

Russian Politics

Science Po Bordeaux

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Professor Sarah Wilson Sokhey
sarah.sokhey@colorado.edu
www.sarahwilsonsokhey.com

Course Description

In this course, we will discuss Russian politics, covering the major economic and political trends from the 1990s to the present. We will talk about the challenges of the post-communist transition to the market, corruption and the oligarchs, the law and political institutions in Russia, Putin, the Putin era, public opinion, and what to pay attention to in 2024 when Russia will have its' next presidential election.

Course Schedule

Lecture 1: Why study Russian politics? What is Russia's role in the world today?

Suggested Reading: Marlene Laruelle and Jean Radvanyi. 2016. *La Russie entre peurs et défis*, Paris: Armand Colin, and Marlene Laruelle, "Putin the Geographer," *Riddle*, October 31, 2018.

Lecture 2: Post-Communist Transitions—Democracy & the Market

Suggested Reading: Chris Miller, *Putinomics: Power and Money in Resurgent Russia*, Chapter 1: Introduction & Chapter 2: State-Building, University of North Carolina Press, 2018.

Lecture 3: Corruption & the Oligarchs

Suggested Reading: 1) Mikhail Khodorkovsky chapter in David Hoffman, *The Oligarchs: Wealth and Power in the New Russia*, Public Affairs, 2003, and 2) Boris Berezovsky chapter in David Hoffman, *The Oligarchs: Wealth and Power in the New Russia*, Public Affairs, 2003.

Lecture 4: The Law & Political Institutions in Russia

Suggested Reading: 1) Boris Yeltsin's memoirs, Chapter 7, "A Rough Patch," 2) Masha Lipman, "Twenty-five years after the Failed [1991] Soviet Coup," *The New Yorker*, August 19, 2016, 3) Alexander Kolosnichenko, "How October 1993 led to President Putin," October 3, 2013, and 4) Igor Klymakin and Lilia Shevtsova, "The Tactical Origins of Russia's New Political Institutions," 1999 (2-page excerpt from *This Omnipotent and Impotent Government: The Evolution of the Political System in Post-Communist Russia*, Moscow: Carnegie Moscow Center)

Lecture 5: Putin & the Putin Era

Suggested Reading: 1) Peter Rutland. 2000. "Putin's Rise to Power," *Post-Soviet Affairs*, and 2) Masha Gessen, "The Weight of Words: One of Russia's most famous writers confronts the state," *The New Yorker*, October 6, 2014. An article about the modern Russian writer, Lyudmila Ulitskaya. Available here: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/10/06/weight-words>

Lecture 6: Public Opinion in Russia

Suggested Reading: 1) Timothy Frye, Scott Gehlbach, Kyle Marquardt, Ora John Reuter. "Is Putin's Popularity Real?" *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 33, Issue 1, 2017, and 2) Samuel Greene and Graeme Robertson, "Vladimir Putin's approval ratings are dropping. This is why," *Washington Post*, July 19, 2018, and 3) Viatcheslav Morozov, Xymena Kurowska, and Anatoly Reshtenikov, "Why Russia's Strategic Deception is Popular: The Cultural Appeal of the Trickster," PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo No. 554, December 2018.

Lecture 7: What will happen in 2024?!?

Lecture 8

Written Exam