POSC 3631 China and Russia in Comparative Perspective

Spring 2015
Monday/Thursday, 10:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.
Dealy Hall 112

Instructor: Olena Nikolayenko
E-mail: onikolayenko@fordham.edu
Office Location: Faber Hall, Rm. 677
Office Hours: Thursday, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Course Overview

Since the introduction of free market reforms in the late 1970s, Chinese economy has been growing at an average annual rate of ten percent. Likewise, Russia has recently experienced an economic boom followed by a steep economic meltdown. In both cases, the ruling elite seek to foster economic growth in a repressive political environment. While embracing some elements of market economy, the Communist Party of China strives to maintain a one-party political system. Similarly, the Russian government stifles the development of civil society to ensure the survival of the non-democratic regime. Moreover, incumbent governments in these states face a litany of policy challenges, including rising inequality, rampant corruption, and demographic crisis. This course is designed to provide a broad overview of political, socioeconomic, and cultural developments in contemporary China and Russia.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

• describe recent political and socioeconomic changes in China and Russia;
• evaluate the relationship between capitalism and autocracy;
• develop analytical skills by writing a policy brief on an assigned topic.
Course Requirements

Participation – 10 percent
Quiz – 10 percent
Current Events Analysis – 15 percent
Midterm Exam – 25 percent
Policy Brief – 30 percent
Presentation of Policy Research – 10 percent

Participation
Evaluation of student participation will be based on the completion of assigned readings and meaningful contribution to classroom discussions. Students are expected to do the assigned readings prior to the class and think about questions for discussion.

Quiz
A quiz made up of ten multiple-choice questions will be administered in class to test the knowledge of basic facts about China and Russia.

Current Events Analysis
Starting February 9, each class will begin with a student-led discussion of current events. The student will be responsible for selecting a news story pertinent to the class material and leading a discussion on the topic. In addition, the student is expected to submit a one-page analysis of the selected current event. In the written analysis, summarize the news item, explain why you think this current event is important, and discuss how it is related to the class material. The analysis should be single-spaced, 12-point font, Times New Roman. Please do not exceed the one-page limit. Attach a copy of the news article and clearly identify the news source. The student can receive a maximum of ten points for the written analysis and additional five points for the facilitation of classroom discussion on the topic.

Midterm Exam
There will be a midterm exam consisting of multiple choice questions and short answer questions. The exam will cover the course material, including assigned readings, lectures, and classroom discussions.

Policy Brief
At the end of the course, students will be expected to write a ten-page policy brief addressing a public policy issue in either China or Russia. The purpose of the policy brief is to convince policymakers to revise the way a policy issue is handled and adopt an alternative course of action. Each student will choose a policy issue that aligns with his or her own interests. Further details will be provided in the class.

Presentation
Prior to the submission of the policy brief, each student will make a ten-minute presentation in class. In the presentation, the student will be expected to briefly describe the policy issue, summarize the policy background, and outline a set of policy recommendations.
Late Penalty

Students are responsible for submitting a hard copy of the policy brief at the beginning of the last class on April 27. Papers handed in after the class will be considered late. The late penalty is ten percent of the assignment grade per day.

Academic Integrity

Failure to properly acknowledge the intellectual contribution of others constitutes plagiarism and is a very serious academic offence. Please consult the *Fordham University Undergraduate Policy on Academic Integrity* to get familiar with the standards of academic integrity.

Required Readings

There is no general “textbook” for this course. The assigned course readings are available via the Blackboard. Students are responsible for downloading the assigned readings from the course web site and reading them prior to the class.

Useful Web Sites

To gain a deeper understanding of political and economic processes in contemporary China and Russia, students are strongly encouraged to follow current events in these countries. Below is a list of web site links that you may find useful in keeping track of regional developments.

  *China Daily* is a major English-language newspaper, representing views of the Chinese government.

- [http://www.chinaview.cn](http://www.chinaview.cn)  
  *China View* is an online publication launched by the state-owned press agency Xinhua News Agency.

- [http://chinadigitaltimes.net](http://chinadigitaltimes.net)  
  *China Digital Times* is a bilingual web site produced by China Internet Project at the University of California-Berkeley in collaboration with volunteer bloggers.

- [http://www.themoscowtimes.com](http://www.themoscowtimes.com)  
  *Moscow Times* is an English-language newspaper published in Moscow, Russia.

- [http://en.rian.ru](http://en.rian.ru)  
  The web site of the Russian News and Information Agency (RIAN) supplies a state-sanctioned perspective on current events in Russia.
Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty provides extensive coverage of the post-communist region from the Western perspective.

Maps of the region are available in the online map collection of the University of Texas: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps.

Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

Jan 12. Introduction

Jan 15. The Rise and the Fall of Empires


Jan 22. Chinese Road to Socialism


Jan 26. Post-Mao China


Jan 29. The Soviet Union


Feb 2. Gorbachev’s Perestroika


Feb 5. The End of History?


Feb 9. Political Institutions in Contemporary China and Russia


Feb 12. Elections in China and Russia


Feb 17. How the Chinese Economy Works


Feb 19. Transition to Market Economy in Russia


Feb 23. Capitalism and Corruption


Feb 26. MID-TERM EXAM
March 2. Civil Society and Mass Media


March 5. Population Policies


March 9. Chinese Youth

Ash, Alec. 2013. “China’s Youth: Do They Dare to Care about Politics?” *Dissent* 60(2): 41–45


March 12. Russian Youth


March 23. Writing a Policy Brief

March 26. No Class/Individual Meetings with Students

March 30. National Identity


April 9. China and the World


April 13. Russia and the World


April 16. US Foreign Policy toward China and Russia


April 20. Student Presentations

April 23. Student Presentations

April 27. Wrap-Up Discussion

Note: The policy brief is due at the beginning of the class. Please bring a laptop for a web-based course evaluation.