURSE POLICIES**

**Notes on Academic Dishonesty of ANY kind:** Any student who is caught committing any kind of academic dishonesty will receive an “F” in this course and will be reported to the University administration. “Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (the appropriation or stealing of the ideas or words of another and passing them off as one’s own), cheating on exams or other course assignments, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with others in preparing course assignments), signing the attendance sheet for a student who is absent (or asking another student to sign you in when you are absent), and abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource material” (Texas A&M University-Commerce Procedures A13.12). If you have any doubt as to what may constitute academic dishonesty, please consult with me prior to submitting any assignments.

**Notes on plagiarism:** All research papers will be submitted to *turnitin.com*, a *digital plagiarism detection system*. Any student who is caught plagiarizing will receive an “F” in this course and will be reported to the University administration for academic dishonesty. If you have any doubt as to what may constitute plagiarism, please consult me prior to submitting any written work.

**Email Policy:** Before you ask me a question in an email, check to see if the syllabus answers your question **FIRST**. I generally reply to emails within 24 hours, Monday-Friday. Emails sent to me over weekends will be replied to on Mondays. I do not reply to emails that ask questions about items covered in the syllabus, such as what chapters are covered on an exam or what the assigned readings are for a given week.

**Code of Student Conduct:** All students enrolled at the university shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. *Faculty have the authority to request students who exhibit inappropriate behavior to leave the class and may refer serious offenses to the University Police Department and/or the Dean of Students for disciplinary action.* Failure to comply with the Code of Student Conduct and commonsensical directions listed above may result in a verbal request to cease inappropriate behavior, your immediate removal from the class, being immediately dropped from the class, and/or a review by an appropriate university disciplinary agency. For more information on this subject, please see the Student Guidebook.

**Campus Carry:** Texas Senate Bill-11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to <http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02R1.pdf> (and/or consult your event organizer). Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

**Non-discrimination notice:** A&M-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

**Note to Students with Disabilities:** The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Gee Library Room 132  
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835 Fax (903) 468-8148  
[StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu)

**In order to maximize your performance in this course, you must:**

- ***TURN OFF ALL PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES BEFORE CLASS BEGINS. THIS INCLUDES (BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO): CELL PHONES, LAPTOPS, iPADS, IPODS, MP3 Players/Recorders, Translation devices, VIDEO CAMERAS, OR ANY OTHER AUDIO AND/OR VIDEO RECORDERS OF ANY KIND***
- ***IF ANYONE IS FOUND TO BE TEXTING OR ANSWERS A PHONE CALL DURING CLASS, THE ENTIRE CLASS WILL TAKE A *POP QUIZ* ON THE SPOT.***
- **Attend each class session AND arrive ON TIME (the classroom door will not be opened for late arrivals 15 minutes after class starts; Notify the professor in advance if you need to arrive late or leave early;**
- **Read** the assigned material before class;

- Be **prepared to discuss** the topics presented in class;
- **Refrain from** reading materials or working on other homework during class;
- **Do NOT get up in the middle of class** to go to the bathroom unless absolutely necessary;
- **Be courteous to -and respectful of-** your fellow students and professor.

### **Required Readings:**

There are **FOUR required texts** for this course:

- The Eagle and the Trident: US-Ukraine Relations in Turbulent Times  
Steven Pifer  
ISBN: 978-0-8157-3040-8
- Russian Politics & Presidential Power: Transformational Leadership from Gorbachev to Putin  
Donald R. Kelley  
ISBN: 978-0-8728-9404-4
- Russian Foreign Policy: Interests, Vectors, and Sectors  
Nikolas K. Gvosdev and Christopher Marsh  
ISBN: 978-1-4522-3484
- Politics in Russia: A Reader  
Joel M. Ostrow  
ISBN: 978-1-6087-1650

### **Course Schedule:**

#### **Week 1 Introduction**

August 29

Read:

- Readings for the first class session will be provided to you.
- ***Buy your books***

#### **Week 2 The Soviet Union Overview**

September 5

Read: (114)

#### ***YOUR STUDENT STATEMENT OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY IS DUE***

- Ostrow, Ch. 1: An Introduction to the Soviet Political System (64)
- Kelley, Ch. 1: Executive Power in Russian Politics (24)
- Gvosdev & Marsh, Introduction (12)
- Gvosdev & Marsh, Ch. 1: The Historical Legacy for Contemporary Russian Foreign Policy (14)

**Week 3        The Collapse of the USSR – Early Years**

September 12

Read: (131)

- Ostrow, Ch. 2 The Collapse of the Soviet Union (69)
- Kelley, Ch. 2: The Gorbachev Presidency (30)
- Kelley, Ch. 3 The Yeltsin Presidency, 1991-1993 (32)

**Week 4        State-(re)building**

September 19

Read: (137)

- Kelley, Ch. 4: Yeltsin and Russia Reborn (34)
- Ostrow, Ch. 3 Core Tasks for Postcommunist Russia (47)
- Gvosdev & Marsh, Ch. 3: The United States: The Main Enemy or Strategic Partner? (56)

**Week 5        Economics/The Executive/Political Parties**

September 26

Read: (152)

- Ostrow, Ch. 4: The Economy: Market Capitalism or Institutionalized Corruption (53)
- Ostrow, Ch. 5: The Executive and the Legislature (34)
- Ostrow, Ch. 6: Political Parties (65)

**Week 6        Putin and The “Tandem”**

October 3

Read: (130)

- Kelley, Ch. 5: Putin I 2000-2008 (42)
- Kelley, Ch. 6: The “Tandem” (40)

**Week 7        Putin and The Future of Russia**

October 10

Read: (82)

- Kelley, Ch. 7: Putin II 2012- (48)
- Kelley, Ch. 8: The Future(s) of Russian Politics (34)

**Week 8        Nationalism and The Media; Research Paper Due**

October 17

Read: (83)

- Ostrow, Ch. 8: Nationalism and Chechnya (39)
- Ostrow, Ch. 9: The Media (44)
- ***Turn in your Research Paper as both a printed copy and an electronic copy by 6:00pm.***

**Week 9 Foreign Policy: East Asia and Eurasia**

October 24

Read: (98)

- Gvosdev & Marsh, Ch. 4: The Bear and the Dragon: China and the East Asia Vector (34)
- Gvosdev & Marsh, Ch. 5: The Eurasian Space (64)

**Week 10 Foreign Policy: Eastern & Western Europe**

October 31

Read: (92)

- Gvosdev & Marsh, Ch. 6 Eastern Europe: Comrades No More (38)
- Gvosdev & Marsh, Ch. 7 Europe: Russia's "Traditional Orientation" (54)

**Week 11 Foreign Policy: Near-East; The Global South**

November 7

Read: (85)

- Gvosdev & Marsh, Ch. 8: The Near-Eastern Vector (43)
- Gvosdev & Marsh, Ch. 10: Africa and Latin America: The Southern Vector (36)
- Gvosdev & Marsh, Epilogue (6)

**Week 12 US-Ukraine Relations (Part I)**

November 14

Read: (76)

- Pifer, Introduction (8)
- Pifer, Ch. 1 Establishing Relations (28)
- Pifer, Ch. 2 Dealing with Nuclear Weapons (40)

**Week 13 Thanksgiving Break**

November 21

Read:

- Nothing. Enjoy your break!

**Week 14 US-Ukraine Relations (Part II)**

November 28

Read: (132)

- Pifer, Ch. 3 The Relationship Blossoms (50)
- Pifer, Ch. 4 The Relationship Matures...but Problems Appear (82)



**Week 15 US-Ukraine Relations (Part III)**

December 5

Read: (126)

- Pifer, Ch. 5 Coping with Downturn (54)
- Pifer, Ch. 6 Election and Revolution (14)
- Pifer, Ch. 7 History Didn't End with the Orange Revolution (38)
- Pifer, Ch. 8 Lessons and Policy Recommendations (22)

**Finals Week Class Dinner; Take-Home Examination DUE**

- *Turn in your Take-Home Examination as both a printed copy and an electronic copy by 6:00pm.*

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**STUDENT STATEMENT OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

**I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read the syllabus in its entirety, and understand the guidelines and agree to the policies detailed therein as a condition of being enrolled in this course. I understand my obligation to adhere to these guidelines and policies in this course, and that failure to do so may result in serious consequences, including (but not limited to) being dropped from the course, and/or receiving a grade of “F” in the course.**

**Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Student PRINTED Name: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Date of Signature: \_\_\_\_\_**

**FAILURE TO RETURN THIS SIGNED STATEMENT BY THE SECOND CLASS SESSION (September 5, 2018) WILL RESULT IN YOUR BEING DROPPED FROM THIS COURSE.**