POLITICAL SCIENCE 141C
Politics and Government in Eastern Europe

Version August 18, 2020

Lecture: M 2-5pm, Zoom
Section 101: Wed 11-12, Zoom
Section 102: Wed 12-1, Zoom

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: Why are some post-communist countries more politically and economically successful than others? What underlies the many conflicts in this region? What can happen in the future, and what can we learn from the East European experience? This course is designed to help you answer these and similar questions. Topics include state-socialism and its collapse, the emergence of ethnic politics, the transitions to democracy and market economics, entry into NATO and the European Union, the migrant crisis, democratic backsliding, and the role of Russia.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Students are expected to attend class regularly, do the assigned reading, complete all exams, and participate in any in-class discussions. The grade for this course will be based on two midterms (30% each), a research paper (20%), and class/section participation (20%). More information about the exams will be provided during the term. I do not grade on a curve, so you are not competing with your classmates for A’s. Everyone who does A-level work will receive an A. But you must take both exams to get a passing grade in the course.

Academic misconduct, also known as cheating and/or plagiarism, will not be tolerated. If you are caught cheating I reserve the right to fail you in the course. For information on what constitutes misconduct please see: http://sa.berkeley.edu/conduct

MATERIAL FOR PURCHASE: The following are required and available for purchase at the ASUC bookstore.


NOTE: All readings not in the Wolchik and Curry book are available on bCourses.
**IMPORTATION NOTE:** New and better readings are always coming to my attention. I therefore reserve the right to add and subtract from the syllabus.

**Class FYI**

1. I do not post my lecture notes online (and in fact do not have notes to begin with), but I will make my lecture slides available on bCourses.
2. I do not allow students to make announcements to the class regarding any extracurricular activity.
3. I do not hand out study sheets before exams, but we will review and discuss exams in class and in section.
4. Please report any suspected errors in the grading of an assignment within two days of receiving the grade. I reserve the right not to effect a grade change if an issue is reported after more than two days.
5. Syllabi are wonderful documents with lots of information on the time and place of office hours, the dates of exams, and course requirements. Please do not ask for information contained in the syllabus.
6. Unless otherwise specified no appointment is necessary to come to my office hours. Just show up!
SCHEDULE OF LECTURES/READING

Aug 31: Introduction: Why Eastern Europe?

Wolchik and Curry, Part I: Introduction (Democracy, the Market, and the Return to Europe: From Communism to the European Union and NATO).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ya55Q-WdIrQ (Is it time to scrap “Eastern Europe”?, 2 minutes)

Sept 7: Labor Day holiday

Sept 14: State-Socialism and Its Collapse (Paper topics handed out.)


Film (Firemen’s Ball, DVD 1063)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VmZy8TMFkI4 (Socialism in One Family: Romania, 52 minutes)

Sept 21: Creating Democracy and Capitalism? Political and Economic Transition

Wolchik and Curry, Chapter 2 (The Political Transition).

Wolchik and Curry, Chapter 3 (Re-Creating the Market).


Sept 28: Accounting for the Past? Transitional Justice

Wolchik and Curry, Chapter 6 (Transitional Justice and Memory).


[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cj4pHuMQguU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cj4pHuMQguU) (Bulgaria: Wrestled to the Ground, 25 minutes)

Oct 5: Ethnicity and Nationalism

Wolchik and Curry, Chapter 5 (Ethnicity, Nationalism, and the Challenges of Democratic Consolidation).


[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0L-oI2yvo5o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0L-oI2yvo5o) (Slovakia: Anti-Muslim rhetoric ahead of elections, 16 minutes)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a7ow9qa8whU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a7ow9qa8whU) (Hungary: Towards the Abyss, 25 minutes)

Oct 12: Defeating Autocratic Incumbents

Wolchik and Curry, Chapter 17 (Ukraine)


Oct 19: Midterm (2-4pm)

Oct 26: Liberal Democratic Disillusionment


Nov 2: Case Studies: Hungary and Poland

Wolchik and Curry, Chapter 9 (Poland); Chapter 11 (Hungary).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k_7EjaMu0ic (Hungary-political chaos on the streets of Budapest, 28 minutes)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tafqx31M0Tw (Poles Apart: Is Poland’s democracy under threat?, 25 minutes)

Nov 9: Influences on East European Politics: EU, NATO

Wolchik and Curry, Chapters 7 and 8 (The EU and Its New Members: Forging a New Relationship; Security Issues: NATO and Beyond).

Nov 16: Influences on East European Politics: Russia


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sPoinjn_CfQ (Sphere of Influence—Russia’s Foreign Policy, 25 minutes. Start at 5:45.)
Nov 23: Influences on East European Politics: Economy and Society

Valerie Bunce, “The Political Economy of Postsocialism,” *Slavic Review* 58, no. 4 (Winter 1999), pp. 756-793 (Focus on the tables.)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1pOw-9zasDc (Romania’s War on Corruption, 25 minutes)

Nov 30: TBD (papers due)

Nov 30: Midterm (2-4pm). Papers due.

Nov 30: Sources of East European Politics: Historical Legacies (papers due)


Final Exam Group 15: Thursday, Dec 17, 3-5pm.