

## PS 1342 Government and Politics of Eastern Europe

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The aim of this course is to introduce students to the government and politics of post-communist Eastern Europe, and to the developments countries in the region underwent after the regime change in 1989. East European states experienced major institutional changes, such as the transition from single-party totalitarian rule to multiparty democracy; they developed interests groups, and adopted free market economies. All these changes have made substantial impact on their political development. Some have democratized more than others, some have joined major international entities such as NATO and the European Union, others have not. During this course students will learn about basic concepts within the electoral and party systems subfield of comparative politics, and how these are applied to the transition countries of Eastern Europe. We will study different political institutions and explore the roles they play in the political lives of these countries. We will study theories, or how scholars expect things to work, and also applied research, how things actually work. A major question that will guide our exploration through the entire course is “do institutions matter?”, and if so, “how?”.

Students will be introduced to various theories of institutional choice, and will have the opportunity to learn how to do political science research. A main aspect of the study of political science is something called “positive political theory”, or modelling causality. We will read theoretical work where scholars look at a given puzzle and propose an explanation, i.e. their theory, and we will also look at works which empirically test such theories, i.e. show whether and how the theories work in reality. Students will also be introduced to the mechanics of the research process and be expected to write a research paper for the course.

### *Course requirements:*

All students are expected to attend class and come prepared by having done the assigned readings. Attendance and participation will count as 10% of your grade. In addition, students are required to complete 2 short written assignments, a midterm exam, and a 10-12 page final paper. Everyone will make a 10 min presentation of their paper, which will count as a 3<sup>rd</sup> assignment. Students will also have an opportunity for extra credit worth 100 points, which will contribute 5% to your total grade.

### *Required books:*

- Communism and Its Collapse, by Stephen White, Routledge, 2001
- Developments in Central and East European Politics, edited by Stephen White, Judy Batt, and Paul G. Lewis, edition 4, Duke University Press, 2007

*Other books to be used through the course (can be obtained at the library):*

- Institutional Design in Post-Communist Societies, edited by Jon Elster, Claus Offe, and Ulrich K. Preuss, Cambridge University Press 1998.
- Analyzing Politics, by Kenneth Shepsle and Mark Bonchek, Norton, 1997.
- Patterns of Democracy, by Arend Lijphart, Yale University Press, 1999.

Jan 8 Intro + syllabus

Extra Credit – Prof. Venelin Ganev’s talk, Jan 13, 3:00-4:00pm, Room 4130, WWPH - (write a 2 page response to the talk to get the credit)

Jan 15 What Was Communism?

Readings: Communism and Its Collapse, chapters 1-2  
Developments in Central and East European Politics, chapters 1-2

Jan 22 Political Change in Eastern Europe – how did it come about?

Readings: Communism and Its Collapse, chapters 5-6  
Institutional Design in Post-Communist Societies, chapters 1-2

Jan 29 Transition in Practice: *Goodbye Lenin (Film)*

Readings: no readings for this week, assignment 1 handed out

Feb 5 What is the Research Process? and Executive Leadership

Readings: The Research Process, chapter 1  
Analyzing Politics, chapters 1-2  
Developments in Central and East European Politics, chapter 8

\*\*\* *Assignment 1 due (movie response) 10% \*\*\**

Feb 12 Parliamentary Democracy and Representation

Readings: Developments in Central and East European Politics, chapter 9  
Analyzing Politics, chapter 16  
Alonso and Ruiz-Ruffino. 2007. “Political representation and ethnic conflict in new democracies”, EJPR, 46: 237–267

- Feb 19 Electoral Systems: How Do They Work, What Do They Do?
- Readings: Patterns of Democracy, Arend Lijphart, 1999, YUP, chapter 8  
 Developments in Central and East European Politics, chapter 10  
 Kostadinova, Tatyana. 2002. "Do mixed electoral systems matter? A cross-national analysis of their effects in Eastern Europe", Electoral Studies, 21, p.23-34.
- Feb 26 Party Systems and Party Competition
- Readings: Developments in Central and East European Politics, chapter 11  
 Benoit, Ken. 2002. "The Endogeneity Problem in Electoral Studies: A Critical Re-Examination of Duverger's Law", Electoral Studies 21, p.35-46.
- \*\*\* Paper proposals due 10% \*\*\*
- March 5 *Midterm Exam (20 multiple choice; 2 short answer)* 25%
- March 12 No Class – Spring Break
- March 19 Electoral and Party Systems: Applied Research
- Readings: Moser, RG (1999). "Electoral Systems and the Number of Parties in Postcommunist States". *World politics*, 51 (3)  
[http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/world\\_politics/v051/51.3moser.html](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/world_politics/v051/51.3moser.html)
- March 26 Citizens and Politics: What Affects Electoral Participation?
- Readings: Developments in Central and East European Politics, chapter 12  
 Kostadinova, Tatiana. 2003. "Voter Turnout Dynamics in Post-Communist Europe", EJPR, 42, 741-759.
- April 2 Central and Eastern Europe and the EU
- Readings: Developments in Central and East European Politics, chapter 17  
 Taggart, Paul and Aleks Szczerbiak. 2004. "Contemporary Euroscepticism in the party systems of

the European Union candidate states of Central and Eastern Europe”, EJPR, 43, p.1-27.

April 9 *Presentations* 10%

April 16 Conclude *Presentations cntd.,*

\*\*\* *Final papers due 35 %* \*\*\*