

PSCI 0228-A: Central/East European Politics

*TuTh 1:30-2:45pm, Le Chateau 110
Fall 2018*

Instructor: Katharine Aha

Office hours: Tuesday 11:00am-1:00pm, Wednesday 2:00pm-3:00pm, and by appointment

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Course Description

This course is designed to present an overview of the politics of East-Central Europe from the early 20th century up to the present day. First, we will discuss the creation of independent states from large empires, and the impact of World Wars I and II. Next, we will examine the over forty years of communist rule, and its breakdown in 1989. In the last section of the course, we will discuss the difficult transition to democracy, accession to the European Union, and several topics to explore the quality of democracy in the region including dimensions of political competition and political participation. As we move throughout the course, we will maintain a comparative approach to understanding the varying political outcomes seen in the region.

Aims and Outcomes

The goals of this course are to both increase your knowledge of the politics of East-Central Europe and to practice analyzing political outcomes through a comparative approach. By the end of this course, you will have learned the historical context of the region necessary for understanding past and current events, be able to draw parallels between historical and contemporary political events, and have practiced analyzing actions taken by political actors. In addition, you will have a better understanding of different political ideologies, and will have applied what you have learned to research an East-Central European country's transition towards liberal democracy. While the focus of the course is on one region, you will be able to use the approaches and concepts learned in the class to better understand politics around the world.

Required Books

Thomas W. Simons, *Eastern Europe in the Postwar World, 2nd Edition* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).

Heda Margolius Kovaly, *Under a Cruel Star: A Life in Prague 1941-1968* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986).

Gale Stokes, *From Stalinism to Pluralism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

Milada Anna Vachudova, *Europe Undivided: Democracy, Leverage and Integration After Communism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

Course Hub

This syllabus is posted on Course Hub. Use Course Hub to access Canvas, where you can find readings and information on assignments. All assignments should be submitted on Canvas, in

addition to bringing a hard copy to class. Please let me know immediately if you have any problems accessing Course Hub or Canvas.

Course Grade Components

10%: Participation grade

15%: Reaction papers

5%: Map quiz

20%: Midterm exam

25%: Final exam

25%: Final paper

Attendance & participation

Our meetings will combine lecture and discussions. Attending class regularly will help you considerably on the exams, and allow you to participate in discussions. I will also take attendance before each class. You are allowed four unexcused absences before missing class starts to affect your grade. Every unexcused absence after that will automatically cause your participation grade to drop by half a letter grade (five points).

I expect you to come to class prepared by having read and thought about the readings and any homework, and ready to actively participate. Lectures are designed with the expectation that you have read the assigned material before class begins. You will not do well in this course unless you do the readings.

Do not expect an A in participation just for showing up – regular attendance denotes average performance, which equates to a grade of seventy-five percent. Raising this grade depends on demonstrating that you have both read and thought about the reading. The only way for you to do this is to actively participate. An easy way to do this is to come to class prepared with comments and/or questions relating to the week's readings, lectures, or how current event reflect what we are studying in class. I will give you ample opportunities to participate in class – please take advantage of this time!

If I feel that students are not reading the course material, pop quizzes will be given.

One of the goals of this class is to give you a safe environment in which to speak so that you can practice analyzing political events and applying the theories we learn in class to real-world events. To this end, we will frequently engage in discussion. Guidelines we will follow to help foster meaningful discussion:

- Be respectful. Different opinions are healthy and welcome in the classroom. However, it is essential that we treat one another with respect. You do not have to agree with someone's view, but you do have to be respectful. Disrespectful students may be asked to leave the classroom. Please take a look at Middlebury's harassment policy if you have questions (<http://www.middlebury.edu/about/handbook/policies-for-all/non-discrim-policies/anti-harassment-discrimin>)
- Speaking in front of groups can be intimidating to some students; it is my goal to ensure that this class is a comfortable space where everyone can participate. Our discussions will be most successful when all voices are heard. If speaking in front of the class makes you

nervous, come talk to me so that we can figure out some strategies to help you earn points towards your participation grade.

- Don't be afraid to ask questions! Everyone has different areas of expertise, and some concepts may be more confusing to you than others. I will be of limited help to you if you don't speak up when you need clarification, and the discussion portions of the class will not work unless you participate.

Reaction papers

During the first half of the semester, you are responsible for writing two short (~350-500 words) reaction papers. The goal of the reaction papers is to help you connect the memoir we are reading, *Under a Cruel Star*, to topics and other readings we are discussing in class. Specific prompts for each reaction paper will be posted prior to their due date. During the second half of the semester, you are responsible for writing one reaction paper. This paper will be in response to the film *Good Bye, Lenin!* The reaction papers are due at the start of class of the due date. You must submit a hard copy and submit on Sakai. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Map quiz

The map quiz will be on September 25th. Preparing for the map quiz will familiarize you with the East-Central Europe region and important neighbors.

Exams

The midterm will be held on October 23rd, and is meant to test comprehension of the readings and lecture material for the first half of the course. The final will be on Saturday, December 16th at 7pm in our regular classroom. The college sets the final exam schedule. The exam will primarily cover material from after the mid-term.

Final paper

The final paper will be due in class on Thursday, December 6th. The paper should be approximately ten double-spaced pages, plus a works cited page. Prior to submitting the final paper, you will have submitted your topic, introduction, and outline. Submitting these pieces prior to the submission of your final paper will provide you an opportunity to get feedback and ultimately help you to write a stronger paper that both addresses the prompt and is finished on time. Failing to turn in any of these earlier components will affect your overall paper grade. Late final papers will be penalized five points for every day the paper is late.

For this paper you will select a country from the East-Central Europe region, and assess how well that country has addressed a challenge to building liberal democracy. More information about the paper will be distributed later in the semester.

Course policies

Honor Code

It is expected that all work you do in this course will be original work not previously or simultaneously handed in for credit in another course, unless this is done with the prior permission of all instructors involved. All work for this course falls under the college's Honor Code; the student's signature on her/ his work confirms that the Code rules were respected. All work must be

your own – plagiarism, cheating, and related violations will not be tolerated. For more information on academic honesty and the honor code, visit <http://www.middlebury.edu/about/handbook/ug-college-policies/ug-policies/academics/acad-honesty>.

Familiarize yourself with the concept and practice of plagiarism in order to make sure that you avoid it. Plagiarism is defined as deliberate or reckless representation of another's words, thoughts, or ideas as one's own without attribution in connection with submission of academic work, whether graded or otherwise. Please visit this link for resources on how to avoid plagiarism: <https://middlebury.libguides.com/c.php?g=431952&p=2946059>.

Rescheduling Exams

If you have to miss class on the day of an exam or wish to reschedule an exam, then you must write and explain beforehand in all but the most unusual circumstances. If you are going to miss an exam for an event you know about well in advance, please come speak to me early in the semester (ie in first week or two of class) so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

Student accessibility

Students who have Letters of Accommodation in this class are encouraged to contact me as early in the semester as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. For those without Letters of Accommodation, assistance is available to eligible students through Student Accessibility Services. Please contact Jodi Litchfield or Michelle Audette, the ADA Coordinators, for more information: Michelle Audette can be reached at maudette@middlebury.edu or 802-443-2169 and Jodi Litchfield can be reached at litchfie@middlebury.edu or 802-443-5936. All discussions will remain confidential.

Computers, cell phones, and additional info

I would like you to bring your laptops to class in order to access electronic resources - however, I expect you to use them for activity related to this course. Playing on the Internet during class is highly disrespectful to people who are trying to pay attention. I may not call you out for being on another site during class, but I will notice, and it will affect your final grade. You may not have your laptops open during any sort of student presentation. If, during the course of the semester, I see that the laptops are acting as more of a distraction than a help, I reserve the right to restrict their usage.

Do not use your cell phone during class. I can tell when you're using it, and it will definitely impact your participation grade.

As a general rule, I will not email you your grades, nor will I discuss your grades with you within 24 hours of handing graded assignments back. That being said, if you have questions about my comments on your assignments, I am happy to talk to you. If you want me to regrade something, you will need to write a few (at least three) paragraphs responding specifically to my written comments and explaining why you feel you deserve a higher grade.

The CNN Cold War documentary series is a great additional resource for material covered during the first half of the semester. I have included the episode(s) that correspond with the topic being covered that week in case you are interested in watching.

Course Schedule

September 11 & 13: Introduction & The Interwar Period

Readings:

- Simons, Chapters 1 & 2

Recommended: CNN Cold War episode 1 - "Comrades"

September 18 & 20: WWII & the Communists Rise to Power

Readings:

- Simons, Chapter 3
- Kovaly, pp. 5-51
- from Stokes, The Stalinist Moment: Yalta

Recommended: CNN Cold War episodes 2/3/4 - "Iron Curtain"/"Marshall Plan"/"Berlin"

September 25: Map quiz

September 27 & October 2: Stalinism

Readings:

- Simons, Chapter 4
- Kovaly, pp. 52-125
- from Stokes, Stalinists
- from Stokes, The Purge Trials

Assignments: 1st reaction paper due October 2nd

Recommended: CNN Cold War episode 6 - "Reds"

October 4 & 9: De-Stalinization & the Hungarian Revolution

Readings:

- Simons, Chapter 5
- Kovaly, pp. 126-192
- from Stokes, The Hungarian Revolution
- OpEd: "Hungary's Prime Minister a Champion for Illiberalism," Canvas

Recommended: CNN Cold War episode 7 - "After Stalin"

October 11 & 16: Reform Efforts & the Prague Spring

Readings:

- Simons, Chapter 6
- from Stokes, The Prague Spring, and The Brezhnev Doctrine
- OpEd: "Putin's Deadly Doctrine: 'Protecting' Russians in Ukraine has Fatal Consequences," Sakai

Assignments: 2nd reaction paper due October 16th

Recommended: CNN Cold War episode 14 - "Red Spring"

October 18: Finishing remaining material

October 23: MIDTERM

October 25 & October 30: Goulash Communism & Return to Politics

Readings:

- Simons, Chapters 7 & 8
- from Stokes: Solidarity, Return to Solidarity, “Name Changes in Bulgaria”

Film screening: *Good Bye, Lenin!* on the evening of October 30th

Assignments: Email proposed topic for final paper by October 30th

November 1 & November 6: The Revolutions of 1989

Readings:

- Simons, Chapter 9
- from Stokes, The Revolutions of 1989

Recommended: CNN Cold War episode 23 & 24 - “The Wall Comes Down” & “Conclusions”

Assignments: 3rd reaction paper due November 6th.

November 8 & November 13: Democratic Transition

Readings:

- Vachudova, Intro (skim), Chapters 1 & 2

Assignments: Paper introductions due November 8th.

November 15: EU Accession Process

Readings: Vachudova, selections from Chapters 3-7

November 20 & November 27: EU Enlargement

Readings:

- Vachudova, Chapter 8
- Article: “European Parliament chastises Hungary on rights, eyes sanctions process,” Canvas
- Article: “EU threatens Poland with sanctions as judiciary stand-off escalates,” Canvas
- Article: “EU sanctions Czechs, Poles, and Hungarians over refugee policy,” Canvas

Assignment: Paper outlines due November 20th. Bring hard copy to class and submit on Canvas.

November 29: Dimensions of Political Competition

Readings: none

December 4: Political Participation

Readings:

- Ceka, Besir. 2013. “The Perils of Political Competition: Explaining Participation and Trust in Political Parties in Eastern Europe,” *Comparative Political Studies* 46(12): 1610-1635. (Canvas)

December 6: The Return of Illiberal Democracy? & Wrap up

Readings:

- Bustikova, Lenka and Guasti, Petra. 2017. “The Illiberal Turn or Swerve in Central Europe?” *Politics and Governance* 5(4): 166-176.

Assignments: Final paper due.

FINAL EXAM: Saturday, December 16th, 7-10pm