

Course Syllabus

Title of the course	Contemporary Russian Politics				
Title of the Academic Programme	BA Programme in Political Science				
Type of the course	Core				
Prerequisites	The Basics of Philosophy (<i>Philosophy 101</i>); The Basics of Sociology (<i>Sociology 101</i>); Political History of Russia and Foreign Countries; History of Political Thought; Political Theory (<i>Political Philosophy 101</i>).				
ECTS workload	5				
Total indicative study hours	Directed Study	Self-directed study	Total		
Course Overview	62 academic hours	128 academic hours	190 academic hours		
	The course aims at forming a coherent knowledge of the recent political developments in Russia through the lens of various conceptual and theoretical approaches. The course revolves around four major issues in Russian politics: super-presidentialism, regionalisation, state weakness and weak political institutions, and its resource wealth. The tasks of the course are therefore covering these four components. The three former institutional characteristics are taken to be more stable and to produce stronger legacies traced back to the late Soviet times and the 1990s. The latter, being primarily the naughts' feature, enters analysis by the mid-term.				
Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)	<p>ULO – 9: Able to think critically and interpret the experience (personal and of other persons), relate to professional and social activities</p> <p>PLO – 4: Student is capable of retrieving, collecting, processing and analyzing information relevant for achieving goals in the professional field.</p> <p>PLO – 8: Student is capable of executing applied analysis of the political phenomena and political processes</p> <p>PLO – 9: Student is capable of reporting the results of the information retrieval and analysis, academic or applied research she/he has conducted:</p>				
Teaching and Learning Methods	The course consists of lectures and seminars. Both lectures and seminars will require home readings assigned by professor as well as presentations by students on selected topics.				
Content and Structure of the Course					
№	Topic / Course Chapter	Total	Directed Study		Self-directed Study
			Lectures	Tutorials	
1	Introduction to the course. Brief overview of Russian political history (1990s-2010s)	22	4	4	14
2	What is Russian politics made of? Presidentialism	22	4	4	14
3	Parties, media and opposition	22	4	4	14
4	What else is Russian politics made of? Federalism	22	4	4	14
5	Corruption, bureaucracy and state-building	22	4	4	14
6	Institutions and the rule of law in Russia. Law and Courts.	22	4	4	14
7	Business and state in Russia. Oil curse. Oligarchs.	22	4	4	14
8	Protests and color revolutions	20	2	4	14
9	Societal, economic and political sources of resilience in Russia	20	2	2	16
Total study hours		190 hours	30 hours	32 hours	128 hours

Indicative Assessment
Methods and Strategy

Final grade consists of the following components:

- 40% work in class during seminars
- 20% two reaction papers
- 10% colloquium
- 30% exam

Seminar work assessment

Every seminar starts with a brief overview of the subject by the instructor. This is followed by an in-depth discussion of the literature assigned for the class, with occasional team project presentations. The students' work in class during seminars amounts to 40% of the final grade. This mostly deals with the instructor's assessment of their reading.

Two reaction papers (one per module)

The other 20% of the grade come from two reaction papers students write covering the reading assignment for two classes of their choice (which they submit to the instructor after the first class where they get familiar with the course requirements and can ask some further questions to ascertain their points of interest for the course). The reaction paper is a 500 words long essay where a student reviews the literature assigned for the class, gives his/her opinion and some critiques on it. Reaction papers must be submitted not later than a day before the class (seminar) on the subject starts.

Colloquium

Colloquium takes place in the middle of the course (beginning of the second term) where students are expected to react to any question(s) asked by the instructor on the assigned topic. Colloquium's format differs from seminars because it does not imply discussion, rather a pure knowledge of the literature and resembles the oral mini-exam with brief and maximally precise answers. The colloquium's subject is the matter of agreement between the instructor and students. Students must read all the literature assigned and be prepared to immediately respond to the question(s). Each correct response amounts to 5 points. Two full and correct (to the reasonable extent) responses amount to the maximum of 10 points (10%).

Exam

The exam (30%) is a written answer to one of the broad questions covered in the course. The exam lasts two hours and can add up to the final grade as 30%.

The final grade is calculated in accordance with the following criteria.

The cumulative grade ($G_{cumulative}$) consists of the grade for the colloquium (G_{colloq}), the grade for the reaction papers (G_{papers}), and current grade ($G_{current}$). The final grade consists of cumulative grade and the grade for the final exam (G_{exam}).

The final grade is calculated in accordance with the following formulae:

$$G_{cumulative} = 0,3 * G_{papers} + 0,1 * G_{colloq} + 0,6 * G_{current}$$
$$G_{final} = 0,7 * G_{cumulative} + 0,3 * G_{exam}$$

Readings / Indicative
Learning Resources

Compulsory literature

1. The Oxford Handbook of the Welfare State, edited by Castles, Francis G., Stephan Leibfried, Jane Lewis, Herbert Obinger, and Christopher Pierson. : Oxford University Press,, 2010-07-15.
<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199579396.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199579396>.
2. The Oxford Handbook of Transformations of the State, edited by Leibfried, Stephan, Evelyne Huber, Matthew Lange, Jonah D. Levy, and John D. Stephens. : Oxford University Press,, 2015-06-01.
<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199691586.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199691586>.

Recommended literature

1. Facon, Isabelle. "The Russian Way of War: in Crisis?." In The Oxford Handbook of War. : Oxford University Press,, 2012-01-19.
<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199562>

	930.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199562930-e-19 . 2. Winter, David G. "Personality Profiles of Political Elites." In The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology. : Oxford University Press,, 2013-09-04. http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199760107-e-014 . 3. Condor, Susan, Cristian Tileagă, and Michael Billig. "Political Rhetoric." In The Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology. : Oxford University Press,, 2013-09-04. http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199760107-e-009 .		
Indicative Self- Study Strategies	Type	+/-	Hours
	Reading for seminars / tutorials (lecture materials, mandatory and optional resources)	+	50
	Assignments for seminars / tutorials / labs	+	50
	E-learning / distance learning (MOOC / LMS)	-	
	Fieldwork	-	
	Project work	-	
	Other (please specify)	-	
	Preparation for the exam	+	28
Academic Support for the Course	Academic support for the course is provided via LMS, where students can find: guidelines and recommendations for mastering the course; guidelines and recommendations for self-study; samples of assessment materials.		
Facilities, Equipment and Software	For the lectures and seminars a room with a laptop, a film projector and a sound system is required.		
Course Instructor	Margarita Zavadskaya: mzavadskaya@hse.ru		

Annex 1

Course Content

Introduction to the course. Brief overview of Russian political history (1990- 2010s)

Perestroika: why did it fail, or did it? August putsch and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Early Russian super-parliamentarism, Yeltsin's rule by decree and October 1993 stand-off. Presidential elections 1996 and the rise of oligarchs. "Who is mister Putin?" Popular and unpopular reforms of the first and second Putin administrations. Putin's political reforms and return to authoritarianism. Medvedev and the economic crisis in Russia. "The Return of the King", "stolen elections" and 2011-2012 protests. Puzzle of Russian political trajectory: struggle between president and legislature in the 1990s, with regions idle. Building power vertical in 2000s and embedding regional political machines.

What is Russian politics made of? Presidentialism.

First electoral cycle and the birth trauma of Russian politics. The 1992-1993 stalemate and the new Constitution. How big a role does president have in Russia? Presidentialism and government instability in late 1990s. Economic crisis and the Primakov left-wing government. 1999 impeachment attempt.

Parties, media and opposition.

Political parties in Russia. Where do they come from? Fate of the CPSU and the new communist party. What role did media play in Russian politics in the late 1990s? Oligarchs and the television.

Spiders in the box. Can federalism be a check on the all-mighty president?

"Federalism by default": Soviet matryoshka federalism and chocolate-bar break-up after the Soviet collapse. The all-mighty governors and gubernatorial elections in 1990s. Regional machines and the Fatherland –All Russia party in 1999. Adverse effects of federalism on party formation. Defederalization of Russia and building governors into the power vertical.

Corruption, bureaucracy and state building in Russia

Russia's surprisingly weak state. What is state weakness? State autonomy, state capacity and corruption. Is Russian state stronger under Putin than under Yeltsin? Descending to the local level and seeking societal explanations. Blat. Political machines.

Institutions and the rule of law in Russia. Law and courts

Formal and informal institutions in Russian politics. Are courts another victim of the regime? How is law made in Russia?

Business and state in Russia. Oil and resource curse. Oligarchs

Is Russia swinging between state-capture and business-capture? How big is the Big Oil in Russian politics? What is resource curse and why is it a curse?

Protests and color revolutions.

Who are the Russian protesters and what do they want? Why revolutions happen elsewhere but not in Russia?

Societal, economic and political sources of autocratic resilience in Russia. A normal country?

Do Russians support their political regime? What are the major correlates of this support? Is it economy? Is it stability? Is it law and order? Are Russians autocratic by nature? What does regime do to stay? How popular are regime policies?

Samples of assignments and examination questions

1. Was Perestroika a successful policy? Why?
2. What were the reasons and the outcome of Constitutional crisis in 1993?
3. Presidential elections in 1996 and 2000.
4. Reforms of the first and second Putin's administration.
5. Presidential succession in 2008 and in 2011-12.
6. Building power vertical in Russia.
7. Checks and balances in Russian Constitution.
8. President-parliament relations in 1990s and 2000s.
9. Political parties in Russia.
10. Role of the media in Russia from 1990s to nowadays.
11. Federal institutions in Russia.
12. Redistributive politics and Russian regions.
13. Russian governors and federal party system.
14. State autonomy and state capacity in Russia.
15. Patrimonial traditions against discipline of bureaucracy.
16. Machine politics in Russia.
17. Formal and informal institutions in Russian politics.
18. Rule of law in Russia.
19. The role of Constitutional Court in Russia.
20. Big oil in Russian economy.
21. The role of oligarchs in 1990s and after.
22. People's support of power in Russia.

Annex 2

Assessment Methods and Criteria

Assessment Methods

Types of Assessment	Forms of Assessment	Modules			
		1	2	3	4

Formative Assessment	Test	*			
	Essay				
	Report/Presentation				
	Project				
	In-class Participation				
	Other (write appropriate control forms for the course)				
Interim Assessment (if required)	Assignment (e.g. written assignment)				
Summative Assessment	Exam				

Assessment Criteria

In-class Participation

Grades	Assessment Criteria
«Excellent» (8-10)	A critical analysis which demonstrates original thinking and shows strong evidence of preparatory research and broad background knowledge.
«Good» (6-7)	Shows strong evidence of preparatory research and broad background knowledge. Excellent oral expression.
«Satisfactory» (4-5)	Satisfactory overall, showing a fair knowledge of the topic, a reasonable standard of expression. Some hesitation in answering follow-up questions and/or gives incomplete or partly irrelevant answers.
«Fail» (0-2)	Limited evidence of relevant knowledge and an attempt to address the topic. Unable to offer relevant information or opinion in answer to follow-up questions.

Project Work

Grades	Assessment Criteria
«Excellent» (8-10)	A well-structured, analytical presentation of project work. Shows strong evidence and broad background knowledge. In a group presentation all members contribute equally and each contribution builds on the previous one clearly; Answers to follow-up questions reveal a good range and depth of knowledge beyond that covered in the presentation and show confidence in discussion.
«Good» (6-7)	Clearly organized analysis, showing evidence of a good overall knowledge of the topic. The presenter of the project work highlights key points and responds to follow up questions appropriately. In group presentations there is evidence that the group has met to discuss the topic and is presenting the results of that discussion, in an order previously agreed.
«Satisfactory» (4-5)	Takes a very basic approach to the topic, using broadly appropriate material but lacking focus. The presentation of project work is largely unstructured, and some points are irrelevant to the topic.

	Knowledge of the topic is limited and there may be evidence of basic misunderstanding. In a group presentation, most of the work is done by one or two students and the individual contributions do not add up.
«Fail» (0-2)	Fails to demonstrate any appropriate knowledge.

Written Assignments (Essay, Test/Quiz, Written Exam, etc.)

Grades	Assessment Criteria
«Excellent» (8-10)	Has a clear argument, which addresses the topic and responds effectively to all aspects of the task. Fully satisfies all the requirements of the task; rare minor errors occur;
«Good» (6-7)	Responds to most aspects of the topic with a clear, explicit argument. Covers the requirements of the task; may produce occasional errors.
«Satisfactory» (4-5)	Generally addresses the task; the format may be inappropriate in places; display little evidence of (depending on the assignment): independent thought and critical judgement include a partial superficial coverage of the key issues, lack critical analysis, may make frequent errors.
«Fail» (0-2)	Fails to demonstrate any appropriate knowledge.

Recommendations for students about organization of self-study

Self-study is organized in order to:

- Systemize theoretical knowledge received at lectures;
- Extending theoretical knowledge;
- Learn how to use legal, regulatory, referential information and professional literature;
- Development of cognitive and soft skills: creativity and self-sufficiency;
- Enhancing critical thinking and personal development skills;
- Development of research skills;
- Obtaining skills of efficient independent professional activities.

Self-study, which is not included into a course syllabus, but aimed at extending knowledge about the subject, is up to the student's own initiative. A teacher recommends relevant resources for self-study, defines relevant methods for self-study and demonstrates students' past experiences. Tasks for self-study and its content can vary depending on individual characteristics of a student. Self-study can be arranged individually or in groups both offline and online depending on the objectives, topics and difficulty degree. Assessment of self-study is made in the framework of teaching load for seminars or tests.

In order to show the outcomes of self-study it is recommended:

- Make a plan for 3-5 presentation which will include topic, how the self-study was organized, main conclusions and suggestions and its rationale and importance.
- Supply the presentation with illustrations. It should be defined by an actual task of the teacher.

Special conditions for organization of learning process for students with special needs

The following types of comprehension of learning information (including e-learning and distance learning) can be offered to students with disabilities (by their written request) in accordance with their individual psychophysical characteristics:

- 1) *for persons with vision disorders:* a printed text in enlarged font; an electronic document; audios (transferring of learning materials into the audio); an individual advising with an assistance of a sign language interpreter; individual assignments and advising.
- 2) *for persons with hearing disorders:* a printed text; an electronic document; video materials with subtitles; an individual advising with an assistance of a sign language interpreter; individual assignments and advising.
- 3) *for persons with muscle-skeleton disorders:* a printed text; an electronic document; audios; individual assignments and advising.