**Federal State Autonomous Educational Institution of Higher Education**

**National Research University "Higher School of Economics"**

**Department of Political Science**

Course syllabus

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS OF CONTEMPORARY RUSSIA

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**Course Description**

*Prerequisites*

Basics of political science (preferable); knowledge of Russian history a plus but not required.

*Course Type*

16-hour classwork course for the HSE Summer University.

 *Abstract*

The course is intended to introduce the students to contemporary Russian politics. It is designed as an overview of principal political institutions of the Russian state. These institutions are analyzed through the lens of comparative political science using neoinstitutional methodological approach, looking not only at the formal framework, but also on the actual performance of actors and institutions, which evolved in Russia since early 1990s. The course covers not only state institutions, but looks at the “agents of change” such as private enterprise, civil society, political culture, collective action, etc.

The course aims at strengthening students’ knowledge of contemporary Russia, developing skills to interpret and analyze political events, intellectual and historical outlook, to maintain professional and public discussion.

**Learning Objectives**

- acquaint the students with the main institutions, events and actors of contemporary Russian politics and teach them the basic skills of its interpretation and analysis;

- provide knowledge of basic ideas and concepts of comparative political science and teach students the skill of applying theoretical knowledge to analysis of individual polities and societies;

**Learning Outcomes**

-competencies to understand and analyze political events using the theoretical knowledge;

- competence to use complex approaches to analysis of political events, combining the “thick description” approach (case study) with comparative theoretical concepts;

 - develop the skills of applied political science, preparing students for professional careers.

**Grading system**

Participation in the class (attendance, activity, written test, etc): 50 per cent

Final Test (written): 50 per cent

**Course Plan**

**Theme 1. Institutions building during transition to modernity: repairing the ship at sea?**

Russia’s way to modernity. Specific features of Russia’s political development and the model of post-Communist transition.

Historic prerequisites of modernization processes in Russia.

From the USSR to Russia. *Perestroika* as a phenomenon of political transition: universal trends and country specifics.

Structure and agency factors of political development: general approach and the specifics of post-communist world.

Readings (required)

Saqwa, Richard. Becoming Modern Russian Style. In: Russia 2025: Scenarios for the Russian Future, M.Lipman and N.Petrov (eds.). London, Palgrave Macmillan. 2013

Makarenko, Boris. The Difficult Birth of Civic Culture in Russia *Putin's Russia: How it Rose, How it is Maintained, and How It Might End. Edited by Leon Aron. American Enterprise Institute. Washington D.C. 2015*. Washington : American Enterprise Institute, 2015. P. 108-126.

Readings (comparative politics classics)

Linz and Stepan. Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America and Post-Communist Europe. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996 Chapter 19.

**Theme 2. Institutional design of the Russian state. The asymmetric powers: checks and balances in the system of institutions.**

Constitutional framework and political practices as factors of Russia’s institutional development.

The problem of “limited uncertainty” in the Russian context.

The Russian model of presidency: between “semipresidentialism” and “superpresidentialism”.

Presidency and the cabinet: The “dual executive” and the myth of the “Russian model”.

Strengths and weaknesses of the Russian parliament.

Checks and balances and its applicability to Russia. The triangle: president – cabinet – legislature.

Readings (required)

Makarenko, B. Institutions of the Russian State: The Controversial Evolution in: La Russia Post-Sovietica: *Dalla caduta del comunismo a Putin:storia della grande transizione.* Giancarlo Aragona (ed.). Milano, Montodori, 2018 (original in Italian)

Henry E. Hale, Russian Patronal Politics Beyond Putin, Daedalus, Spring 2017, Vol. 146, No. 2,

Remington, Thomas. Politics in Russia. Edition No 07. . Longman, 2012. Chapter 3

Colton, T. Paradoxes of Putinism. In: *Daedalus* Spring 2017, Vol. 146, No2. Russia beyond Putin

Readings (comparative politics classics)

Schmitter, Philippe, Karl, Terry Lynn. 1991. "What Democracy Is. … and Is Not." Journal of Democracy 2 : 39-52.

Shugart M., Carey J. Presidents and Assemblies: Constitutional Design and Electoral Dynamics / Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. Ch.3

Linz Juan. 1990. "The Perils of Presidentialism." Journal of Democracy 17: 51-69.

**Theme 3. The agents of change: developmental state, private enterprise and civil society in the making of modern Russia.**

Neocorporatist traits and practices in the Russian political system: prerequisites, functions. Russian model of bureaucratic authoritarianism.

“Development state” as a concept; applicability in Russia. Achievements and limitation of the government structures as the agent of development.

Private enterprise as an agent of change. Evolution of relations between business and government. The controversial concept of “oligarchy”.

Emergence and development of civil society in Russia: comparative politics approach.

The problems of “social capital” and “horizontal confidence” in Russia as an explanation.

Achievements and limitations of civil society in Russia.

Readings (required)

Makarenko, B. Post-Crimean Political Order. in: *The State of Russia: What Comes Next?* / Ed. by N. Petrov, M. Lipman. Houndmills : Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. P. 6-27.

Bunin, I, and Makarkin, A. Russia: Business and State Russie. Nei. Visions No 88, IFRI, Russia/NIS Center November\_2015.

Greene, Samuel A. Citizenship and the Social Contract in Post-Soviet Russia: Twenty Years Late? *Demokratizatsiya,* Vol. 20, No. 2, Spring

[Melville A. Y.](https://www.hse.ru/org/persons/10444822), [Mironyuk M. G.](https://www.hse.ru/org/persons/16958077) “Bad Enough Governance”: State Capacity and Quality of Institutions in Post-Soviet Autocracies. [Post-Soviet Affairs](https://publications.hse.ru/articles/?mg=66241447). 2016. Vol. 32. No. 2. P. 132-151.

Readings (optional and comparative politics classics)

The Global Competitiveness Report 2016–2017. https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-competitiveness-report-2016-2017-1

The Ease of Doing Business. http://www.doingbusiness.org/Rankings

Philippe C. Schmitter. Still the Century of Corporatism? The Review of Politics, Vol. 36, No. 1, The New Corporatism: Social and Political Structures in the Iberian World (Jan., 1974), pp. 85-131

O’Donnell. G.A. O’Donnell (1973) *Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism* (University of California Press),

**Theme 4. Political culture of limited pluralism: societies, parties, elections and beyond.**

Approaches to interpretation of political subcultures in Russia. Evolution of political subcultures in Russia.

Emergence of political pluralism in Russia. Cleavages and divides.

The concept of “two majorities” (presidential and parliamentary elections).

Evolution of the electoral system and its effects.

Political regime and public policy.

Role and functions of political parties in a political system: comparative politics approach and Russian realities.

Evolution of party system in Russia.

The phenomenon of “post-Soviet party of power”.

“Color revolutions”: conflicting definitions. Prerequisites, features, effects. Demonstration effect of colored revolutions in post-Soviet space. Protest movements in Russia in 2011-2012 and after.

Readings (required)

Kolesnikov, A. and Makarenko, B. Another Rubber Stamp Duma? Carnegie Moscow Center, September 2016

Makarenko, Boris. The Difficult Birth of Civic Culture in Russia *Putin's Russia: How it Rose, How it is Maintained, and How It Might End. Edited by Leon Aron. American Enterprise Institute. Washington D.C. 2015*. Washington : American Enterprise Institute, 2015. P. 108-126.

Polyakov, Leonid. “Conservatism”in Russia: Political Tool or Historic Choice? Russie. Nei. Visions No 90, IFRI, Russia/NIS Center December\_2015.

Makarenko, B. The Post-Soviet Party of Power: United Russia in Comparative Context. *Russian Politics and Law*, vol. 50, no. 1, January–February 2012, pp. 54–83.

Kynev, A. State Duma Elections 2011 and the Marginal Role of Russian Parties. <http://www.iss.europa.eu/publications/detail/article/russian-elections-and-relations-between-the-centre-and-the-regions/>

Bunce, Valerie. The Prospects for a Color Revolution. In: *Daedalus* Spring 2017, Vol. 146, No2. Russia beyond Putin

Baunov, A. Going to the People —and Back Again: The Changing Shape of the Russian Regime. Carnegie Moscow Center, January 2017

Michael McFaul, M. Transitions from Postcommunism. Journal of Democracy Volume 16, Number 3 July 2005

Readings (comparative politics classics)

Almond, G. and Verba, S. The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy In Five Nations. Sage Publications. 1989. Chapter 1.

Putnam, Robert D. Making democracy work: Civic traditions in modem Italy. Princeton University Press, 1993. Chapter 6.

Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism. Journal of Democracy Volume 13, Number 2 April 2002