

# PSCI 3208

## Week 1

- Reform and Russia
  - 1905-1917
    - Constitutional democracy + agricultural reform
  - 1987-92
    - Economic decentralism + political pluralism
  - 2000-2012
    - National state + economic modernization
- What happened to reform in Russia
  - 1917
    - Interrupted by October Revolution
  - 1991
    - Interrupted by collapse of Soviet Union
  - 2012
    - The idea of reform has faded; replaced by concepts of stability, national destiny, and evolution.
- Trends in Russian Politics
  - Remnants of centralized communist system remain even after the Soviet Union's collapse

## Week 2 THE SOVIET SYSTEM

- Landmarks of Change
  - 1987-91
    - Perestroika reforms of Mikhail Gorbachev
  - 1991
    - Collapse of the Soviet Union
  - 1992
    - Russian Federation became an independent state
- Federalism (in Soviet Union)
  - 15 republics
- Governance
  - Soviets
  - The Communist Party
  - Nomenklatura
- The impact of Stalinism
  1. Centrally planned economy: a step beyond nationalization
    - The plans/gasplan
    - Role of the Communist party
    - Government ministries

### Central Planning 2

- The collectivization of Agriculture

- Kolkhozy - collective farms
- Sovkhoz - state farms
- Kulaks
  
- Problems in the Soviet Union
  - The system's successes
  - Weaknesses/inefficiencies of the CPE
  - Political obstacles to reform
  - Dissent
  - Social malaise (unhappiness)
- Soviet Reform Experiences
  - Khrushchev - attempted liberalization and decentralization
  - Brezhnev - stagnation
  - Andropov - discipline
  - Gorbachev - the major reforms after a slow beginning
- Legacies of Soviet Regime
  - Legitimacy of social welfare system/social stability
  - Informal nature of system of government, despite appearance of strong institutions
  - State control over the economy
  - Ideology as anchor/promise of progress

## Week 3 PERESTROIKA

- Political Reforms
  - Glasnost
  - New Political Thinking
  - Perestroika
- Economic reforms
  - Cooperatives
  - Foreign Trade
  - Law on State Enterprise
    - Reduced role of central planning
    - Cost accounting
- Political Reform and Democratization
  - Stage 1: New Soviet Parliament
  - Multicandidate elections for Supreme Soviet
  - New post of President of Soviet Union
- Initial Successes of Perestroika
  - Increased popular interest in politics, and public debate
  - Active media
  - Creation of a nation-wide parliamentary reformist bloc (inter-regional group)
- Problems accompanying Perestroika
  - Economic confusion - Political opposition - CPSU divisions - weakened state - ethnic and independence demands - economic confusion - etc.
- Democratization stage 2
  - Lithuania

- RSFSR (Russian) elections : Boris Yeltsin
- Union Treaty
- August 1991 Coup Attempt
  - Attempt pavlov and Yazov
  - After the coup's failure, Yeltsin banned Communist Party in Russia
  - Prepared radical market reforms for January 1992 - shock therapy
- The collapse of the Soviet Union
  - August coup
  - Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania leave august 1991
  - Ukraine - december 1991
  - Commonwealth of Independent States
  - Shock therapy

#### Economic Reforms

Gorbachev	Yeltsin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Socialism</li> <li>● Public ownership of property</li> <li>● Decentralization of state planning</li> <li>● Subsidized prices</li> <li>● Cooperatives</li> <li>● Foreign Trade</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Capitalism</li> <li>● Rapid transition to market: shock therapy</li> <li>● Privatization, including agriculture</li> <li>● Price liberalization</li> <li>● Allow individual ownership of property</li> <li>● Further foreign trade liberalization</li> </ul>

### Week 4 THE SOVIET COLLAPSE: GROUP WORK DISCUSSION

### Week 5 POLITICS OF ECONOMIC REFORM

- The Russian Federation 1992 Reform
  - The disintegration of Soviet governance
  - The ban of the Communist party
  - The commonwealth of independent states
  - Conflicts on the periphery of the former Soviet Union - including within Russia, in Chechnya
  - Russian joined international organizations like IMF
- Shock therapy
  - Rapid transition to a market economy
  - A method of economic recovery
- Privatization
  - When state-owned property is turned over to private ownership
  - Small businesses, housing, larger industries, farms, utilities
- Politics of shock therapy
  - Supreme Soviet elected in 1990
  - Yeltsin granted special decree powers for economic reform

- Members of Supreme Soviet began to oppose therapy in 1992
- Political problems 92-3
  - End of price subsidies, currency reforms -> rapid price increases, loss of savings for population
  - Privatization - how to do it fairly?
  - Executive-legislative conflict: over legislation, budget, and ultimately the constitution
  - Central Bank and hyperinflation
- The constitutional crisis
  - September-October 1992 crisis: Yeltsin vs Supreme Soviet opposition
  - Dec 1993 - elections for new Parliament (Federal Assembly)
  - Dec 1999 - adoption of Russian constitution
  - The legalization of the Communist Party (KPRF)
  - January 1994 amnesty of alleged participants in August 1991 coup
  - December 1993 elections - pro-Yeltsin reformers won only a minority of seats in Duma
- The institutional basis of market reform
  - Laws on property rights contracts, bankruptcies
  - Transparent privatization process
  - Functioning tax system
  - Independent institutions : courts, Central Bank, oversight
  - A social safety net
- Shock therapy - what happened
  1. Insider privatization and a lack of a level playing field allowed some firms to become wealthy, but small businesses faced serious obstacles
  2. Many unprofitable businesses survived; many citizens faced under-employment, wage arrears, and sharp drop in living standards
  3. State policies - Privatization, currency reform, social safety net - were incomplete
  4. State remained involved in much of the economy
  5. Budgetary crisis persisted due to recession, barter, poor, tax collection
- Russian Constitution 1993
  - Semi-presidential system - executive includes President and PM
  - Presidential powers are especially strong - sometimes called superpresidentialism
  - Federal Assembly also strong on paper consists of State Duma/Federation Council
  - High Courts: Supreme Court and Constitutional Court
  - Federalism

## Week 6 DEMOCRATIZATION AND SOCIETY; PUTIN'S ACCESSION TO POWER

### Key Principles of the Constitution

- Federalism

- The federal principle as inherited from Soviet Union
- 89 subjects
- Republics
- Krays
- Oblasts
- Cities
- Republics/regions with some autonomy and elected bodies

#### Federal Assembly (Parliament)

- State Duma: lower house elected, 50% by regional districts, 50% by proportional representation (party list)
- Federation Council: Upper house of parliament (Senate)
  - 2 from each republic
- Problems in the Federal system 1990s
  - Budgetary system and tax system
  - Politics of opposition in the regions
  - Bilateral treaty process, beginning with Tatarastan Treaty 1997
- Parliamentary elections in Russia 93-2003
  - State Duma - lower house of parliament
  - In order to register, parties must have a quota of signatures to show nation-wide support
  - Parties needed 5% of vote to be represented in Duma (7% as of 2007)
- Presidential elections
  - Every 4 yrs, 1996-2012; as of 2012 its every 6 years
  - Direct elections
  - Second round run-off
  - Two-term limit
- Political Parties
  - Pro-government
    - Russia's Choice
    - Our Home is Russia
    - Unity
  - Left opposition - communist party
  - Centrist - women of Russia; Fatherland all-russia OVR
  - Nationalist - Liberal Democratic Party of Russia
  - Independent - Yabloko
- Civil Society in 1990s
  - Fragmentation of pro-democracy movement, such as Democratic Russia
  - Pensioners and veterans emerged as politically mobilized groups

- Social movements including the Soilders' Mothers; the women's movement; local groups such as independent trade unions and environmental groups
- The Political Landscape 1990s
  - With no consistent affiliation with any political party, President Yeltsin lacked a stable power base or communication channel with the Duma and the regional governments
  - A fragmented and polarized parliament passed much legislation, but stalled on key issue such as tax reform and land reform
  - For various reasons, moderate, centrist and independent parties had difficulty gaining seats
  - President Yeltsin's reform plans lost coherence, and slowed down by late 1990s
  - Opposition to Yeltsin intensified; political discourse shifted to nationalism, critiquing the West, corruption and 'oligarchs' for a worsening economy.
- The Who lost Russia debate
  - Stiglitz
  - Role of the West/International organizations in Russian Economic Reform
  - Was policy change emphasized over rule of law? Was privatization emphasized over social welfare?

## Week 7 CLASS DISCUSSION: The Relationship of Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy

## Week 8 REFORMS UNDER PUTIN'S PRESIDENCY I

- Context of Putin's Ascent to Power
  - Economy: August 1998 financial crisis
  - PResident Yeltsin and the Duma: crisis over Prime Minister appointments, impeachment
  - Renewed conflict in Chechnya and Dagestan; terrorist incidents, 199
  - Backlash against the West and NATO expansion 1998-9
- Putin's ascent to power
  - August 1999: Putin became Prime Minister
  - October 1999: Second Chechen War
  - Creation of Unity Party/1999 дума elections
  - Dec 1999 became Acting President upon Yeltsin's resignation
  - March 2000 Elected President

### Goals of Putin's reforms 2000-2008

1. To unify and strengthen the state
  - a. Attempts to regain control of Chechnya
  - b. State administration and law
  - c. Reforms of the federal system
  - d. Strengthen presidential authority

2. To facilitate the passage of legislation and improve relations with Federal Assembly
  - a. Development and expansion of United Russia party
  - b. Reforms to encourage greater party discipline and more stable parties
  - c. Electoral reforms
3. More 'orderly' and more cohesive forms of social participation
  - a. Formation of Public Chamber - increased role of appointed bodies of social consultation
  - b. New difficulties for opposition parties, independent media, and social movements
4. To restore economic growth and international prestige
  - a. The oligarchs
  - b. Major economic reforms: land reform, tax reform
  - c. Increased state control over oil and gas
5. To develop national patriotism and international prestige
  - a. The national anthem
  - b. The projection of presidential power
  - c. A more assertive foreign policy

- Early Impacts of Putin's Reforms
  - Improvements in economic development and overall living standards (world prices for oil and gas played a role)
  - Putin's popularity; dominance of United Russia in elections/in regional governments
  - Concerns about independent media, fair political competition
- Putin's reforms of Federalism 2000-2005
  - Federal districts
  - Reform of Federation Council
  - Increased presidential powers to remove governors and mayors
  - Social welfare spending
- Social Plans and Policies under Putin/Medvedev
  - Pronatalism - measures to encourage births and discourage abortions, promote 'family values'.
  - Putonomics - attributes Putin's longevity to a particular social contract

#### Controversies in Putin's First Two Terms

- The Khodorkovsky Affair
  - Khodorkovsky arrested in 2003, spent 10 year in prison, now in exile
  - Followed the controversies over media oligarchs Gusinsky and Berezovsky
  - Questions about the Russian economy and the independence of businesses
  - Statu capture
- Post-Beslan Reforms

- Beslan, North Ossetia - a terrorist hostage-taking incident took place at an elementary school in September 2004.
- Governors no longer elected
- Abolition of direct regional representation in Duma
- Chechnya
  - Beslan, 2004: continuing concerns about terrorism and instability in North Caucasus
  - International concern over human rights issues in Chechnya
  - Chechenization - de facto autonomy of Chechnya under Presidents Kadyrov
- The coloured Revolutions
  - Georgia, “Rose Revolution”, 2003
  - Ukraine 2004 “Orange Revolution”
- De-Democratization in Russia
  - Question over the fairness of elections and the conditions for oppositions and independent media

## Week 9 REFORMS UNDER PUTIN’S PRESIDENCY II: DEMOCRATIC REVERSAL

- Why is Putin popular?
  - Populist leadership: use of TV, image-making, macho persona (Sperling)
  - Appeals to patriotism and national pride
  - Putinomics - a combination of cautious economic policies, social policies that benefit older voters, and sporadic boosts in public spending. But after the 2008 recession, Putinomics have been at risk.
  - However, Putin’s popularity are not necessarily why he has been in power for so long. Factors like:
    - Corruption and patronage
    - Pressure on leader, businesspeople
    - Democratic reversal
- Democratic Reversal
  - Formal changes (reform legislation)
  - Informal measures (pressure or intimidation)
  - Symbolic actions (political discourse and messages sent to the public politicians)
- Stage 1 Decline in independent centres of power
  - Media

- Oligarchs
  - Regional governors
  - Opposition political parties
  - NGOs
- Relevant reforms, 2004-2008
    - Elected regional governors replaced by appointed governors (can be removed by the President)
    - Electoral reforms to Duma, 2005:
      - Move to full PR system
      - Threshold raised from 5-7%
      - Enabled United Russia majority in the Duma while disadvantaging small independent parties
      - Later reforms gave United Russia an advantage in regional assembly elections
- Election trends 2000-2007
    - Increasing role of United Russia
    - Atomization/fragmentation of opposition - especially liberal and moderate parties (such as Yabloko)
    - Concerns from international monitoring bodies (OSCE, Council of Europe)
- Administrative Resource
    - A term used in Russia to describe a perceived situation in which governing elites use state power, including employer-employee relationships, in election campaigns
- The ascendance of a Quasi-IDEology
    - Theory of Sovereign Democracy
    - Posited that a wild democracy was responsible for the economic chaos and decline of the 1990s
    - Prioritizes economic growth and improved living standards; goals over process of government
    - Democracy is interpreted as a moral government ruling with approval of the majority
- Critiques of “Sovereign Democracy”
    - Puts less emphasis on minority rights or interest groups, compared to liberal democracy
    - Assumption that opposition movements, and interest groups, weaken the state
    - Critiques of Russian democratization usually point to Russia’s own constitution, not ‘western models’
    - Assumes that centralized government will lead to improved governance and economic growth. Economic crisis since 2008 challenged this assumption

- Dmitry Medvedev 2008-2012
  - Tandem politics
  - Go Russia
  - Modernization
  
- Reforms under Medvedev
  - Nov 2008 addresses to the Federal Assembly already called for more active state encouragement of democracy
  - Electoral reform to enable parties with 5% to gain some representation in Duma and regional legislatures and to simplify registration for elections
  - Increase in openness of parliamentary/government proceedings via digital technology
  - Requiring government officials to declare incomes only, and other transparency-oriented reforms
  
- Did Medvedev encourage democracy?
  - His address claimed that modernization required free discussion and fair competition.
  - Argued that vote-counting inaccuracies, difficult party registration requirements, and excessively high voter threshold should not be permitted to impede democracy
  - Regional elections should meet the same standards as national elections
  
- His Political reforms
  - Electoral reforms
  - Restoration of elected governors
  - Constitutional change to increase president's term (to 6) and length time between Duma elections to 5
  
- A "hybrid regime"
  - Remains which is more authoritarian than democratic, but which has democratic elements (especially elections with limited competition)
- Duma 2011 elections
  - United Russia lost its majority of popular vote, retained a slight majority of seats
  - The Bolotnaia movement protesting alleged electoral irregularities
  - Concessions made by Medvedev on political liberalization
  - Emergence of new generation of opposition leaders like Navalny
- Putin's return 2012. Stage 3 of Democratic Reversal
  - Tougher laws adopted on unauthorized political demonstrations
  - Law on foreign agents - affected NGOs with foreign funding
  - Laws limiting LGBT speech and adoption of Russian children by same-sex couples

- Elections
  - Many workers feel pressured to vote by employers
  - Position of regional governments creates incentives for manipulating election results
  - Some evidence suggests that Putin is losing support in big cities.

## Week 10 CIVIL SOCIETY AND OPPOSITION SINCE 2012

- The Soviet Communist Legacy
  - The Communist Party controlled all legal social activity; until Goerbachev's perestroika, independent social movements were at risk
  - As an official atheist state, churches and faiths were also limited in their ability to function
  - Russian Orthodox Church resumed an active role and became a powerful institution in the 90s
- Social movements 90s
  - Human rights movement: Memorial
  - The soldiers' mothers movement: response to Chechnya war
  - Independent political parties:
    - Communist party
    - Liberal parties: Yabloko
    - Nationalist parties and movements
- Social movements under Putin
  - Cooperation - Public chamber
  - Marginalization- especially of independent liberal activity
  - Mobilization - of public towards nationalism
- The coloured revolutions
  - Rose Georgia 2003
  - Orange Ukraine 2004
- The monetization protests in Russia 2005
  - Protested reforms to social benefit systems that would replace in-kind benefits with cash benefits
  - Protests occurred across Russia, in towns and small cities
  - Did not involve the intelligentsia, but the sorts of groups who tended to support Putin or to be relatively uninvolved in politics: pensioners, veterans, people of social assistance, students
- Impact on Russia 2006-2011
  - Establishment of Nashi
  - Russian nationalist organizations: Ruskii Marsh
  - New law on non-governmental organizations 2006
  - New protests-oriented movements formed: Strategy 31, Khimki Forest environmental movement, solidarity
  - Navalny and the anti-corruption movement
- Putin's nationalism
  - Critique of US influence and claim to protect Russian outside of Russia : contributed to annexation of Crimea from Ukraine 2014

- Policies to promote pronationalism and traditional values; laws against LGBT propaganda 2013
- Russian patriotism and role of Orthodox Church
- IS Russia's Activism Joyful?
  - Formation of civil movements especially among the young in Navalny movements
  - Navalny has organized a borad-based social network, crowdfunding and a set of alternative media
  - Navalny March 19:the most important thing is the formation of an organized social movement

## Week 11 RUSSIA AND THE WEST: Discussion session only

## Week 12 FOREIGN POLICY AND THE STATE

Themes in Russian Foreign Policy since 1991

1. Rejection of Soviet ideology - beginning with perestroika
  - a. New political thinking - struggle between communism and capitalism no longer the ethos of foreign policy
  - b. Withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan
  - c. Disbandment of the Warsaw pact
  - d. Pursuit of friendly relations with the west and embrace of market capitalism under boris yeltsin
- Russia's FP under Andrei Kozyrev 91-91
  - Recognized independence of Baltic states, ukraine and belarus
  - Commonwealth of independent states
  - Soviet union international rights and obligations (UN security council)
  - Seeking western/international assistance with design as well as funding of market reform
2. An insecurity about loss of control over territory
  - a. Collapse of the soviet union - Russia los tinfluence over other formal soviet republics
  - b. Concerns about conflits on the russian norder:Chechnya, Georgia, Moldova
  - c. NAtO and eU expnasion into Eastern Europe
3. A search for a new sense of nationhood and national interest
  - a. Liberal democracy: stongly cricized by communist party, extreme nationalism but a new elite resisted the return of socialism
  - b. Putin embraced statism, moderate nationakism, orthodz church - but democracy and pro-western orientation continued to have adherents
4. A preoccupation with domestic politics and domestic stability
  - a. By early 200s strong focus on overocming debt balancing budget and building a more controlled state
  - b. For putin these includes steps towards chechen speartists, oligraphs and regional governors

- c. But Putin seemed sensitive to critique that he was undermining democracy and to critiques that his view of maintaining Russian sovereignty included pressure among neighbouring states (ex Ukraine)
- These four themes reinforced each other
  - A clearer sense of Russian sovereignty might have contributed to a stronger sense of security vis-a-vis neighbouring countries
  - A greater tolerance of democrats and communists at home might have contributed to the calm dialogue about Russia's relations with the West
  - The greatest prosperity of Russia 2004-8 could have made Putin more confident about Russia's ability to coexist with coloured revolutions
  - As Putin's power increased, Russia's foreign policy has become more confrontational
- Impact of Russia's foreign policy 90s could be perceived as successful
  - Break up of the USSR relatively peaceful, conflicts did not break up
  - Control over USSR's nuclear weapons remained stable
  - Improved relations with US and NATO
  - Inclusion in G8 Council of Europe, NATO-Russia Council, WTO
- But foreign policy tended to focus on Russia's setbacks 90s
  - Failure of CICA to gain consensus, influence
  - August 98 financial crisis
  - NATO expansion
  - International concerns over Chechnya from UN and Council of Europe
- The frozen conflicts
  - Russia was recognized internationally as having a role to play in many conflicts but there were no resolutions:
    - Abkhazia and South Ossetia
    - Transnistria Republic (Moldova)
    - Nagorno-Karabakh (Armenia)
- 2000 nwar: Russian FP became reactive
  - Domestic backlash against Western influence in Russian economy, former Soviet republics
  - Perceptions that Russia was being left out of important international decisions
  - 2007 Munich conference: criticism of US
  - Over time, became more oriented towards Euroasian and non-Western spaces
- Turning points in Russian foreign policy
  - The coloured revolutions
    - Alleged Western efforts to influence politics
  - Russo-Georgian War, 2008
    - Conflict with Georgian territory
    - Idea that Russia had national interests in territory of neighbouring states
  - Arab Spring and Syria conflict

- Russia expressed concern over instability and regime change in general
- Support for Bashar al-Assad's regime
  
- Ukraine/Crimea 2014
  - Euromaidan
  - Russia's annexation of Crimea led to sanctions from US, Canada and EU
- The US elections
  - Role of Russian, if any, is unclear
- Since 2012 Russia advocated for conservatism in politics
- Since 2016 Russian foreign policy seems adrift - no clear allies, no clear enemies