



**Catalog course description**

This course uses the experience of the Soviet Union and Russia to understand change in political and economic systems,

**Communication**

The easiest way to communicate with me is by e-mail. I will usually respond within 24 hours, a bit longer on weekends. Don't hesitate to resend your message if you think I am taking too long. I will be communicating with you as individuals and with the whole class through e-mail on a regular basis, so be sure that you also check e-mail regularly.

I will be holding Zoom office hours every week Monday and Wednesday 3:45-4:30 pm Central US time. During those times, you can just drop in if you want to talk about anything. The standing office hour meeting link is <https://slu.zoom.us/j/96903001331?pwd=bjkveWRrUkJoYjI2d1I4dmdXRWpFdz09>.

I'm also happy to arrange a separate meeting with you, if you would rather meet privately. For this semester, those meetings mostly will be on Zoom or on the phone. Just e-mail me if you want to set up a meeting outside office hours. When you e-mail, let me know some times that will work for you. For those of you taking the class in person, I'll be available after class to talk in a socially distanced way.

Throughout the semester, we will be communicating with each other through a number of online tools, including Blackboard. Here are a few "netiquette" – or internet etiquette – rules.

**Be respectful:** Respect the opinions and privacy of your classmates. We can certainly disagree – and we may learn more when we do – but please disagree tactfully and explain the reasons for your disagreement. Do not share personal information about your classmates with others.

**Be scholarly:** Use correct language, grammar, and spelling. Write in full sentences. Credit the ideas of others. Be clear when you are stating an opinion, and provide sources to back up your facts. Where appropriate, engage the class readings directly or refer to ideas and concepts that

This class is divided into 5 modules. Each module will include a few low-stakes assessments. These will include discussion boards, blogs, short reflections, quizzes and some group projects. More information on these low-stakes assessments is provided for each module on Blackboard. Students taking the class online will complete all this work on Blackboard. Students who are present in the classroom will be able to complete some of it in class. In either case, you will receive feedback on these exercises, usually within 5 days, in the Blackboard grade center.

Included in the low-stakes assessment is evaluation of your participation in class. Whether you are taking the class in person or on line, you should come to class prepared to engage the material during every class meeting. This daily participation will help you apply the concepts you are learning and expose where you still have questions. To participate effectively, you will need to keep up to date with the assigned reading and continually think about how ideas from one set of readings relate to the others. You should be prepared to

**Tips for success**

Do all the reading and think about it. It is very difficult to fully engage with the topics we will be examining without doing the reading. I provide a reading question for each day to help you focus your reading on aspects we are likely to talk about in class.



W.E.B. DuBois, "Marxism and the Negro Problem," from *W.E.B. DuBois: A Reader*, edited by David Levering Lewis (New York: Henry Holt, 1995), pp. 538-544 (on e-reserve).

Does it make sense to think – as Marx does – that revolution will arise organically from the situation of the proletariat under capitalism? What does Lenin think? What does Olson think?

February 10

Colton, pp. 13-42.

March 10                    ESSAY ONE DUE

March 15                    Colton, pp. 54-68.  
David Painter, *The Cold War: An International History* (London: Routledge, 1999),  
pp. 112-118 (e-reserve).  
Heonik Kwon, *The Other Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010),  
pp. 153-157 (e-reserve).  
Seweryn Bialer, "Soviet Stability and its Sources," In Ostrow, pp. 44-64.

Was the Soviet Union still "totalitarian" after Stalin?  
Why did observers think the Soviet system was more stable than it really was?  
What did they miss? Why did they miss it?

March 17                    Colton, pp. 68-84.  
Igor Kliamkin and Andranik Migranian, "The Iron Hand! Do We Need It?"  
*Literaturnaya Gazeta (International)*, February 1990 (on e-reserve).

Why might it be hard to reform a totalitarian system?



Does central planning encourage desirable behavior on the part of economic actors? Does shock therapy?

April 2 Easter break – No class – Stay safe!

April 5 Colton, pp. 115-133.  
Ostrow, "The Economy: Market Capitalism or Institutionalized Corruption," pp. 181-185.  
Katherine Verdery, "What was Socialism and Why Did it Fall?," in Ostrow, pp. 70-83.  
Lilia Shevtsova, "The Triumph of Bureaucratic Capitalism," in Ostrow, pp. 203-211.  
Steven Handleman, from "Comrade Criminal" and "The Criminal State," in Ostrow, pp. 212-233.

Would a "China strategy" of economic reform without political reform have worked in Russia?

**Module 4: RETURN TO AUTOCRACY**

April 7 Ostrow, "The Executive and the Legislature," pp. 234-238.  
Gessen, chs. 1-3, pp. 11-70.

Would you explain the concentration of power that occurred under Putin by looking at the man or the institutions he inherited?

**QUIZ**

April 12 Gessen, ch.7, "The Day the Media Died," and ch. 8, "Dismantling Democracy," pp. 145-197.

Why did "strengthening vertical power" seem like a good idea after Yeltsin?

April 14 Colton, pp. 134-154.  
M. Steven Fish, "Stronger Legislatures, Stronger Democracies," *Journal of Democracy* 17, no. 1, January 2006, pp. 5-20 (on e-reserve).  
Paul Chaisty, "Majority Control and Executive Dominance," in Ostrow, pp. 253-267.

Why is a strong legislature good for democracy?

April 19 Colton 154-181.  
Milan W. Svobik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*

- April 21 Ostrow, "Elections," pp. 333-336.  
Misha Myagkov and Peter Ordeshook, "Russian Elections: An Oxymoron of Democracy," in Ostrow, pp. 373-388.  
Gessen, ch. 9, "Rule of Terror," ch. 11, "Back to the USSR," Epilogue, and Afterword, pp. 199-226 and pp. 261-305.

Why is it so difficult to create a strong opposition in Russia?  
How would you handle the many personal and professional compromises implicit in living in an autocratic regime?

- April 26 ESSAY 2 DUE

### Module 5: RUSSIA AND THE WORLD

- April 28 Valerie J. Bunce and Sharon L. Wolchik, "Favorable conditions and electoral revolutions," *Journal of Democracy* 17, no. 4 (October 2006): 5-16 (e-reserve).  
Maria Popova, "Why the Orange Revolution Was Short and Peaceful and Euromaidan Long and Violent," *Problems of Post-Communism* 61, no. 6 (November-December 2014): 64-70 (on e-reserve).  
Anton Troianovski, "Belarus Opposition Calls General Strike, as Protesters Gird for Long Fight," *New York Times*, 26 October 2020 (on e-reserve).  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/26/world/europe/belarus-protests-lukashenko.html?searchResultPosition=18>  
Samuel Greene, "Putin's arrest of opposition leader Alexei Navalny is a sign of weakness, not strength," *The Washington Post* *The Monkey Cage*, 18 January 2020 (on e-reserve).  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/01/18/putins-arrest-opposition-leader-alexei-navalny-is-sign-weakness-not-strength/>
- Electoral revolutions encourage people to question election results. Is that good for democracy in the long run?
- May 3 Colton, pp. 182-240.
- Are Russia and the U.S. heading into a new cold war?
- May 5 Keith A. Darden, "Russian Revanche: External Threats and Regime Reactions," *Daedalus* 146 (2) Spring 2017, pp. 128-141 (on e-reserve).  
Massimo Calabresi, "Hacking Democracy: Inside Russia's Social Media War on America," *Time*, 29 May 2017, pp. 30-35 (on e-reserve).  
Victoria Nuland, "Pinning Down Putin: How a Confident America Should Deal with Russia," *Foreign Affairs* 99, no. 4 (July-August 2020) (on e-reserve).
- Is Russian disinformation a threat to democracy worldwide? Why or why not?
- May 10 Joel Ostrow, Georgiy Satarov, and Irina Khakamada, "Critical Junctures and the Demise of Democracy in Russia," in Ostrow, pp. 139-148.  
Valerie Bunce, "The Prospects for a Color Revolution in Russia," *Daedalus* 146 (2) Spring 2017, pp. 19-29 (on e-reserve).

Why did democracy fail in Russia? Do you think Russia will become more democratic in the future?

May 12

FINAL EXAM, 2-3:50

### Selected Supplemental Reading

#### FICTION

- Bulgakov, Mikhail. 1967. *The Master and Margarita*. New York: Penguin Classics.
- Bulgakov, Mikhail. 1968. *The Heart of a Dog*. New York: Harcourt Brace.
- Grossman, Vasily. 1972. *Forever Flowing*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Pelevin, Victor. 1999. *Homo Zapiens*. New York: Viking.
- Solzhenitsyn, Alexander. 1962. *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. Berkley.
- Solzhenitsyn, Alexander. 1968. *The Cancer Ward*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Solzhenitsyn, Alexander. 1968. *The First Circle*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Solzhenitsyn, Alexander. 1973. *The Gulag Archipelago*. New York: Harper Classics.
- Shteyngart, Gary. 2002. *The Russian Debutante's Handbook*. New York: Riverhead Books, Penguin Putnam.
- Shteyngart, Gary. 2007. *Absurdistan: A Novel*. New York: Random House.
- Voinovich, Vladimir. 1986. *Moscow 2042*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Voinovich, Vladimir. 1975. *The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of Private Ivan Chonkin*.
- Zamiatin, Eugene. 1924. *We*. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co.

#### PERSONAL AND JOURNALISTIC ACCOUNTS

##### *The Soviet Period:*

- Alexievich, Svetlana. 1992. *Zinky Boys: Soviet Voices from the Afghanistan War*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Alexievich, Svetlana. 2018. *The Unwomanly Face of War: An Oral History of Women in World War II*. New York: Random House.
- Alekseyeva, Julia. 2017. *Soviet Daughter: A Graphic Revolution*. Portland, OR: Microcosm Publishing.
- Reed, John. 1934. *Ten Days that Shook the World*. New York: International Pub.
- Garros, Veronique, Natalia Korenevskaya, and Thomas Lahusen. 1995. *Intimacy and Terror: Soviet Diaries of the 1930s*. Translated by Yy Boys: Li.55 365.2(a)14(r)-3(t)13(,)13( )

- Press.
- Satter, David. 2003. *Darkness at Dawn: The Rise of the Russian Criminal State*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Yeltsin, Boris. 1990. *Against the Grain*. New York: Summit Books.
- Yeltsin, Boris. 2000. *Midnight Diaries*. Translated by Catherine A. Fitzpatrick. New York: Public Affairs.
- Judah, Ben. 2014. *Fragile Empire: How Russia Fell In and Out of Love with Vladimir Putin*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Garrels, Anne. 2016. *Putin Country: A Journey into the Real Russia*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.
- Gessen, Masha. 2014. *Words Will Break Cement: The Passion of Pussy Riot*. New York: Riverhead Books.
- Isikoff, Michael, and David Corn. 2018. *the Election of Donald Trump*. Twelve.
- Kasparov, Garry. 2015. *Winter is Coming: Why Vladimir Putin and the Enemies of the Free World Must Be Stopped*. PublicAffairs.
- Ostrovsky, Arkady. 2015. New York: Viking.
- Politkovskaya, Anna. 2004. *A Dirty War: A Russian Reporter in Chechnya*. Harvill Press.
- Politkovskaya, Anna. 2007. *A Small Corner of Hell: Dispatches from Chechnya*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Politkovskaya, Anna. 2007.







**Note: Accordingly, no consumption of any food will be allowed in class.**

Students who do not comply with a request by a SLU instructor to wear a mask in accordance with the University's *Interim Policy on Face Masks* may be subject to disciplinary actions per the rules, regulations, and policies of Saint Louis University, including but not limited to the *Student Handbook*. Non-compliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including any of the following:

- dismissal from the course(s)
- removal from campus housing (if applicable)
- dismissal from the University

To immediately protect the health and well-being of all students, instructors, and staff, instructors reserve the right to cancel or terminate any class session at which any student fails to comply with faculty or staff request to wear a mask in accordance with University policy.

Students are strongly encouraged to identify to their instructor any student or instructor not in compliance. Non-compliance may be anonymously reported via the SLU Integrity Hotline at 1-877-525-5669 (or confidentially via the Integrity Hotline's website at <http://www.lighthouse-services.com/slu>).

### **In-Person Class Attendance and Participation**

The health and well-being of SLU's students, staff, and faculty are critical concerns. Accordingly, the following University policy statements on in-person class attendance are designed to preserve and advance the collective health and well-being of our institutional constituencies.

1. Students who exhibit any [potential COVID symptoms](#) (those that cannot be attributed to some other medical condition the students are known to have, such as allergies, asthma, etc.) shall absent themselves from any in-person class attendance or in-person participation in any class-related activity until they have been evaluated by a qualified medical official. Students should contact the [University Student Health Center](#) for immediate assistance.
2. Students who exhibit any [potential COVID symptoms](#) (those that cannot be attributed to some other medical condition the students are known to have, such as allergies, asthma, etc.) but who feel well enough to a) attend the course synchronously in an online class session or b) participate in asynchronous online class activities, are expected to do so. Those who do not feel well enough to do so should absent themselves accordingly.
3. Students (whether exhibiting any of potential COVID symptoms or not, and regardless of how they feel) who are under either an isolation or quarantine directive issued by a qualified health official must absent themselves from all in-person course activity per the stipulations of the isolation or quarantine directive. They are expected to participate in synchronous or asynchronous online class activities as they feel able to do so, or absent themselves accordingly.
4. Students are responsible for notifying each instructor of an absence as far in advance as possible; when advance notification is not possible, students are responsible for notifying each instructor as soon after the absence as possible.
5. As a temporary amendment to the current [University Attendance Policy](#), all absences due to illness or an isolation/quarantine directive issued by a qualified health official Ë