

Department of Political Science, University of California, Berkeley  
 Fall 2021  
 Political Science 141A  
 Prof. Steven Fish  
 TuTh 3:30-5 Mulford 159  
 Office hours: Tu 5:30-7:00, 744 Social Sciences Bldg  
 GSIs: Melissa Samarin and Kseniya Usovich

## RUSSIAN POLITICS

This course presents a broad introduction to contemporary politics and society in Russia. What was the Soviet Union, and why did democracy fail in Russia after the USSR fell apart? What kind of regime has Vladimir Putin constructed? What do we know about public opinion and the lives and values of ordinary Russians? Does the recent rise in social protest and state repression portend major political change? How does the Russian economy work? How may we understand the nature of Russian nationalism and the quest for a secure national identity? How did Russia reemerge as a global power and how does it challenge the West and democracy around the world? The course is recommended for juniors and seniors but is open to all students.

Requirements consist of three exams and attendance at all lectures and discussion sections. Students are expected to do the readings for the week in their entirety by the time of their discussion section on Wednesday. There will be a short quiz on the readings for the week each Thursday at the beginning of lecture, with the exception of weeks 1, 6, and 11, when there will not be a quiz. The ten top quiz grades (and only the ten top grades) will count toward the course grade. No quizzes may be made up for any reason.

The first preliminary exam is on September 30; the second preliminary exam is on November 4; and the final exam is on December 17.

Grades will be determined on the basis of a 100-point scale. Each preliminary exam counts for 20 points; the final exam counts for 30 points; the quizzes count for 2 points each (for 20 points in total); and 10 points will be determined by attendance at lectures and attendance and participation in discussion sections. The third and final exam will be cumulative in coverage of course material and will run for two hours.

All correspondence regarding the course should be carried out with your GSI. Students who wish to consult with Professor Fish should do so during office hours. All administrative and logistical questions should be directed to your GSI.

Use of laptop computers, cell phones, and any other communications or internet devices in lecture is prohibited. Phones and laptops must be placed in backpacks or otherwise out of sight during lecture. Use of such devices will result in a ten-point reduction (roughly one letter grade) in the final course grade for each infraction.

Course readings are in the assigned books and the course reader. The pieces that appear in the reader are marked with an asterisk (\*); all other readings are in the books. The books and the reader are available electronically on the bcourses site. Our books for the course are:

- Timothy J. Colton, *Russia: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).
- Fiona Hill and Clifford G. Gaddy, *Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin*, new and expanded ed. (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2015).
- Mary McAuley, *Soviet Politics, 1917-1991* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).
- Gulnaz Sharafutdinova, *The Red Mirror: Putin's Leadership and Russia's Insecure Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020).
- Brian D. Taylor, *The Code of Putinism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).
- Joshua Yaffa, *Between Two Fires: Truth, Ambition, and Compromise in Putin's Russia* (New York: Crown, 2021).

### *Syllabus*

#### **PART I: RUSSIA IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY**

##### Week 1 (Aug 26): Studying Russia

Colton, *Russia*, chs. 1-2.

Sharafutdinova, *The Red Mirror*, preface and Ch. 1.

##### Week 2 (Aug 31 & Sept 2): What Was the Soviet Union?

McAuley, *Soviet Politics*, pp. 1-88.

Colton, *Russia*, ch. 3.

Sharafutdinova, *The Red Mirror*, ch. 3.

##### Week 3 (Sept 7 & 9): Collapse, Crisis, and the Struggle for Power

McAuley, *Soviet Politics*, pp. 89-123.

Colton, *Russia*, ch. 4.

Hill and Gaddy, *Mr. Putin*, chs. 2-3.

Sharafutdinova, *The Red Mirror*, ch. 4.

#### **PART II: THE REGIME AND THE RULER**

##### Week 4 (Sept 14 & 16): Forging Autocracy

Colton, *Russia*, ch. 5.

Sharafutdinova, *The Red Mirror*, chs. 2 & 5.

Week 5 (Sept 21 & 23): The Autocrat

Hill and Gaddy, *Mr. Putin*, chs. 1, 4-9.

Week 6 (Sept 28 & 30): Putinism

Taylor, *The Code of Putinism*, introduction and chs. 1-3.

M. Steven Fish, "What Has Russia Become?," *Comparative Politics* 50, 3 (April 2018), pp. 327-346.\*

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 30: FIRST PRELIMINARY EXAM (COVERS MATERIAL WEEKS 1-6)**

Week 7 (Oct 5 & 7): How the Government Works

Taylor, *The Code of Putinism*, ch. 5.

Natalia Forrat, "Shock-Resistant Authoritarianism: Schoolteachers and Infrastructural State Capacity in Putin's Russia," *Comparative Politics* 50, 3 (April 2018), pp. 417-434.\*

Maria Lipman, Anna Kachkaeva, and Michael Poyker, "Media in Russia: Between Modernization and Monopoly," in Daniel Treisman, ed., *The New Autocracy: Information, Politics, and Policy in Putin's Russia* (Washington, DC: Brookings, 2018), pp. 159-190.\*

Sharafutdinova, *The Red Mirror*, chs. 6-7.

Yaffa, *Between Two Fires*, ch. 1.

**PART III: ECONOMY AND SOCIETY**

Week 8 (Oct 12 & 14): The Economy and Its Owners

Taylor, *The Code of Putinism*, ch. 4.

Clifford G. Gaddy and Barry W. Ickes, "The Russian Economy through 2020: The Challenge of Managing Rent Addiction," in Maria Lipman and Nikolay Petrov, *Russia in 2020: Scenarios for the Future* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2011), pp. 165-186.\*

Stanislav Markus, "The Atlas That Has Not Shrugged: Why Russia's Oligarchs Are an Unlikely Force for Change," *Daedalus* 146, 2 (Spring 2017), pp. 101-112.\*

Gulnaz Sharafutdinova and Karen Dawisha, "The Escape from Institution-Building in a Globalized World: Lessons from Russia," *Perspectives on Politics* 15, 2 (June 2017), pp. 361-378.\*

#### Week 9 (Oct 19 & 21): How Russian Think about and Engage in Politics

Hill and Gaddy, *Mr. Putin*, ch. 10.

Samuel A. Greene, "Running to Stand Still: Aggressive Immobility and the Limits of Power in Russia," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 34, 5 (2018), pp. 333-347.\*

Yaffa, *Between Two Fires*, prologue.

Masha Gessen, "Alexey Navalny's Fearless Return to Russia," *The New Yorker*, January 19, 2021.\*

Joshua Yaffa, "Navalny's Long-Running Battle with Putin Enters a New Phase," *The New Yorker*, January 24, 2021.\*

Anne Applebaum, "Navalny Has a Lesson for the World," *The Atlantic*, April 22, 2021.\*

Julia Ioffe, "'These Bastards Will Never See Our Tears': How Yulia Navalny Became Russia's Real First Lady," *Vanity Fair*, September 2021.\*

#### Week 10 (Oct 26 & 28): Society and the State I

Yaffa, *Between Two Fires*, chs. 2, 3, & 5.

Kenneth Wilson and Jaechul Lee, "Questioning Putin's Popularity: Presidential Approval in an Electoral Authoritarian Regime," *Problems of Post-Communism* 67, 1 (2020), pp. 37-52.\*

Alexei Navalny's conversation with his would-be assassin, December 14, 2020, YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AeQXci82r1A>.

#### Week 11 (Nov 2 & 4): Society and the State II

Yaffa, *Between Two Fires*, chs. 6-7.

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4: SECOND PRELIMINARY EXAM (COVERS MATERIAL WEEKS 7-10)**

## PART IV: RUSSIA AND THE WORLD

### Week 12 (Nov 9): The View from Moscow

Angela E. Stent, *Putin's World: Russia against the West and with the Rest* (New York: Twelve, 2019), pp. 1-53.\*

Taylor, *The Code of Putinism*, ch. 6.

Marlene Laruelle, "Making Sense of Russia's Illiberalism," *Journal of Democracy* 31, 3 (July 2020), pp. 115-129.\*

George W. Breslauer, "The Long Shadow: Immediate and Downstream Consequences of the Collapse of the USSR," forthcoming in *Journal of World Affairs* 28, 1 (2022).\*

### Week 13 (Nov 16 & 18): The Operative in the World

Hill and Gaddy, *Mr. Putin*, chs. 11-14.

### Week 14 (Nov 23): Russia and America

Angela E. Stent, *Putin's World: Russia against the West and with the Rest* (New York: Twelve, 2019), pp. 293-343.\*

Jane Mayer, "How Russia Helped Swing the Election for Trump," *The New Yorker*, October 1, 2018.\*

Dominic Tierney, "How Putin Got into America's Mind," *The Atlantic*, September 13, 2020.\*

Thomas Graham, "Let Russia Be Russia: The Case for a More Pragmatic Approach to Moscow," *Foreign Affairs* 98, 6 (November-December 2019).\*

Victoria Nuland, "Pinning Down Putin: How a Confident America Should Deal with Russia," *Foreign Affairs* 99, 4 (July-August 2020).\*

### Week 15 (Nov 30 & Dec 2): Reflections and Prospects

Hill and Gaddy, *Mr. Putin*, coda.

Angela E. Stent, *Putin's World: Russia against the West and with the Rest* (New York: Twelve, 2019), pp. 344-362.\*

Colton, *Russia*, ch. 6.

Taylor, *The Code of Putinism*, ch. 7.

Yaffa, *Between Two Fires*, epilogue.

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17, 7:00-9:00 pm: FINAL EXAM, LOCATION TBD (COVERS ENTIRE COURSE)**