

POLS 3553  
Government and Politics of Central Eurasia  
Instructor: Dr. Sam Watson

2025 Fall Semester  
Midwestern State University  
209 Prothro-Yeager  
12:30-1:50 pm T,R

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Course Description

POLS 3553 is an upper division, undergraduate lecture course which focuses on the comparative political study of the Russian Federation and the fourteen other independent states of the former Soviet Union.

Course Goals

In this course, we will primarily examine the difficult process of dismantling an entrenched Marxist-Leninist political and centrally planned economic system in favor of more democratic and market oriented forms of political, economic, and social organization. Such a transition has been attempted, with mixed results, in most of the states of Central Eurasia since 1991. Principally through an examination of the establishment and traditional practice of Marxism-Leninism in what was the Soviet Union, we will seek answers as to why the reform communist processes of the Gorbachev era failed and why so many diverse forces have emerged since the dissolution of communist party rule. By doing so, we will attempt to make some assessment of the short and long term prospects for democracy and the market in the former Soviet republics.

Required Materials

- 1) Donald W. Treadgold and Herbert J. Ellison, Twentieth Century Russia, 9<sup>th</sup> edition (Westview)
- 2) Grigory Ioffe, Global Studies: Russia and the Near Abroad, 12<sup>th</sup> edition (McGraw-Hill)

Strongly Recommended Materials

- 1) A current map of Central Eurasia and the world.

## Resource Materials

The University (Moffett) Library contains valuable resources which can aid students in their study and research for this course. In addition to many relevant books, a number of periodicals will be particularly useful. A list of selected periodicals available in the library and local sources of broadcast media significant for political science research is attached to this syllabus.

## Course Requirements

|                    |                 |            |
|--------------------|-----------------|------------|
| First Examination  | 9/30            | 30 percent |
| Second Examination | 11/4            | 30 percent |
| Final Examination  | 12/11 (10:30am) | 30 percent |
| Attendance         |                 | 10 percent |

The midterm and final examinations consist of a series of short answer essay questions. The final exam tests only the material covered since the second exam.

In order to pass this class, a student must participate. Participation means coming to and preparing for class. Attendance will be checked by signature sheet.

## Topics and Schedule of Assignments

|                                                                            |             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| --Introductory session                                                     | 8/26        |
| --New Currents in Old Russia<br>(Treadgold, pp. 3–92)                      | 8/28;9/2,4  |
| --The Communists Take Power<br>(Treadgold, pp. 95–190)                     | 9/9,11,16   |
| --Stalin's Rule through World War II<br>(Treadgold, pp. 193-315)           | 9/18,23,25  |
| --First Examination                                                        | 9/30        |
| -- The Postwar Period<br>(Treadgold, pp. 319-469)                          | 10/2,7,9    |
| --Russia and Its Nations<br>(Ioffe, pp. 9-100, 207-257; selected readings) | 10/14,16,21 |

|                                                                                       |              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| --The New Eastern Europe<br>(Ioffe, pp. 101-133, 279-282, 287-290; selected readings) | 10/23,28,30  |
| --Second Examination                                                                  | 11/4         |
| -- The Baltics<br>(selected readings)                                                 | 11/6,11      |
| --Transcaucasia<br>(Ioffe, pp. 134-161, 264-267, 272-278; selected readings)          | 11/13,18,20  |
| --Central Asia<br>(Ioffe, pp. 162-206, 283-286; selected readings)                    | 11/25;12/2,4 |
| --Final Examination                                                                   | 12/11        |

No Class

11/27-- Thanksgiving