POSC 2625 China and Russia in Comparative Perspective

Fall 2010
Monday/Thursday, 11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.
Faculty Memorial Hall 214

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Office Location: Faber Hall, Rm. 677
Office Hours: Monday, 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 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. In recent years, Russia has also experienced a spectacular economic boom propelled by high world prices for hydrocarbons. In both cases, the strong economic growth occurs in the repressive political environment. Notwithstanding the rapid movement of goods and labor, the Communist Party of China seeks to check the diffusion of ideas and suppress dissent to maintain a one-party political system. Likewise, the Russian government stifles the development of civil society in an attempt to solidify the strength of the non-democratic regime. Still, incumbent governments in these states face a litany of policy challenges, including rising inequality, rampant corruption, and environmental pollution. This course is designed to provide a broad overview of political and socioeconomic transformations 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 in comparative perspective;
- develop analytical skills by writing a policy brief on an assigned topic.

Course Requirements

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<th>Requirement</th>
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<td>Participation</td>
<td>– 10 percent</td>
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<td>Quiz</td>
<td>– 10 percent</td>
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<td>News Summary</td>
<td>– 15 percent</td>
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<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>– 25 percent</td>
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<td>Policy Brief</td>
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Participation
Student participation is essential. Students are expected to do the assigned readings prior to the class. Evaluation of class participation will be based on the completion of assigned readings and meaningful contribution to classroom discussions.

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.

News Summary
Starting the third week of classes, two or three students per week will be responsible for preparing news summaries of current events in China and Russia. Students will be expected to present the selected news stories in the classroom on Thursdays. The full text of news articles saved in a Microsoft Word document should be circulated to other students via email by 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday to allow others sufficient time to read the selected news stories.

The one-page news summary, as well as a hard copy of the news articles, is due at the beginning of the class on Thursday. The news summary should focus on two events that occurred in China and Russia over the past week (one event per country). Locate a current event article and summarize the news item, explain why you think this current event is important, and discuss how it is related to the class material. Please specify the news source. Other students should be prepared to discuss the news stories in class.

Midterm Exam
There will be a midterm exam consisting of multiple choice 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. Further details will be provided in the class.

Late Penalty
You are responsible for submitting a hard copy of the policy brief at the beginning of the class on December 9. Papers handed in after that point will be considered late. The late penalty is ten percent of your assignment grade per business 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. There is no reading course pack either. 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 are some web site links that you may find useful.

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn
*China Daily* is a popular English-language newspaper.

http://www.chinaview.cn
This online English-language publication is produced by the government press agency Xinhua News Agency.

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
*Moscow Times* is an English-language newspaper published in Moscow, Russia.

http://en.rian.ru
Russian News and Information Agency (RIAN) supplies a state-sanctioned perspective on current events in Russia.

http://www.rferl.org/section/Russia/161.html
*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.

No Electronic Devices

Please do not use laptops, cell phones, iPods, or other electronic devices in the classroom. Make sure that you turn off your cell phone before the start of the class.
Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

Sept 2. Introduction (no readings)

Sept 9. Historical Legacies: Path Dependence or Path Contingency?


Sept 13. Chinese Road to Socialism


Sept 16. Post-Mao China


Sept 20. Soviet Economy


Sept 23. Gorbachev’s Perestroika


Sept 27. The End of History?


Sept 30. Capitalism and Corruption


Oct 4. Gender


Oct 7. Mass and Elite Support for Market Reforms


Oct 12. Review Session

Oct 14. MID-TERM EXAM

Oct 18. Political Regime in Contemporary China and Russia


**Oct 21. Elections in China**


**Oct 25. Elections in Russia**


**Oct 28. Public Opinion in China and Russia**


**Nov 1. Mass Media and Online Activism**


**Nov 4. Civil Society**


**Nov 8. National Identity**


**Nov 11. The Uyghurs in Xinjiang**


**Nov 15. Human Rights Violations in Chechnya**


**Nov 18. Chinese-Russian Relations**


**Nov 22. Writing a Policy Brief**
Nov 29. China and the World


Dec 2. Russia and the World


Dec 6. US Foreign Policy toward China and Russia


Dec 9. Wrap-Up Discussion

*Note: The policy brief is due.*