**PSC 290: Special Studies Russian Politics**

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Description automatically generated**

**PROFESSOR:** Nicolè M. Ford, Ph.D.

**e-mail:**nford@ut.edu *(I will respond within 24-48 hours)*

**Office Hours:** by appointment.

**Course Overview:**

This course is an overview of Russian politics from the late Soviet period through today. We will discuss Marxist and democratic thought, the fall of the USSR, the Russian democratic experiment, Putin’s rise to Power, the Chechen Wars, Great Power Politics, and Russia after Putin? Scholarly works in the field are included to highlight and develop topics.

**Texts:**

Robinson, Neil. 2018. *Contemporary Russian Politics.*

Kelly, Donald R. 2017. *Russian Politics & Presidential Power: transformation from Gorbachev to Putin.*

**IMPORTANT!!!!**  Please see this list of additional resources below. You are expected to keep up with current events. I will expect you to incorporate, make connections to current events in the content/ your readings, during class discussions and in your final project. PLEASE: Read MULTIPLE sources and be prepared to cite/ link sources in your in-class discussions/ paper as warranted. Many of these have options to subscribe to breaking news and updates so they will be sent to your email/ you don't have to check each site daily. Possible online source material (\*note these are not considered peer-reviewed [more on that later]):

Foreign Policy Magazine <https://foreignpolicy.com/>

The Moscow Times <https://themoscowtimes.com/>

•  BBC: The “Europe” web page of the BBC for news on Russia which can be found at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world/europe/. Scan the BBC headlines for news on Russia and read any relevant articles. You can also search “Russia” from the BBC web page to find the most relevant news.

* Public Opinion Polls: Check out Putin’s approval ratings, and other important results of national polls (including attitudes towards the US) at Levada (a private polling company) (http://www.levada.ru/en/) and at the Russian Public Opinion Research center (a state-owned polling organization) (https://www.wciom.com/). Both have English versions of their websites.
* Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty <http://www.rferl.org/>
* <https://meduza.io/en> Meduza They are a Russian language independent media outlet that has an English language version. They are based out of Riga, Latvia.
* Normally, I would never recommend anyone use RT as a source, and I still would not. However, it is important to understand how Russia’s state-owned media exports its news to the Western and English-speaking audiences. Use RT only for that purpose, never as fact-finding. <https://www.rt.com> Compare it to other news sources. Sputnik news is also another option.

This site will help you determine which sites are more reliable for news and information:

<https://mediabiasfactcheck.com>

This graph will also help you.   
<https://www.adfontesmedia.com>

Scholarly books are also acceptable.

***Special note:*** Any sources listed as far-right, far-left, and or fall below "level of fair analysis" in the media graph is not considered acceptable source material per empirical links above. Opinion pieces are also not acceptable unless heavily sourced by reliable academic material like those listed above. Wikipedia or any other encyclopedia, to include Britannica, **are not acceptable sources for college-level work.** Please consider consulting the links below for help when determining what sources of news are reliable. When in doubt-- ask me.

**Course Outline:** (subject to change, see below)

There will be approx. 12 Modules in this course:

Mod1. Introductions. Getting to know one another and the course.

Robinson text. Chapter 1: Change & Continuity in the Russian System & Kelly Chapter 1: Executive Power in Russian Politics.

Mod 2. Robinson Chapter 2: The Soviet System & readings on BB

Mod 3. Robinson Chapter 3: Perestroika & the Fall of the USSR & Kelly Chapter 2 The Gorbachev Presidency

Mod 4. Robinson Chapter 4: Yeltsin & the Politics of Crisis & Kelly Chapter 3 & 4 Yeltsin Presidency

Mod 5. Robinson Chapter 5: Putininsm, Reform, & Retrenchment. Kelly Chapter 5

Mod 6. Robinson Chapter 6: Presidency & Parliaments. Kelly Chapter 6: “Tandem”

*\*\*\*\* Midterm likely to be at the end of Mod 6\*\*\*\**

Mod 7. Robinson Chapter 7: Russian Federalism & Kelly Chapter 7: Putin II (pp. 203-228)

Mod 8. Chapter 8: Political Parties & opposition & Kelly Chapter 7: Putin II (pp. 228-250)

Mod 9. Chapter 9. Elections & Voters & readings on BB

Mod 10. Chapter 10: The New Russian Political Economy. & readings on BB

Mod 11. Chapter 11: Russia & the World & readings on BB

Mod 12. Chapter 12: What kind of Polity is Russia? & Kelly Chapter 8: Future of Russian Politics

All of this is subject to change depending upon how the class progresses, current events, school-related emergencies, technical issues, etc. Please check BB daily for any updates or changes as you are ultimately responsible for knowing what we are doing and when items are due.

**Course Assessment Breakdown.**

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| --- | --- |
| **Quizzes** | **15%** |
| **Midterm** | **20%** |
| **Final Exam** | **25%** |
| **Project** | **25%** |
| **Geography Quiz** | **5%** |
| **Class participation** | **10%** |

The grading scale is the standard UT scale. Please see the Undergrad handbook.

**Participation (10%)**

This is a seminar type course. As such it will rely heavily on your coming to the course having read the course material beforehand and being ready to discuss and engage with the material and one another. However, you in ***addition***, you can take the discussions to Blackboard after class where you can continue discussions, initiate new discussions with classmates and share information with one another on the course topic.

**Note on in-class discussions:**

Typically, I will expect you have read the material before the class. Sometimes these will be structured in an "in-class exercise" based format they will be very informal based on the readings.

You are always very welcome to just ask questions you are curious about related to politics/ world events. If you hear a question in class & you would like to reply, you should try to engage with the material we have been learning; apply it to your answer in ways that make what we study meaningful to the topics at hand. Bring in terms and concepts. If that is difficult, and sometimes it may be, answer as you will. I encourage you to think critically. Above all, be respectful.

Overall-- DO NOT politicize any topic. I am interested in that which you can support via academic source materials. This is political science and not political punditry. Be respectful of one another. Keeping your discussions relegated to the facts will help you in this regard. *Having a position* *that ‘feels’ partisan is acceptable if it is backed with* ***demonstrable FACTS***.  
  
**Geography QUIZ. (5%)**

There will be a geography quiz at the end of week 3 which tests your knowledge of the relevant countries, country capitals, and major geographic features. It will count as 5% of your grade.

**Honor Code Certification:**

In this course, we agree to abide by an honor code, it is a governing principle of our learning community. It is based on the idea that honorable students do not lie, cheat or steal. This honor code depends on the idea that people (at least within the community) can be trusted to act honorably. Those who violate the honor code are subject to various sanctions as determined by the community. Here is an example from UNC. For additional information about HONOR refer to the [Academic Integrity Tutorial.](http://ut.smartcatalogiq.com/current/catalog/Academic-Policies-and-Procedures/Academic-Integrity-Policy)

**Late Assignments/Due Dates**

Activities/Assignments ("To Do's") are due as described above during the week assigned.

**Notes on Late Work:**

LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED; A SCORE OF ZERO (0) POINTS WILL BE RECORDED FOR ASSIGNMENTS NOT TURNED IN BY THE DUE DATE/TIME. If you have serious mitigating circumstances such as hospitalization, illness, death in the family, etc. I will, of course, make an exception. I will require documentation scanned/ emailed to me ASAP. If you do not have a scanner you make take a picture of the note and email it to me. [nford@ut.edu](mailto:nford@ut.edu)

**Quizzes:**

Quizzes will be given online approx. once/twice per week and will be timed. You will have from Thursday until Sunday at 11:59 pm to take the quizzes. Once you login to the quiz you will see how much time you have-- each quiz may vary depending upon how long the quiz is. At maximum, you will have no more than 20 minutes unless otherwise specified.

**Exams:**

These will be given in person as outlined via the department's guidelines/ days/ times. Exact exam dates TBA. You will be given a review sheet for each exam. They will not cover every question but are meant to be used as a guide to help you understand the sorts of questions you will be expected to answer to help you mentally prepare. We will not go over them/ I will not be posting answers. You are expected to find the answers yourselves. You may work together on completing the study sheets if you wish. Exams are not open notes.

NOTES on exam time and dates. These are not negotiable unless you have a note from a doctor, judge, whatever, you will NOT be allowed to make up exams/quizzes.

**Final Project:**

~week 3 we will be talking about possible topics and expectations.

**Course Procedures**

Use only your official UT email account when communicating with your instructor.

Check your official UT email account at least once per day to keep current on course events.

Use up-to-date anti-virus software on your computer to prevent the spread of computer viruses and other malicious programs. [Check out UT IT](http://www.ut.edu/technology/computerrecommendations/) for recommendations or contact them with any questions or concerns.

**Plagiarism is literary theft. It is serious and there are consequences.**

It includes: unattributed quotes of the exact words of a published text, the unattributed borrowing of original ideas by paraphrase or passing another person's work off as your own

The consequences of academic dishonesty are serious! Sanctions depend on the seriousness of the offense and may include receipt of an "F" with a numerical value of zero on the item submitted, and the "F" shall be used to determine the final course grade. It is the option of the instructor to assign the student a grade of "F" of "FF" (the latter indicating dishonesty) in the course.

For additional information refer to [Academic Integrity Tutorial.](http://ut.smartcatalogiq.com/current/catalog/Academic-Policies-and-Procedures/Academic-Integrity-Policy)

**Detection of Plagiarism**

This course may require you to submit your papers to a plagiarism detection site that will be identified by your instructor. To comply with federal (FERPA) and state privacy laws, you (students) are not required to include personal identifying information such as your name, SSN in the body of the work (text) or use such information in the file naming convention before submitting. Please follow carefully your instructor's instructions regarding what identifying information to include. Your submission will be placed in the course grade center in your account that can be accessed by the instructor and attributed to you. Assignments are compared automatically with a database of journal articles, web articles, and previously submitted papers. The instructor receives a report showing exactly how a student's paper may have been plagiarized.

**ADA Statement**

Students in need of academic accommodations for a disability may consult with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities to arrange appropriate accommodations. Students are required to give reasonable notice (typically 5 working days) before requesting an accommodation.

**UT Policy on Religious Observances**

Students who anticipate the necessity of being absent from the online environment for more than 1 week due to a major religious observance must provide notice of the date(s) to the instructor, in writing, by the second week of the course. (.pdf)

**Emergency Procedures/Academic Integrity**

In the event of an emergency, it may be necessary for UT to suspend normal operations. During this time, UT may opt to continue delivery of instruction through methods that include but are not limited to: the learning management system, email and/or an alternate schedule. It is the responsibility of the student to monitor their courses for specific communication, and the main UT, College, and department websites, emails, and UT Spartan messages for important general information.

**Title IX: Sexual Harassment & Discrimination.**   
First, know if you are experiencing threats, or harassment of any kind, though I am a mandatory reporter, but please know you can come to me, *I will believe you.* The University of Tampa has resources to help you.

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 protects individuals from discrimination based on sex in any educational program or activity operated by recipients of federal financial assistance. Title IX prohibits gender discrimination and sexual harassment which includes acts of sexual violence.

The University of Tampa is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination based on sex and provides a number of resources and services to assist students, faculty and staff in addressing all aspects of discrimination including issues involving gender discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct and relationship violence, including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking. The University of Tampa will provide written notification to students and employees about existing counseling, victim advocacy, legal assistance, visa and immigration assistance, student financial aid and other services available for victims, both within the institution and in the community. Students are prohibited from conduct that violates Title IX under the Sexual Misconduct and Relationship Violence Policy.

<https://www.ut.edu/campus-life/student-services/office-of-student-conduct/title-ix-and-sexual-misconduct-procedures> Please visit this link to report your concerns and/ or for more information.

**Sources for Help: “Three Before Me”**

Note on “Three Before Me”:

I want my students to think critically (outrageous, I know). Part of that is being resourceful, knowing where to go for help and persisting until the problem is solved. Students must consult at least 3 sources for help BEFORE asking me. For example, you may consult the Question/Answer discussion board I have set up on Canvas. EVERY time you have a question, you can use that source as one of your 'three before me' options. Also, it is the responsibility of the learning community to help each other find the [correct] answers (in other words, don't just give out free answers to people).

***Three Before Me suggestions:***

Peers, ask your classmates (if you have a question, likely, a classmate does as well)

UT IT Help Desk 1.813.253-6293 OR [helpdesk@ut.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ut.edu)

In blackboard, see the “Get Help” link at the bottom of the screen (<http://edtech.ut.edu/external-links/360-get-help> )

WWW at large, you can always, “google it” just be sure to scrutinize the “answers” you find. Not everything on the Inter-Webs is correct. (shocker, I know). Record what you were searching for and what you found out (www.google.com) on the Q/A DB so others in the learning community can benefit

Me! I’m your last resort, not because I don’t like you, I just want you to challenge yourself to figure things out yourself ([nford@ut.edu](mailto:nford@ut.edu) ). Contrary to popular belief, I have a few other things going on besides sitting at my computer 24/7 waiting for *tech support* questions :0) I am more eager and able to help with actual ***class content support*** questions!

**RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS:**

UT is filthy rich with student success resources, take advantage of them! You pay for these services via your tuition; it is your right and responsibility to use them to increase your academic and all future successes:

Need advising, we got that: <http://www.ut.edu/academicadvising/>

Need help with writing, we got that: <http://www.ut.edu/academic-support/saunders/>

Need help with Science, Math, Research, Technology, we got that: <http://www.ut.edu/aep/tutoring/>

Need software tutorials, we got that: <http://www.atomiclearning.com/highed/home>

Need help with test preparation, we got that: <http://www.ut.edu/sapprep/>

I am looking forward to a FABULOUS semester! If you ever need anything, please don’t hesitate to contact me. I am here to help you! :0)