

CAS IR 542

**RUSSIA: A COUNTRY IN TROUBLE**

Fall 2016, EPC 208

Tu/Th 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

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**SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES**

Russia has taken strides to regain its status of a superpower. Vladimir Putin has seized Crimea, his troops are in eastern Ukraine, and his strategic bombers often fly toward the airspace of such countries as Sweden, Norway, and Iceland. He is popular at home and seems confident in public. But the fighting in Ukraine has revitalized NATO, antagonized the United States, energized the European Union, Poland, and the Baltic republics. Western sanctions have contributed to the weakening of the Russian economy. In 2015 GDP dropped 3.7 percent, and the ruble lost much of its value: in 2013 \$1 sold for 30-32 RUB, but in 2016 \$1 traded for 66-77 RUB.

Russia's population has declined from 151 million in 1990 to 142 million in 2016; there are 11.6 births and 13.69 deaths per 1,000 population annually. Men in Nepal and Papua New Guinea live longer than do men in Russia. The country is rich in natural gas and oil, and energy production tends to be profitable. However, for Russia to enjoy prosperity, oil would have to sell at c. \$115 per barrel or more and it now (August 2016) sells at \$41.

This course will analyze the careers of Vladimir Putin, Boris Yeltsin, and Mikhail Gorbachev. It will examine the impact of organized crime, public health, and environmental crises on today's Russia. We will study the fate of other players on the Russian political scene, such as the oligarchs Khodorkovski, Abramovich, and Berezovsky. It will be noted that today 110 Russian billionaires, all friends of Mr. Putin, own 35 percent of Russia's wealth.

In addition, the course will critically engage the following questions: the Soviet totalitarian system came to an end a quarter of a century ago. How different is the new regime? Russian citizens are now generally free to express their political views but almost all media belong to the Kremlin. Power remains vested in the hands of a ruling class that has squandered away much of Russia's wealth and channeled state resources into private accounts at home and abroad. Corruption is a serious problem: in 2016 Transparency International listed Russia as being 119<sup>th</sup> on the Corruption Perception Index scale, same as Sierra Leone. Over \$300 billion are said to be spent annually on bribes for state officials. The country's political and security relations with the United States and the EU countries have declined during the past several years. Journalists and critics of the Kremlin have been murdered.

Finally, the course will deal with US-Soviet and US-Russian competition in the field of intelligence. A 2010 roundup of a large group of Russian illegals operating in the United States embarrassed Moscow's intelligence professionals. To even the score the fugitive Edward Snowden, whose revelations embarrassed Washington, has been granted temporary political asylum in Moscow.

## **REQUIRED READINGS**

Peter Baker and Susan Glasser, *The Kremlin Rising* (New York: Scribner, 2005).

Karen Dawisha, *Putin's Kleptocracy: Who Owns Russia?* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014).

Ben Judah, *Fragile Empire: How Russia Fell in and Out of Love with Vladimir Putin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

**ADDITIONAL READINGS** are assigned from the following books that are available on the Blackboard:

Marc Bennetts, *I'm Going to Ruin Their Lives* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2016).

Bill Browder, *Red Notice: A True Story of High Finance, Murder, and One Man's Fight for Justice* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2015).

Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

Murray Feshbach, *Russia's Health and Demographic Crises: Policy Implications and Consequences* (Washington: The Chemical and Biological Arms Control Institute, 2003).

Masha Gessen, *The Man Without a Face: The Unlikely Rise of Vladimir Putin* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2012).

David Hoffman, *The Oligarchs: Wealth and Power in the New Russia* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2002).

Paul Klebnikov, *Godfather of the Kremlin: Boris Berezovsky and the Looting of Russia* (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 2000).

David Satter, *Darkness at Dawn* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

## **IMPORTANT DATES**

6 September 2016	First day of class
19 September 2016	Last day to add a course
12 October 2016	Last day to drop a class without a W
25 October 2016	The midterm hand out
1 November 2016	The midterm essay due
10 November 2016	Last day to drop the class with a W
8 December 2016	Last day of class, the final hand out
21 December 2016	The final essay due

## OFFICE HOURS

I am available for consultations during my office hours, every Tuesday and Thursday from 0915 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. My office is at 154 Bay State Road, room 101. I am also happy to speak with you before and after each lecture. If you are unable to see me during my office hours, send me an email, and I will be happy to make a prompt arrangement for us to meet within a few days.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There will be a take-home midterm and a take-home final examination. Both involve a five-page analytical essay on a theme you will choose from a list of three topics. The topics are selected to provide you with an opportunity to demonstrate your command of the material covered in class. Your essay has to demonstrate that you have developed a critical understanding of the assigned texts and are familiar with the points made during class lectures and discussions. You should be able to engage the texts and lecture themes and also to develop and present your own point of view.

You are also asked to select one of the lecture dates and start the class with a short (10-15 min) summary of the most current Russia-related events. A sheet with available dates will be circulated; please sign up early.

Finally, there will be several short reading quizzes before some lectures. Their purpose is to test your familiarity with the assigned texts. Attendance is required.

Attendance and active participation are required. I start each lecture with a review of the material covered so far. Please come prepared to be challenged.

## GRADING

**Midterm:** 30 percent

**Final:** 40 percent

**Reading quizzes:** 20 percent

**Current events presentation:** 10 percent.

## ACADEMIC CONDUCT CODE

It is your responsibility to know and understand the provisions of the Academic Conduct Code; a copy can be obtained on the website of the CAS Dean's Office. Please consult <http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/>.

## GRADUATE STUDENTS

Please come to see me (154 BSR) as soon as possible at the beginning of the semester to discuss how you can best profit from taking this course. I will be happy to match your scholarly interests and professional plans for the future with the requirements of this course.

## REEMERGENCE OF RUSSIA

### Course Outline

#### Fall 2016

1. 6 September	Introduction
2. 8 September	Ukraine: Is It Important?
3. 13 September	Putin: From the KGB to St. Petersburg
4. 15 September	Putin: In St. Petersburg
5. 20 September	Putin: In the Kremlin
6. 22 September	Putin: Taking Over
7. 27 September	Putin: War on Terror
8. 29 September	Political Deaths: Litvinenko, Politkovskaya, et al.
9. 4 October	Organized Crime: <i>Vorovskoy mir</i>
10. 6 October	Russia's Medical Crisis
11. 13 October	Russia's Environmental Crisis
12. 18 October	Spy Wars: A Short Introduction
13. 20 October	Two Perspectives on the Tolkachev Case
14. 25 October	KGB v. CIA: Protecting/Catching Aldrich Ames
15. 27 October	RYaN, KAL 007, and Able Archer 1983
16. 1 November	Gorbachev's Rise to Power
17. 3 November	Gorbachev's Experiment
18. 8 November	Yeltsin and the Collapse of the Old Regime
19. 10 November	The August 1991 Coup d'État
20. 15 November	The Elections of 1996
21. 17 November	Yeltsin and the Oligarchs
22. 22 November	Boris Berezovsky
23. 29 November	Mikhail Khodorkovsky
24. 1 December	Putin's Vertical of Power
25. 6 December	Putin's Troubled Return

26. 8 December

From Magnitsky to Crimea and Eastern Ukraine

**Lecture 1**  
**6 September**  
**Introduction**

Description of the course & discussion of required readings; course requirements, attendance, readings, policy on incompletes, and grading.

**Lecture 2**  
**8 September**  
**Ukraine: Is It Important?**

Judah, *Fragile Empire*, 84-86.

Snyder, "The Battle in Ukraine Means Everything."

European Values, "The Ukrainian Crisis: The Most Frequent Myths and Lies."

Wilfred Martens Centre, "Caught in the Act."

**Lecture 3**  
**13 September**  
**Putin: From the KGB to St. Petersburg**

Dawisha, *Putin's Kleptocracy*, 36-103.

**Lecture 4**  
**15 September**  
**Putin: In St. Petersburg**

Dawisha, *Putin's Kleptocracy*, 104-162.

**Lecture 5**  
**20 September**  
**Putin: In the Kremlin**

Satter, *Darkness at Dawn*, 24-33.

Dawisha, *Putin's Kleptocracy*, 163-223.

**Lecture 6**  
**22 September**  
**Putin: Taking Over**

Dawisha, *Putin's Kleptocracy*, 224-265

Satter, *Darkness at Dawn*, 5-23.

**Lecture 7**  
**27 September**  
**Putin: War on Terror**

Baker and Glasser, *Kremlin Rising*, 156-178, 15-37.

Dawisha, *Putin's Kleptocracy*, 266-312.

**Lecture 8**  
**29 September**  
**Political Deaths: Litvinenko and Politkovskaya, et al.**

Gessen, *The Man Without a Face*, 199-226.

Regarding Litvinenko: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gD8a9j6S-jQ>

Harding, "Litvinenko: The Man Who Solved His Own Murder."

**Lecture 9**  
**4 October**  
**Organized Crime: *Vorovskoy mir***

Satter, *Darkness at Dawn*, 127-155.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=imNE5CEjZW4>

**Lecture 10**  
**6 October**  
**Russia's Medical Crisis**

Eberstadt, *Russia's Peacetime Demographic Crisis*, 7-60, 281-300.

**Lecture 11**  
**13 October**  
**Russia's Environmental Crisis**

Feshbach, *Russia's Health and Demographic Crises*, 51-89.

Chernobyl and the "White Gold" Disasters: Destruction of the Aral Sea. See the websites of the BBC and other reputable news organizations.





**Lecture 12**  
**18 October**  
**Spy Wars: A Short Introduction**

Bagley, *Spy Wars*: 3-27, 197-230.

**Lecture 13**  
**20 October**  
**Two Perspectives on the Tolkachev Case**

Royden, "Tolkachev, A Worthy Successor to Penkovsky: An Exceptional Espionage Operation."

Fischer, "The Spy Who Came in for the Gold: A Skeptical View of the GTVANQUISH Case."

**Lecture 14**  
**25 October**  
**KGB v. CIA: Protecting/Catching Aldrich Ames**

Grimes and Vertefeuille, *Circle of Treason*, 112-182.

Fischer, "Spy Dust and Ghost Surveillance."

**Lecture 15**  
**27 October**  
**RYaN, KAL 007, and Able Archer 1983**

Fischer, "A Cold War Conundrum," CIA Center for the Study of Intelligence, 1997.

General Mielke on RYaN, Wolf on RYaN.

**Lecture 16**  
**1 November**  
**Gorbachev's Rise to Power**

Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor*, 24-88.

**Lecture 17**  
**3 November**  
**The Gorbachev Experiment**

Lukes, "Changes in the Decision-Making Apparatus."

**Lecture 18**  
**8 November**  
**Yeltsin and the Collapse of the Old Regime**

Klebnikov, *Godfather of the Kremlin*, 46-72.

**Lecture 19**  
**10 November**  
**The August 1991 Coup d'État**

Gessen, *The Man Without a Face*, 101-129.

Klebnikov, *Godfather of the Kremlin*, 72-76.

**Lecture 20**  
**15 November**  
**The Elections of 1996**

Klebnikov, *Godfather of the Kremlin*, 212-247.

Hoffman, *The Oligarchs*, 325-364

**Lecture 21**  
**17 November**  
**Yeltsin and the Oligarchs**

Klebnikov, *Godfather of the Kremlin*, 248-283.

Hoffman, *The Oligarchs*, 209-236.

**Lecture 22**  
**22 November**  
**Boris Berezovsky**

Hoffman, *The Oligarchs*, 127-149.

**Lecture 23**  
**29 November**  
**Mikhail Khodorkovsky**

Hoffman, *The Oligarchs*, 100-126.

Judah, *Fragile Empire*, 55-84.



**Lecture 24**  
**1 December**  
**Putin's Vertical of Power**

Judah, *Fragile Empire*, 90-166.

**Lecture 25**  
**6 December**  
**Putin's Troubled Return**

Bennetts, *I'm Going to Ruin Their Lives*, 149-170, 171-186. The book is available in the Library and can be read online:

<http://site.ebrary.com.ezproxy.bu.edu/lib/bostonuniv/reader.action?docID=11210641&ppg=11>

**Lecture 26**  
**8 December**  
**From Magnitsky to MH17 and Crimea**

Browder, *Red Notice*, 1-11, 183-205, 279-288.

Bellingcat Investigation, "MH17: Potential Suspects and Witnesses from the 53<sup>rd</sup> Anti-Aircraft Missile Brigade."