1. Content of the course:

The post-Soviet/Eurasian space is a great natural experiment for social sciences. Studying its transformation makes possible to explore a wide range of topical issues: democratic transitions and authoritarian backlashes, state-building and nation-building, the transformation of single political institutions and political regimes in general. The fundamental question of the course is what social sciences can learn from post-Soviet states transformation?

This course is an introduction to the topic of post-Soviet/Eurasian studies. The central scope of the course is newly-emerged polities and its transformation from different angles. Social aspect uncovers the idea of ‘homo soveticus’ as a unique phenomenon. It helps to contemplate how social engineering of a new type of human beings was implemented and affected a wide range of social attitudes. Economic aspect deals with approaches to the transitional economy. These topic embraces not only members of the former USSR but covers all post-communist regimes that followed different economic tracks switching from a planned economy to free market. And the last but not least aspect touches political processes. It unearths the causes of transformation the former USSR republics into a variety of political regimes from full democracies (Baltic states) to hybrids and tough autocracies (Turkmenistan and Karimov’s Uzbekistan). This provides a good basis for profound comparative studies. The course gives firm ground to elaborate on the topic of post-Soviet/Eurasian studies and to amplify perspectives.

2.1. Learning objectives

The main objective of the course is to acquaint students with the main social, economic and political processes which occur in the countries of the former USSR from the moment of its collapse to the present day. Transformation of the post-Soviet countries shows how newly-emerged political entities develop.

The present course is designed:

• to make students familiar with the major concepts, theories, and debates in post-Soviet/Eurasian studies from the angle of fundamental social, economic and political approaches;
to develop and/or foster the ability to critically review published research outcomes, which are based on contemporary research and global best practices in post-Soviet/Eurasian studies;

to cultivate students' ability to prepare reports in the proper academic form on topics related to ongoing research activities.

2.2. Learning outcomes

Completing the course students will be able to operate basic ideas, concepts and theories concerning post-Soviet space. The listeners of the course will beef up their knowledge about post-Soviet space in particular and about fundamental social, economic and political spheres in general. The students will be disposed to propose their original views and contribute to the developing discussions on the topic. They will have enough for introducing their knowledge and presenting own arguments in oral and written forms.

3. Content of the course:

Theme 1. Introduction. Crisis of expertise in the 2000s. Why the post-Soviet area is urgent again?

The general crisis of science in post-Soviet countries. Brain drain. Military and secret services expertise vs expertise for civil and business purposes. The non-prestigious area for the scholars and disregard of the decision-makers. The ‘first calls’ of the emerging expertise crisis in Russia: the ‘Rose’ revolution in Georgia, the ‘Orange’ revolution in Ukraine and other cases. The failure of the policy towards Ukraine in 2013-onwards. New challenges for Russia: Armenia, Kazakhstan, Belarus. The post-soviet area as the core of the greater Eurasia. The upcoming prospects: integration projects (Western one vs Chinese one).

Theme 2. the USSR collapse and post-Soviet states emergence: state-building and nation-building.


Theme 3. Separatist movements.

Soviet roots of separatist movements. Administrative and territorial structure of the USSR. Socialist federalism and nations self-determination. Causes of separatism. Why some movements were successful (Transnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh/ Artsakh, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Luhansk and Donetsk republics), and some not (Karakalpakstan, Gagauzia, Ichkeria)? Are new separatism movements looming? Non-recognized and partly-recognized polities: strategies of survival and approaches to break the deadlock (comparing with Northern Cyprus, Kosovo, Somaliland and the others)?

Theme 4. Democratization, hybridity and autocracies.

Part 1.

Theme 5. Economies in transition.


Theme 7. Church and power in post-Soviet countries.


Theme 8. Post-Soviet/ Eurasian integration project.

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS): more dead than alive? Macroregional initiatives: the Eastern Partnership of the EU, the conception ‘Europe from Lisbon to Vladivostok’. Post-Soviet states and ‘One road, one belt’. EU vs China. Pluses and minuses of these integration projects. Local initiatives: EAC, GUAM, OCAC, Baltic Assembly, Union State of Russia and Belarus.

4. Grading:

Total grade = 40% * grade for the activity at the seminars + 30% * grade for the presentation + 30% * grade for the essay

Activity at the seminars implies regular participation in discussions of the topics and home reading.

Public presentation should be delivered at the seminar and should concern one of the topics.

Essay criteria are the follows:
In the case of plagiarism, the essay is not assessed, and the student scores ‘0’ as a final grade for this component
- up to 15% of borrowings are acceptable in case of proper citing;
- incorrect citing is not the excuse

Text composition
- logic, coherence, cohesion;
- ideas should be delivered clearly;
- statements should be backed up with arguments and empirical data;
- alternative positions should be provided

Usage of the course materials and literature
- it is not mandatory to agree with all views and opinions given in the recommended literature; criticising it is still an appropriate and promising option

Correct usage of terms and notions
- key terms should be defined clearly

Correct and accurate editing and presentation of the text
- academic style of writing;
- compliance with grammar rules;
- correct footnotes, references and links;
- correct bibliography and list of sources

Author’s personal contribution to the analysis, expression own views and original ideas

5. Reading List:

5.1. Basic literature

| № | Title |


5.2. Additional literature

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5.3. Professional data bases, information reference systems, internet resources (electronic educational resources)

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<tr>
<td>Online resources</td>
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6. Material and Technical Support

Classrooms for lectures are equipped to allow for presentations of textual descriptions, figures, and data corresponding to the program for the course and include:

- PC with Internet access (operating system, office software, antivirus software);
- Multimedia projectors with remote control (at the classrooms).