Political Science 355K: The Politics of the Russian Federation
Spring 2015

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Office hours: 1.10:00 -12:00 MWF or by arrangement
Course Meeting Time: MWF 11:00-11:50, Curry 303

Syllabus and Course Outline

This course focuses primarily on the current politics of the Russian Federation. It will examine
the country’s institutional structure and critical issues, such as the problems of democratization,
economic reform, civil society, and foreign policy. In order to better understand contemporary
Russian politics, it will also provide a review of the communist period, and the causes and
consequences of the USSR's dissolution.

A. Course Requirements

Students will take a midterm exam, worth 25% of your grade. During the semester you will
write a research paper on some aspect of current Russian politics. The research paper will be
with 30% of your grade. The results of the research papers will be discussed in class during the
latter part of the semester. You will also have a final exam worth 35% of your grade. 10% of
your grade is based on class participation. I use a standard ten-point grading system. For
example: 93-100 = A; 90-92 = A-; 87-89 = B+; 83-86 = B, etc. This is a writing intensive
course. Exams will be essay and short answer. Your research paper will be written in multiple
drafts and will be assessed on the bases of the quality of your writing in addition to the substance
of your research.

B. Required Readings


White, Stephen, Richard Sakwa and Henry E. Hale, Developments in Russian Politics 8

Additional readings will be posted on blackboard

ACADEMIC HONOR CODE: Each student is required to sign the honor statement on all major
work submitted for this course. Refer to the UNCG Undergraduate Bulletin.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes unless prior
permission is obtained in advance from the instructor.

ELECTRONIC Devices: Turn off or turn to vibrate ALL cell phones, pagers, and other
electronic devices other than your laptop computer. Concerning laptops: The only reason to
bring a laptop to this class is to take notes. There are no exceptions.

DROP POLICY: Refer to UNCG Undergraduate Bulletin
Course Outline

I. Introduction: Continuity and Change in Russian Politics, the Role of History

Sakwa, Richard, “Politics in Russia,” in White, Sakwa and Hale, Developments in Russian Politics.


II. The Soviet Period

McAuly, “Introduction”
McAuly, chapters 2-6.

III. From Brezhnev to Yeltsin: the Transformation of Russian Politics

McAuly, chapters 7 and 8.

IV. Russia’s Transition Political Economy and the Rise of Vladimir Putin


Midterm Exam, Approximately February 20th

V. Executive and Legislative Politics

Willerton, John, “The Hegemonic Executive,” in White, Sakwa and Hale, Developments in Russian Politics.
Remington, Thomas, “Parliamentary Politics in Russia,” in White, Sakwa and Hale, Developments in Russian Politics.

VI. Parties and Elections

VII. Russia’s new Political Economy

Hanson, Philip, “Managing the Economy,” in White, Sakwa and Hale, Developments in Russian Politics.

VIII. Civil Society and Political Culture

Robertson, Graeme, “Civil Society and Contentious Politics in Russia,” in White, Sakwa and Hale, Developments in Russian Politics
Stephenson, Svetlana, “Society and Social Divisions in Russia,” in White, Sakwa and Hale, Developments in Russian Politics.
Oats, Sarah, “Russia's Media and Political Communication in the Digital Age,” in White, Sakwa and Hale, Developments in Russian Politics.
Hendley, Kathryn, “Assessing the Rule of Law in Russia,” in White, Sakwa and Hale, Developments in Russian Politics

IX. Russian’s Evolving Security Policy

Light, Margot, “Foreign Policy,” in White, Sakwa and Hale, Developments in Russian Politics.
Title: Why the Ukraine crisis is the West's fault: the liberal delusions that provoked Putin
Mearsheimer, John J., “Why the Ukraine crisis is the West's fault: the liberal delusions that provoked Putin,” Foreign Affairs, 93.5 (September-October 2014).

X. Conclusion

Gel”man, Vladimir, “Trajectories of Russian Politics,” in White, Sakwa and Hale, Developments in Russian Politics.

Final Paper due on the last day of class, Tuesday April 28th

Final Exam, May 6th, 8:00-11:00