

**Politics 316**  
**Seminar on Post-Communist Transformations**

Stephen Crowley  
Spring 2007  
Wednesday 2:30-4:20  
AJLC 104

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This seminar will examine the attempts to create new political, economic and social systems in the post-communist societies of eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Among the questions we will investigate are the following: What was Soviet socialism, and why did it collapse? What impacts are the institutional and cultural legacies of the communist era having on post-communist societies? What difficulties have these countries faced creating democracy and capitalism out of communism, and are these two goals compatible? What has the impact of these changes been on the identities of different social groups, such as workers, women, and ethnic groups? What explains the divergent outcomes in terms of democracy and capitalism throughout the region?

The seminar will involve reading a number of works examining the many layered changes that have followed the end of communism. Through these we will jointly explore hunches, ideas, concepts, hypotheses and theoretical models that may prove fruitful in the writing of your research paper, which will comprise a major part of this course. The first nine sessions will involve critical discussion of the readings. The last few sessions will be devoted to presentations and discussions of your "works in progress."

**Requirements:**

Since this is a seminar, you are expected to complete the weekly reading and come to class prepared to discuss the issues raised.

The first nine sessions will involve critical discussion of the readings. The day before each class (i.e., Tuesday) you are to post comments and questions about the week's reading on the seminar's Blackboard discussion board. These will form the basis for our collective discussions and are essential for the success of that enterprise.

The extended research paper (approximately 20-25 pages) will comprise a major part of this course. To make completing the paper more manageable, we will break the research and writing into a number of components, according the following schedule:

- a conference with instructor to define a topic sometime before class meeting of Feb. 28

- a 1-2 page proposal for your research topic, which should include a statement of your research question(s); justification of the topic in terms of its interest and importance; any anticipated problems and proposed solutions, due March 7
- an annotated bibliography, which identifies and evaluates a variety of research materials, due March 23 (before break).
- a 1-2 page introduction to your paper, including your thesis statement, due April 4
- a detailed outline of your paper, due April 18
- a draft of your paper, due April 25
- a presentation of your “works in progress” to the class; the last three sessions will be devoted to these presentations and discussion of your papers in progress.
- the final paper, submitted together with your draft(s) and the other above materials as a portfolio, will be due May 19 (by College rules, no extensions are possible beyond this date).

Grades will be assessed in the following manner: Class participation, including your regular postings to Blackboard forum and the in-class presentation, will be 50%. The remaining 50% will be based on the research paper.

### **Reading:**

The following books have been ordered for purchase at the Oberlin bookstore:

David Ost, *The Defeat of Solidarity: Anger and Politics in Postcommunist Europe* (Cornell University Press, 2005).

Vadim Volkov, *Violent Entrepreneurs: The Use of Force in the Making of Russian Capitalism* (Cornell University Press, 2002).

M. Steven Fish, *Democracy Derailed in Russia* (Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Allen C. Lynch, *How Russia is Not Ruled* (Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Other readings will be available on Eres.

### **Class Schedule**

#### **February 7: Introduction**

No reading assignment

#### **February 14: What Was (Soviet) Socialism?**

Valerie Bunce, “The Empire Strikes Back: the evolution of the Eastern bloc from a Soviet asset to a liability,” *International Organization* (winter 1985)

Katherine Verdery, "What Was Socialism, and Why Did it Fall?" in Verdery, *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* (Princeton University Press, 1996)

Stephen Crowley, "Barriers to Collective Action: Steelworkers and Mutual Dependence in the Former Soviet Union," *World Politics* (July 1994), 589-615

Stephen Crowley, "Coal Miners, Cultural Frameworks, and the Transformation of the Soviet Political Economy," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, vol. 13, no. 2 (April-June 1997)

Ken Jowitt, "The Leninist Extinction," in *New World Disorder* (University of California Press, 1992)

Grzegorz Ekiert and Stephen Hanson, "Time, Space, and Institutional Change in Central and Eastern Europe," in Ekiert and Hanson, eds., *Capitalism and Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2003)

### **February 21: From Communism to Capitalism**

Jeffrey Sachs, *Poland's Jump to the Market Economy* (MIT Press, 1993), pp. 1-34.

Joseph Stiglitz, "Who Lost Russia?" in *Globalization and its Discontents*

Joel Hellman, "Winners Take All: The Pitfall Reform," *World Politics*, 50 (January 1998)

David Woodruff, "Barter of the Bankrupt: The Politics of Demonetization in Russia's Federal State," in Michael Burawoy and Katherine Verdery, eds., *Uncertain Transition: Ethnographies of Change in the Postsocialist World* (Rowman and Littlefield, 1999)

David Stark and Laszlo Bruzst, *Postsocialist Pathways* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), chapt. 3

Barnes, Andrew. "Comparative Theft." *East European Politics and Societies* 17, no. 3 (2003)

### **February 28: The Russian State**

Volkov, *Violent Entrepreneurs*

### **March 7: Explaining Russia's Politics, take 1**

Fish, *Democracy Derailed*

[paper topic due]

**March 14: Explaining Russia's Politics, take 2**

Lynch, *How Russia is Not Ruled*

**March 21: What About the Workers?**

Ost, *The End of Solidarity*

[annotated bibliography due by March 23]

[March 28: Spring Break]

**April 4: Postcommunist Identities**

V.P. Gangon, *The Myth of Ethnic War: Serbia and Croatia in the 1990's* (Cornell University Press, 2005), chaps. 1, 3-4

Lynne Haney, "‘But We Are Still Mothers’: Gender, the State, and the Construction of Need in Postsocialist Hungary," in Burawoy and Verdery, eds., *Uncertain Transition*

Gil Eyal, Ivan Szelenyi, and Eleanor Townsley, *Making Capitalism Without Capitalists* (Verso, 1998), chapt. 3 [skim chapter 4]

[paper introduction due]

**April 11: What Explains Divergence?**

Burawoy, Michael. 2001. "Neoclassical Sociology: From the End of Communism to the End of Classes," and responses by Eyal and Szelenyi, and Stark and Bruszt. *American Journal of Sociology* 106(4)

Jeffrey Kopstein and David Reilly, "Geographic Diffusion and the Transformation of the Postcommunist World," *World Politics*, October 2000

Anna Milada Vachudova, "The Leverage of International Institutions on Democratizing States" Eastern Europe and the European Union." European University Institute, Working Paper No. 2001/33

Ana Grzymala-Busse and Abby Innes, "Great Expectations: The EU and Domestic Political Competition in East Central Europe," *East European Politics and Societies*, vol. 17, 1, 2003.

Bohle, Dorothee. 2006. "Neoliberal Hegemony, Transnational Capital and the Terms of EU Enlargement." *Capital & Class* 88: 57-88.

Stephen Cohen, "The New American Cold War," The Nation, July 10, 2006

**April 18**

no class; individual meetings with instructor to discuss your papers.  
[outline of paper due]

**April 25 and May 2, 9 -- Presentations of Draft Papers**

[draft paper due April 25]

**May 19 – Papers Due**