Political Science 948
Seminar on Post-Communist Politics

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Spring, 2004
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Description: The goal of this seminar is to gain theoretical insight into processes of economic, social, and political transformation in post-communist East Europe and the former Soviet Union. The course emphasizes both empirical outcomes and theoretical explanation. Thus, we will survey successes and failures in creating functioning market economies and democratic societies, but we will also explore the theoretical underpinnings of the observed outcomes. The seminar is open to all interested graduate students and advanced undergraduates with permission of instructor.

Requirements: Two-thirds of your grade will be based on a term paper, due in my mailbox by Tuesday, May 11, 5:00pm. You are free to choose any topic you wish, provided that it is relevant to the course and approved by me. Topics might include an analysis of a particular case of communist breakdown and democratic transition, a larger N study of democratic consolidation, or a theoretical critique of the existing literature. A one-page synopsis of your proposed paper is due in class on March 2, when the students will also give brief presentations on their topics. One-third of your grade will be based on class participation and four “reaction papers” based on the readings in weeks 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10. These papers, no more than three pages long, should not be mere descriptions of the weekly readings. They could, for example, elaborate further on some theoretical point, propose and discuss an alternative hypothesis, or compare and contrast different readings. Class participation is essential. This means two things. First, you must do the weekly readings, and think about what arguments the authors are making. Second, you must be prepared to critically discuss these arguments in class. I reserve the right to add or subtract readings as needed.

The following books are available for purchase at Underground Textbook Exchange 664 State Street (across from Starbucks):


• Grzegorz Ekiert and Stephen Hanson, eds., *Capitalism and Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe*. (Cambridge University Press, 2003).


**Make-ups**: No extensions on the paper will be granted without a bona fide medical excuse. This means a signed letter from your doctor stating that you were physically incapable of completing the work on time. To help you budget your time one-page paper synopses are due March 2 in class. Late papers (without an excuse) will be docked one entire grade for each day that they are late.

**Plagiarism**: Bad. It infuriates me, and is unfair to those who put in genuine work. At a minimum cheaters will fail the course. At a maximum they will face UW disciplinary action. For information on what constitutes academic misconduct please see: [http://www.wisc.edu/students/amsum.htm](http://www.wisc.edu/students/amsum.htm)

**Communicating**: I have set of an email list for this course. The address is: ps-948@lists.students.wisc.edu If you use a “students.wisc.edu” account and are registered for this course, then you are already on the list. For those of you who use another address you will need to join the list manually. See [https://www.psl.doit.wisc.edu/EASI/](https://www.psl.doit.wisc.edu/EASI/) for details. Other than in class, this list will be the primary means by which I communicate last minute corrections, so please be sure to register. My email address is listed above.

**Schedule of readings**:

• Week 1, Jan. 20: Introduction and Overview

• Week 2, Jan. 27: State-Socialism


- Week 3, Feb. 3: The Fall of State-Socialism

  
  
  
  

• Week 4, Feb. 10: Post-Communism or Post-Communisms?

  
  
  
  - Herbert Kitschelt, “Accounting for Postcommunist Regime Diversity,” in Ekiert and Hanson, Chapter 2.

• Week 5, Feb. 17: Overview of Political Reform

  
  
• Week 6, Feb. 24: Overview of Economic Reform

• Week 7, Mar. 2: In-class presentations and one-page paper synopses.

• Week 8, Mar. 9: Institution-Building

**Week 9, Mar. 23: Nation-building**


**Week 10, Mar. 30: Civil Society**


**Week 11, Apr. 6: Parties and Elections**

• Week 12, Apr. 13: Success and Failures, Winners and Losers

- Jeffrey S. Kopstein and David A. Reilly, “Postcommunist Spaces: A Political Geography Approach to Explaining Postcommunist Outcomes,” in Ekiert and Hanson, Chapter 4.

- Grzegorz Ekiert, “Patterns of Post-Communist Transformation in Central and Eastern Europe,” in Ekiert and Hanson, Chapter 3.


• Week 13, Apr. 20: Returning to Europe


• Week 14, Apr. 27: Post-Communism in Comparative Perspective


- Week 15, May 4: Semester Wrap-Up