Government and Politics of Russia

GOVT 338 001 Spring 2015
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CLASS MEETS: MW 10:30-11:45 AM IN 105
OFFICE HOURS: after class or by appointment
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GOAL: To provide an advanced, critical and comprehensive view of Russian government and politics today. To understand Russia, its institutions, policies, and people, we will use a wide range of explanatory approaches borrowed from political science, sociology, political psychology, behavioral economics, and cultural studies. Very few countries alter as dramatically as Russia has done over the past 25 years. It has changed as a state, nation, and military power. It transformed its entire political and economic system. Almost everything in Russia these days is “work in progress” marked by sudden accelerations, slowdowns, turnarounds, and paradoxes. We will try to understand them in the dynamic context of global politics and the US’ foreign policy.

REQUIREMENTS: The final grade will be based on four exams and the paper. The exams—February 12, March 19, April 9, and April 30—will consist of multiple-choice and short-answer questions. The text and lectures will be covered about equally. See the study guides posted for each exam.

DEADLINES: You must take each scheduled test. If you miss a test for a legitimate reason, schedule a make-up exam with professor or TA (3 points could be deducted from the score). You have to submit your term paper before or on April 28, class time. The final grades will be assigned based on the points accumulated for the four exams and the written work.


GRADING. Tests 1, 2, and 3 are worth 25 points (maximum) each. Test 4 is 15 points (max.).

Paper is 10 points (max). To receive a(n): A+ you must earn at least 97 points, A you must earn at least 93 points, A- you must earn at least 90 points, B+ you must earn at least 88 points, B you must earn at least 83 points, B- you must earn at least 80 points, C+ you must earn at least 78 points, C you must earn at least 73 points, C- you must earn at least 70 points, D you must earn at least 60 points. An A+ grade may not be earned by extra credit work.

Test 1-3 grading: 24-25 points=A; 23 points=A-; 22-21=B; 20=B-; 18-19=C; 17=C-; 13-16=D. Test 4 Grading: 14-15 points=A; 13=A-; 12=B; 11=B-; 10=C; 9=C-; 7-8=D. One point is earned—if answered correctly—for two multiple choice questions; one point is given for each short-answer question.

Extra Credit: Up to 5 points can be earned and added to your total score for an optional research assignment. See “Assignments” on Blackboard for details.

All course-related notes, slides, and reading assignments are available on Blackboard. Follow this course on Facebook. Link: Russian Government and Politics on Facebook

Student members of the George Mason University must follow the provisions of the Honor Code. They pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work. All work submitted to fulfill course requirements is to be solely the product of the individual(s) whose name(s) appears on it. Except with permission of the instructor, no recourse is to be had to projects, papers, lab reports or any other written work previously prepared by another student, and except with permission of the instructor no paper or work of any type submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of another course may be used a second time to satisfy a requirement of any course in the Department. No assistance is to be obtained from commercial organizations, which sell or lease research help or written papers. With respect to all written work as appropriate, proper footnotes and attribution are required. If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. The instructor for this course reserves the right to enter a failing grade to any student found guilty of an honor code violation.


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