**Spring 2019**

**Professor Monika Nalepa**

**University of Chicago**

**DRAFT SYLLABUS**

**Russian Civ III: Eastern and Central Europe: The Russian “Other”**

email: [mnalepa@uchicago.edu](mailto:mnalepa@uchicago.edu)

web: monikanalepa.com

This class covers the politics of Eastern European states since 1944, when their socialist constitutions were drafted for them by Soviets. (see to the left, an example of the Polish Constitution, dated 22 July 1944, with Joseph Stalin’s handwritten comments!). It will continue past the end of the Cold War and cover the joining international organizations, when largest post-communist states are members of the European Union. Finally, we will cover challenges to democratic consolidation from civil war (in the former Yugoslavia and Ukraine) and ethnic violence to the rise of populism and democratic erosion in Hungary and Poland.

We will use a variety of source materials including movies and archival documents to understand why some post-communist states succeeded at consolidating democratic institutions, while others suffered authoritarian reversals. The primary cases we will consider are Poland, Hungary, Ukraine, as well as the former Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia.

The Learning Objectives:

* First, understand the geo-political constraints to democratization that countries in Eastern Europe faced following World War II.
* Second, be able to characterize the non-democratic systems of East and East Central Europe between 1945 and 1989.
* Third, identify and analyze choices facing countries exiting from Communist rule.
* Fourth, articulate and apply criteria for evaluating the success (or failure) of a democratic transition.

**Week 1: Communism**

In 1945 the Yalta treaty solidified the fate of Eastern Europe, forcing all countries to the East of the “Iron Curtain” to remain under the control of the Soviet Union and establishing communist governments supported by Moscow. This week will cover the establishment of communist rule and reactions to it, ranging from support to rebellion. We will begin with the bloody massacre of 1956 in Budapest and end with the ris in 1981of Poland’s pro-democratic Solidarity trade union—the largest social movement of the twentieth century.[[1]](#footnote-1) In the case of Solidarity, although the Soviet Union threatened invasion, it ended up stepping aside Poland’s own communist party implemented Martial Law and ordering its own military to crush Solidarity. From December 1981 to July 1983, under Martial Law, 15,000 Solidarity union members went to jail and hundreds of thousands lost their jobs.

Day 1: The Establishment of Communist Rule

Day 2: The Hungarian Uprising

Day 3: The Prague Spring

Day 4: 18 months of Solidarity and Martial Law in Poland

Day 5: Friday Excursion: Instytut Literacki (guided tour) and scavenger hunt at Le Mesnil-le-Roi for monument of the creators of "Kultura Paryska"

**Week II: Transitions to Democracy**

In 1986 Michail Gorbachev became the first Secretary of the CPSU and 3 years later, Solidarity won enough seats in the Polish parliament to create the first non-communist cabinet in the Soviet Bloc.

On February 6, 1989. On November 9, 1989, merely 9 months after a 20-year-old German student was fatally shot as he tried to cross the Berlin Wall to escape to West Germany, the infamous Wall fell, and a few months after, East and West Germany were reunited. In December, 1989, Vaclav Havel—a dissident long persecuted by the communist regime—became the president of a democratic Czechoslovak state. Only one month earlier, on St. Venclaus square, the Czechoslovak communist police brutally silenced an anti-democratic demonstration.

These abrupt and dramatic transitions to democracy occurred with little bloodshed and were relatively peaceful. By 2000, many post-communist countries had become members of NATO and by 2007 they were members of the European Union. In this week of the course we will talk about the challenges associated with democratic transitions from dealing with members and collaborators of authoritarian past to negotiating participation in and joining international organizations.

Day 1: Roundtable Talks in Poland and Hungary

Day 2: Challenges of Economic Reform

Day 3: Dilemmas of Transitional Justice

Day 4: Joining International Organizations

Day 5: Friday Excursion to Strasbourg (European Council, the EU executive body and European Court of Human Rights)

**Week III: Challenges to sustaining democracy**

Yet not all countries’ advancement to democratic consolidation did not always go as smoothly as planned. In 1992, a civil war broke out in the territory of former Yugoslavia leaving a record number of civilian casualties. The atrocities committed by all sides to the conflict resembled those of World War II. As democratization was failing in Belarus and Russia, civil war broke out in Chechnya. n August 7, 2008, under the pretext of “peacekeeping” and “defending Russian citizens” in the Southern Osetia region of Georgia, Russian tanks invaded that country in an episode that painfully resembled prior Cold War incursions. In the spring of 2014, following the Olympics in Sochi, Putin’s army annexed Crimea and a civil war broke out in the Ukraine.

Day 1: The Balkan Wars

Day 2: Russian interventions in Georgia and the Ukraine

Day 3: Backsliding in Hungary

Day 4: Democratic Erosion in Poland

Office Hours

I will hold office hours on Tuesday and Thursdays from 2pm to 3:30pm. When these hours create a conflict with your other classes, on a case by case basis I will schedule alternative meeting times.

Academic Honesty

In this class, I will follow the policies and procedures outlined in the Student Manual section on Academic Honesty and Plagiarism (available at https://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/Policies). You may not collaborate with fellow students on any of your written assignments. It is vital that in your written work you properly cite and reference your sources. In your written work, you are expected to follow the Chicago Guide of Style: <http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/DocChicago.html>. Remember that you must cite internet resources as well as printed ones.

Email Policy

I will respond to your emails within 24 hours if you send me an email between Monday 8am and Friday at 5 pm. I cannot commit to respond to your email during weekends. If you have a question that requires more than a paragraph to answer, you are advised to come to office hours.

Readings will be extracted from the following books

1. Frye T. (2010)“Building States and Markets after Communism,” Cambridge New York, Cambridge University Press. (Frye)
2. Nalepa, M. (2010). “Skeletons in the Closet: Transitional Justice in Post-Communist Europe” Cambridge New York, Cambridge University Press. (Nalepa)
3. Stokes, G. (1996) “From Stalinism to Pluralism. A documentary history of Eastern Europe since 1945” (second edition) (Stokes)
4. Pop-Eleches, Grigore, and Joshua A. Tucker. “Communism's Shadow: Historical Legacies and Contemporary Political Attitudes.” Princeton University Press, 2017 (Shadow).
5. Philipp Ther and Charlotte Hughes-Kreutzmüller “Europe since 1989: A History.” Princeton University Press, 2016 (History).

Grading

Your grade is a combination of grades obtained for paper essays and participation in the class.

Participation and reaction memos (20 points total)

You are expected to actively participate in class. You should read the assigned articles, chapters or chapter sections in advance of the lecture and come prepared to raise and answer questions and comment upon issues contained in the text. In addition to the required text, you must prepare a reaction memo and submit a copy of it in the beginning of the class. The preparation of reaction memos is to aid your participation in the discussion. It is entirely up to you, how long you wish the reaction memo to be. The reaction memos will not be graded, but your participation will. Last, but not least, you are also expected to read or at least skim *The Economist* and *The New York Times. International Edition*.

Film viewing

On the first two Thursday afternoons we will watch together a movie that is selected to accompany the discussion in class that week. It will be screened at the Center at a specific location TBA.

Two 4 page essays (20 points each)

Over the course of the three weeks, you will be asked to write two short papers. Each will require you to answer a specific question pertaining to the, the readings and lectures. The essay topic will be announced 4 days before it is due. I will grade your essays for both substance and form. Substantively, I will look for familiarity with the issues discussed and for critical analysis of assigned readings. For form, I will be assessing your ability to write with proper grammar, with clarity, and with concision. You are therefore encouraged to use Strunk and White’s *Elements of Style* and to consult the checklist for writing short papers that I have prepared. Your papers must have one inch margins, be double-spaced, and prepared in 12 point Times New Roman font. Papers will be due at 5:00 p.m. on Fridays. If your paper is late, your grade will drop by one letter grade for each 24 hours it is tardy. You have two options for submitting the paper.

Presentations (20 points)

You will be assigned (based on your preferences) to give a short presentation pertaining to a leader or organization. These presentations should be no longer that 20-25 minutes (including Q and A) and you should be able to prepare them using the web with a little guidance from the instructor. Please prepare powerpoint, presi or beamer slides to accompany your presentation.

Grading Scale:

96-100: A

91-95: A-

86-90: B+

81-85: B

76-80: B-

71-75: C+

66-70: C

55-65: C-

51-55: D

<50: F

Students with disabilities

Any student with a disability requiring accommodations in this course is encouraged to contact me after class or during office hours.

Schedule

**Week I**

**Monday May 13: Introduction and overview**

* Kundera, M. “The Tragedy of Central Europe” (in Stokes “From Stalinism to Pluralism”)
* Stokes: 9-34 and 66-77

**Tuesday, May 14: Anti-communist resistance I: Hungary**

* Stokes: 80-93
* Tucker and Pop-Eleches, Chapter 2
* Presentation: Who was Imre Nagy? (students 1 and 2)

**Wednesday, May 15: Anti-communist resistance II: Czechoslovakia**

* Stokes: 122-133 & 156-174
* Presentation: What was Charter 77? (students 3 and 4)

**Thursday, May 16: Anti-communist resistance III: From Pope John Paul II to Martial Law**

* Stokes: 107-114 & Stokes: 193-214
* See “Blind Chance” by Krzysztof Kieslowski Parts I & II

**Friday, May 17: Excursion to Instytut Literacki Kultura Paryska**

**Saturday**: **First Paper due at 12am**

**Week II**

**Monday, May 20: Roundtable Talks in Poland and Hungary**

* History: Chapter 3
* Presentation: Who is Lech Walesa? (students 5 and 6)

**Tuesday, May 21: Economic Reform**

* Frye: 1-47 (recommended 48-121)
* Presentation: What is the Big Bang Theory of Economic Reform? (students 7 and 8)

**Wednesday, May 22: Transitional Justice**

* See “Blind Chance” by Krzysztof Kieslowski, Part III
* See the movie “Lives of Others” by Florian von Donnersmarck
* Nalepa: Chapters 1,2, and 6

**Thursday, May 23: Joining International Organizations**

* History: Chapter 5
* Presentation: What is the EU? (students 9 and 10)

**Friday, May 24: Excursion to RED “Art and utopia in the land of Soviets”**

**Saturday**: **Second Paper due at 12am**

**Week III:**

**Monday, May 27: Day after the elections to Euro-parliament**

* **Follow results of EU elections**

Discussion of EU results. What do the results mean for the future of Europe?

* Based on “Europarties After Enlargement: Organization, Ideology and Competition”

By E. Bressanelli (Palgrave, 2014)

* Presentation: What happened at the Euromaidan? (students 13 and 14)

**Tuesday, May 28: Civil war in Ukraine**

* Nalepa, Monika. "Reconciliation, refugee returns, and the impact of international criminal justice: The case of Bosnia and Herzegovina." *Nomos* 51 (2012): 316-359.
* Presentation: What is the ICTY (students 11 and 12)
* Gehlbach and Earle (Unpublished Manuscript)

**Wednesday, May 29: Hungarian Backsliding**

* Greskovits, Béla. "The hollowing and backsliding of democracy in East Central Europe." Global Policy 6 (2015): 28-37
* Plattner, Marc F., and Larry Jay Diamond. "Is East-Central Europe Backsliding?." Journal of Democracy 18.4 (2007): 5-6.
* Presentation: What is Fidesz? (students 15 and 16)

**Thursday, May 30: Polish Democratic Erosion**

* Grzymala- Busses and Nalepa’s selection of Washington Post analysis pieces
* Authoritarian Backsliding by Chiopris et. al.
* Presentation: What happened in Smolensk April 10, 2010? (student 17)

1. With over 10 million members, Solidarity was the first trade union that was independent of the communist party. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)