April 2, 2018

PoliSci 213A | PoliSci 313A | REES 213A | IPS 213A

Russia and the West

Term: Spring 2018  
Units:  5 units  
Instructor:  Michael McFaul  
Teaching Coordinator:  Anya Shkurko,  ashkurko@stanford.edu  
Time: Mondays 3:00p-5:50p  
Location:  200-107

Course Description

Most agree that relations between the United States and Russia today are at one of the low points in decades. Why? Some attribute this current clash to decisions taken by foreign policymakers in Washington and Moscow. These analysts cite variation in Russian-American relations – sometimes relations have been “good”, other times “bad” – to highlight the role of more contingent factors in driving the ups and downs of U.S.-Russia relations. Another school focuses on regime type as the central driver of conflict and cooperation. Others point to more enduring, structural features of this bilateral relationship such as the balance of power in the international system or cultural differences between “East” and “West.”

In this seminar, we will seek to evaluate these competing theories by examining Russian-American relations over the last hundred years or so. At times, our lens will expand to include Russia's relations with the West more generally. But the focus will be Russian-American relations. This course will analyze shifts in U.S.-Russia relations over several decades, but with a particular emphasis on the post-Cold War era.

Office Hours

Friday afternoons and by appointment only, schedule with Magdalena Fitipaldi (magdabf@stanford.edu)
Assignments

We will meet once a week for three hours. Students are expected to attend every class session and complete all required readings before each session. Students with an excused absence must notify the course assistant in writing before the start of class. More than one excused absence will affect class participation grading. Students must come to class each week ready to discuss the readings and engage in discussion. This course is not a lecture class. Sessions will be highly participatory.

Beginning in week four, four students will present on four different theories (realism, culture, institutions, and individuals) to explain the historical period being discussed that week. Students will write a 4-6-page paper on their analysis before each class, which will be posted on Friday night. All students will be expected to read these papers before Monday's seminar.

The final paper will address the central question of the course: what are the causes of cooperation and/or confrontation in Russian-American relations?

Evaluation

30%: class participation.

20%: short paper and presentation

50%: final paper.

Technology Policy

The use of laptops, tablets, mobile phones, and any recording devices is prohibited during seminar discussions. This condition is important to me. If you cannot abide by it, please do not take this class.

Course Materials

Martin Malia, Russia under the Eyes of the West (Cambridge: HUP, 1999).


Selected readings posted on Canvas.
COURSE SCHEDULE

April 2: Introduction

Get ahead on future readings now!

April 9: Structural Theories: Realism and Culture

Required Readings:


Benn Steil, “Russia’s Clash with the West Is About Geography, Not Ideology,” *Foreign Policy*, February 12, 2018


April 16: Agency and Institutional Theories: Individuals, Ideas, Regimes, and Bureaucracies

Required Readings:


Recommended:

Steve Krasner, “Are Bureaucracies Important (Or Allison in Wonderland), Foreign Policy, 7 (Summer 1972), pp. 159-179.


April 18: Movie screening “Nemtsov” (Attendance required)

7 pm – 9 pm, Cubberley Auditorium

April 23: Russia and America in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries

Required Readings:

Martin Malia, *Russia under the Eyes of the West*, chapters 3 & 4, pp. 161-286.


Recommended:

George Kennan, *Russia and The West under Lenin and Stalin.*


April 30: The Cold War

Required Readings:

Malia, *Russia under the Eyes of the West*, chapter 5, pp. 287- 408.


National Security Council Paper NSC-68 (entitled “United States Objectives and Programs for National Security”)
Nikita Khrushchev, "For New Victories of the World Communist Movement," at the meeting of party organizations of the Higher Party School, the Academy of Social Sciences and the Institute of Marxism-Leninism, Moscow, January 6, 1961.


Recommended:


May 4 (Friday, in lieu of the May 7th class): The End of the Cold War

Required Readings:

McFaul, From Cold War to Hot Peace, chapters 1 & 2.


Recommended:

William Taubman, Gorbachev: His Life and Times (NY: Norton, 2017)

May 14: Democratic Russia and Democratic America?

Required Readings:


McFaul, From Cold War to Hot Peace, chapters 3-4.


Recommended:


May 21: Reset + May 28: End of Reset

Required Readings:


Recommended:


End of Reset (*extra session after the class on May 21st*)

Required Readings:


Aleksandr Dugin, “Pussy Riot = Information Warfare against Russia,” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5WwqYDMDhZk

**Recommended:**


**June 6 (Wednesday): Trump-Putin**

**Required Readings:**

McFaul, *From Cold War to Hot Peace*, Epilogue.


**Recommended:**