This seminar uses the cases of eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union to study the problem of political transitions – in this case, away from one-party socialist regimes. Focus is on the politics of and political outcomes in this transition, but it will use literature from many disciplines (political science, anthropology, sociology, economics, in particular) because the regime change since 1989-91 is taking place in all aspects of these societies – economic system, political system, social order and relations, culture, and even sovereignty, with more than half of the 29 states (and counting) entirely new. Although the focus is on a specific geographical region, the questions we will examine are not area-bound; thus, comparisons with countries from other areas will be welcome in the seminar discussion. Many aspects of this transition are also taking place in the remaining communist-party governed states (China, Cuba, Vietnam especially), moreover, and comparisons with their trajectories will also be welcome, although time prevents us from examining them directly.

The empirical literature on this process is now substantial and rich for theorizing. At first situated in the comparative context of “democratization,” the countries are increasingly being studied for their own characteristics and for the diversity of paths and outcomes that calls for explanation. What kinds of states are actually being created? How best should one characterize the process of change – a transition? a wholesale transformation? a revolution? What are the characteristics and consequences of a simultaneous political (constitutional, regime type, bases of power) and economic (in both property regime and criteria of value and distribution) transformation? Are class structures of a new type being created? Is it a variety of capitalism, or something else? Why is ethnonationalism so prominent a feature of the political landscape? Why is there so little protest, given the dramatic collapse of living standards and end to welfare guarantees? Why is there so much diversity if the countries share common systemic starting points?

Requirements:
Your grade will be based on 2 requirements:
(1) active participation of the readings during seminar – in general, and in the particular seminar session for which you will take responsibility
(2) a research paper, due May 25 at 5:00 pm (sooner is fine), either by email to me or in my office. Pose a question about transition that can be answered empirically in some way. A typed, double-spaced, statement of the topic, explicit research question, and initial bibliography is due, in class (or by email that day) on March 27.

N.B.: Please note that I do not accept incompletes (except in the rare case of a genuine emergency or serious illness, which we would obviously discuss).

Guidance:
(1) Choose one of the sessions in which you are most interested and which covers the questions (and we hope, theories) within which you think you will write your research paper. Sign up, on February 6, to present the arguments of the readings for that seminar session, a critical analysis, and a set of questions for the rest of the seminar discussion.

(2) Research paper: the key choice is to identify a question you want to answer, and to identify that question as early as possible. There are no restrictions at all on methods, including the selection and number of countries. I am hoping that you will use this choice to develop an expertise on this topic for the rest of the seminar.

There is no page length, only a requirement that it be typed, double-space, and PROOFREAD, before you hand it in.

Readings:

Articles are primarily from standard journals so that you can retrieve them through the library’s online access to journals. In the few cases where they are not, they have been placed on electronic reserves for the course.

Books have been placed on library reserve. The following books can be bought on the GC virtual bookstore because we will be reading substantial portions. You may choose to purchase them or read them from the library.

Gil Eyal, Ivan Szelenyi, and Eleanor Townsley, Making Capitalism Without Capitalists: Class Formation and Elite Struggles in Post-Communist Central Europe (Verso: 1998)

**Recommended:**


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**Seminar Schedule**

**January 30:** Introduction to the Seminar

**Recommended Reading:**

The following are classic works on the Soviet system and are highly recommended in preparation for the first exam, any dissertation on the area, and future teaching:

Merle Fainsod and Jerry Hough, *How the Soviet Union is Governed* (1979) (This is Jerry Hough’s revision of Merle Fainsod’s classic, which provoked extensive debate because Hough argued here and elsewhere that there was political pluralism in the USSR, if one actually looked at how the system worked instead of coming at it from Western prejudices and assumptions.)

Alexander Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective* (1962)

Samuel Huntington and Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Political Power: USA/USSR* (1963)


Mark Field, ed., *Social Consequences of Modernization in Communist Societies* (1976)
February 6: Theorizing Transition: the issues


Their debate continued in the following articles; if you are interested in the debate and particularly its methodological points, read these as well:


**Reading Further:**


February 13:  

**Regime breakdown and change: explaining the “surprise”**


Mark Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*, chapters 1-2, 8-9 (pp. 1-102, 385-459). [read the rest of the book if you can]


David Stark and Laszlo Bruszt, *Postsocialist Pathways*, chapter 1 (pp. 15-48).


*Reading Further:*


February 27:  

**Sovereignty: Why, and Why War or Not?**


Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War*, chs. 7, 8, 10 (pp. 199-272, 333-373).


Mark Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*, chapters 6-7 (pp. 271-384).
Katherine Verdery, What Was Socialism and What Comes Next?, Part II, chapters 3-4 (if you have time): pages 61-103.
David Laitin, Identity in Formation, chapters 1, 4, and 12 (pp. 3-35, 85-104, 325-345).

Reading Further:
Maria Bakalova, “The Violent Nationalism that did not Happen: The Case of Bulgarian Turks in Early 1990,” ms.
Vladimir Volkov, Violent Entrepreneurs: the use of force in the making of Russian Capitalism (Cornell 2002).

March 6: The Democratic “Latecomers”

Reading Further:
Adrienne Lynn Edgar, Tribal Nation: The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan (PUP 2004)
Pauline Jones Luong, ed., The Transformation of Central Asia: States and Societies from Soviet Rule to Independence (Cornell 2004)
James Sherr, “Ukraine’s Scissors: between Internal Weakness and External Dependence,” IFRI Russian Program, Visions no. 9 (March 2006)
A. Wilson, Ukraine’s Orange Revolution (Yale 2005)

March 13: The Political Economy of Transition

David Stark and Laszlo Bruszt, Postsocialist Pathways, chapters 2, 3, and 7 (pp. 51-105, 188-201).
Gil Eyal, Ivan Szelenyi, and Caroline Townsly, Making Capitalism without Capitalists: The New Ruling Elites in Eastern Europe (Verso 1998), pages 1-16, 82-158. (You may also wish to read the review symposium on paths of postcommunist capitalism in the American Journal of Sociology 106:4 [January 2001], especially the reply of Eyal, et al. to Michael Burawoy, pp. 1121-28, that of Stark and Bruszt to Burawoy, pp. 1129-37, and of Michael Kennedy on both books, pp. 1138-51.)

Reading Further:
**Research Topic Due: March 27**

**March 27: Privatization**


**Reading Further:**


Liviu Chelcea, “Ancestors, Domestic Groups, and the Socialist State,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*

L. King, D. Stuckler, and P. Hamm, “Rapid Large Scale Privatization and the Postcommunist Mortality Crisis,” ms.


**April 17: Democratization**

Timothy Colton, * Transitional Citizens: Voters and What Influences Them in the New Russia* (Harvard 2000), preface and chapters 1, 2, and 7 (pp. vii-xi, 1-68, 211-
228). [I recommend his helpful discussions of methodology, including the appendix].

Herbert Kitschelt, et al., Post-Communist Party Systems, chapters 1-2 and 11 (pp. 19-92, 383-407); read chapters 7-10 (pp. 223-380) if you have time.


David Laitin, Identity in Formation, chapters 5-6 (pp. 105-198).


Reading Further:


April 24:  The Social Bases of Politics

Susan Gal and Gail Kligman, The Politics of Gender after Socialism
Gil Eyal, Ivan Szelenyi, and Eleanor Townsly, Making Capitalism without Capitalists (Verso 1998), conclusion (pp. 159-193).
Lynne Haney, “‘But We Are Still Mothers’: Gender, the State, and the Construction of Need in Postsocialist Hungary,” in Burawoy and Verdery, eds., Uncertain Transition, pp. 151-188.

Reading Further:
Zoltan Barany and Robert G. Moser, eds., Ethnic Politics after Communism (Cornell 2005)
Adriana Petryna, Life Exposed: Biological Citizens after Chernobyl (Princeton 2002)


S. Crowley, Hot Coal, Cold Steel: Russian and Ukrainian Workers from the End of the Soviet Union to the Post-Communist Transformation (University of Michigan 1997)


Victoria Sperling, Organizing Women in Contemporary Russia (CUP: 1999)


May 1: Institutions


Reading Further:


Kathryn Stoner-Weiss, Resisting the State: Reform and Retrenchment in Post-Soviet Russia (CUP 2006).

Kathryn Stoner-Weiss, Local Heroes (Princeton 1997).
Pauline Jones Luong, Institutional Change and Political Continuity in Post-Soviet Central Asia: Power, Perceptions, and Pacts (Cambridge UP 2002),
David M. Olson and Philip Norton, eds., The New Parliaments of Central and Eastern Europe (Frank Cass 1996)
Valerie Bunce, Subversive Institutions: The Design and the Destruction of Socialism and the State (Cambridge UP 1999)

May 8: Explaining political outcomes: the international influence


Reading further:
Heather Grabbe, The EU’s Transformative Power: Europeanization through Conditionality in Central and Eastern Europe (Palgrave 2006)


Elena A. Iankova, *Eastern European Capitalism in the Making* (chapter on IMF)


Ronald Linden, ed., *Norms and Nannies* (Rowman and Littlefield 2002)

May 15: The Problem of Regime Classification – What is Russia?

Timothy Colton and Stephen Holmes, eds., The State after Communism: Governance in the New Russia (Rowman and Littlefield 2006) (chapters by Colton, Easter, Cook, Frye, and Remington)

Michael McFaul, Russia’s Unfinished Revolution, chapter 10 (pp 338-371).


Reading Further:


Fiona Hill, Energy Empire: Oil, Gas, and Russia’s Revival (Brookings 2004)


S. Fish, Democracy Derailed in Russia


Peter Reddaway and Dmitri Glinski, The Tragedy of Russia’s Reforms: Market Bolshevism against Democracy (2001)

May 22: Meeting to discuss research papers (?)

Good sources of information on post-communist (“transition”) countries:

Anthropology of East Europe Review
(https://condor.depaul.edu/~rotenbe/aeer/issues.html)

Beyond Transition: the Newsletter about Reforming Economies
(www.worldbank.org/transitionnewsletter)

Central Asian Survey
Communist and Post-Communist Studies
Development and Transition (www.developmentandtransition.net)

East European Constitutional Review (www.nyu.law.edu/eecr)

Eastern European Politics and Societies
Economics of Transition
Europe-Asia Studies
Ethnopolitics

FAST (Swiss Peace Foundation)

Nations in Transit (annual publication by Freedom House)
Post-Soviet Affairs
Problems of Post-Communism
Slavic Review
Transitions (RFE/RL online journal)
Johnson’s List (for Russia in particular)
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) publications (online) such as the Early Warning briefs
United Nations Economic Commission on Europe (www.unece.org)
Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR), online reports for the Balkans (until 2005), Central Asia, and the Caucasus