

SUNY GENESEO

PLSC 225-01
Fall 2009 Semester
T Th, 2:00 – 3:15 pm
Welles 128

Dr. Robert Goeckel
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245-5459
Office Hours:
T Th: 11-11:30 am &
3:15–5:00 pm

PLSC 225 POLITICS OF EAST EUROPE

- I. Course Description. The course will examine the politics of the governments in East Central Europe and the Balkans. Formerly characterized by rigid, authoritarian political systems in the pre-World War II phase, succeeded by the structures of Communism after the war, these political systems have always been pressured internationally by their larger neighbors. Since 1989 they have been undergoing processes of dramatic change as they seek to introduce democratic structures and market economies, as well as integrate into the Western international architecture represented by NATO and the EU. Yet these changes in the “new Europe” are occurring in the context of historical and ethnic/national conflicts that are of heightened salience due to the removal of the veneer of Communist uniformity. The transitions have thus been characterized by varying amounts of political instability as a result. Is the “new Europe” converging with the “old Europe”, or does it retain a distinct identity based on its historical legacy as well as interests? Are the Balkans synchronizing with East Central Europe, or destined to remain less developed and destabilizing to the European project?

The course will first survey the historical inheritance of these systems from the pre-Communist period. In this context the continuities of geography and political culture will be addressed. Following a comparison of the Communist takeovers and the Stalinization process, the course will describe the structures and institutions of the Communist period. Cases of attempts at major change in the region prior to 1985 will be reviewed. The 1989 East European revolutions and post-Communist developments will be analyzed and compared. Special attention will be paid to political disintegration in the former Yugoslavia and the factors explaining this change in political community.

Course Goals: Students will acquire descriptive and analytical background on a major region of the world, will master important political concepts and be able to compare different political systems, and will analyze the sources and processes of political and economic change. They will improve their skills in oral and written expression. They will learn to draw out the policy implications from their analysis.

- II. Required Books. The following books are available at the SunDance Bookstore:
Joseph Rothschild and Nancy Wingfield, Return to Diversity (4th ed.)
Sharon Wolchik and Jane Curry, Central and East European Politics
Elizabeth Pond, Endgame in the Balkans

Other articles and selected current events articles from the New York Times may be assigned also. Students are encouraged to follow events in the region by reading the New York Times (available in

Milne Library, the College Union, and online), using the internet media sites (such as RFE Daily Report), or watching the Newshour on PBS.

III. Office Hours T Th 11:00-11:30 am and 3:15-5pm or by appointment

IV. Course Requirements. Final grades will be based on the following factors:

- Class participation 20%
- Midterm examination 20%
- Presentation 15%
- Paper (10-12 pages) 15%
- Final Examination 30%

Students will make presentations as a group. Each group will serve as consultants, analyzing the post-Communist development of a particular political system or region in Eastern Europe. Aspects to be analyzed include the political, economic, and social development, as well as its opportunities and posture in foreign policy and its relations with the US. Each group will be expected to submit an outline of its presentation. Papers are due on the date of presentation.

QUIZZES - announced and unannounced - may be given and used in calculation of the participation component. In addition, participation consists of raising and answering questions, comments and interpretations regarding the class material. It is difficult to achieve good performance on the participation component if one does not attend class regularly.

MAKE-UP EXAMS OR INCOMPLETES will be given only for convincingly-documented medical or personal reasons. Make-up exams will take the form of oral exams. The fact that your ride home leaves earlier than class is not considered sufficient grounds for a make-up exam.

LATE PAPERS WILL BE PENALIZED ½ GRADE PER DAY. LATE PAPERS MUST BE SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY TO THE PROFESSOR IN ORDER TO RECEIVE PROPER CREDIT.

PLAGIARISM will be handled with the technological means available to the College, including submission to turnitin.com, and will result in grade reductions and possibly disciplinary action. Pursuant to this, students will create a user account with turnitin.com and submit their papers electronically to turnitin.com for originality analysis.

PROTOCOL MATTERS. Students should turn off cellphones before each class begins. Students with disabilities and seeking accommodation based on this must present a letter from the Office of Disability Services at the beginning of the semester.

V. Course Outline

R=Rothschild/Wingfield W/C=Wolchik/Curry Pond=Pond

9/1 I. Why study Eastern Europe?

9/1-9/10 II. The Context

1. Geographical and Cultural Background W/C pp. 3-13
2. Development in Interwar Period, R Ch. 1
3. The Effect of WWII, R Ch. 2

9/10 GEOGRAPHY QUIZ

9/15-9/22 III. The Communist System

1. Takeovers and Makeovers, R Ch. 3

2. Political Structures and Processes under Communism, W/C pp. 13-22

9/24-10/6

IV. Cases of Political Instability and Change

1. Titoist Deviation and Destalinization, R Ch 4
2. June 1953 Uprising, the Wall, and Ostpolitik in East Germany
3. The Hungarian Revolution of 1956, R Ch 5 (pp. 118-133)
4. The Prague Spring of 1968, R Ch. 5 (pp. 133-152)
5. Solidarity in Poland (1980-81), R Ch. 6 (pp. 153-162)

10/8 MIDTERM

10/15-10/29

V. Reform and Revolution W/C 22-25

1. Neostalinist Regimes and the Soviet Context,
2. Reformist Responses: Hungary, R Ch. 6 (pp. 162-165) and Ch. 7 (pp. 191-195)
3. Reformist Responses: Poland, R Ch 7 (pp. 181-187)
4. Fall of the Wall in East Germany
5. Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia, R Ch. 6 (pp. 165-168) and Ch. 7 (pp. 187-191)
6. Revolution in Bulgaria: R Ch. 6 (pp. 168-173) and Ch. 7 (pp. 200-202)
7. Violent Revolution in Romania and Albania: R Ch. 7 (pp. 195-200 and 202-205)
8. Interpreting the Revolutions, R Ch. 6 (pp. 173-180)

11/3-11/10

VI. Issues of Post-Communist Development, R. Ch. 8 (pp. 242-243), NYT "Hurdles in Eastern Europe Thwart Restitution Claims"

1. Political Transition, W/C Ch. 2
2. Economic Transition, W/C Ch. 3, NYT "Currency Issues Weigh on Eastern Europe," "A Crisis is Separating Eastern Europe's Strong from its Weak"
3. Ethnic and Social Issues, W/C Ch. 4, 5, NYT "In Poland, A Jewish Revival Thrives, Minus Jews"
4. Foreign Policy Issues, W/C Ch. 6,7, NYT "Once its Rationale, Collective Defense Poses New Challenge to a Larger NATO"

11/12-11/19

VII. Disintegration and Change in Yugoslavia, R. Ch. 7 (pp. 205-209)

1. Legacy of Titoism, W/C Ch. 13 (pp. 281-288)
2. Authoritarian Nationalism under Milosevic
3. Wars of Yugoslav Succession, Pond Ch. 1; W/C Ch. 13 (pp. 288-293)
4. Postwar Transitions, W/C Ch. 13 (pp. 293-315), R. Ch. 8 (pp. 234-242)

11/19-12/10

VIII. Student Group Presentations on Post-Communist Transitions

1. Poland, W/C Ch. 8, R. Ch. 8 (pp. 211-216), NYT "For Poland, A Milestone in choice for European Post"
2. Czech Republic, W/C Ch. 9, R. Ch. 8 (pp. 216-221), NYT "Battle Royal Lingers over Head of State for Czech State of Mind," "With Fall of Government, a Big Moment for Czechs Seems to Shrink"
3. Slovakia, W/C Ch. 9, R. Ch. 8 (pp. 216-221)
4. Hungary, W/C Ch. 10, R. Ch. 8 (221-225), NYT "Anxiety Rules Hungary's Economy and Politics"
5. Romania, W/C Ch. 14, R. Ch. 8 (pp. 225-229), Pond Ch. 3, NYT "EU Report Find Bulgaria and Romania Beset with Problems," "IMF Announces Financial Rescue Plan for Romania"

6. Bulgaria, W/C Ch. 13, R. Ch. 8 (pp. 229-232), Pond Ch. 2, NYT “Socialist Coalition Loses in Bulgarian Elections”
7. Albania, R. Ch. 8 (pp. 232-234), Pond Ch. 8
8. Slovenia
9. Croatia, Pond Ch. 5
10. Bosnia, Pond Ch. 6, NYT “13 Years After Peace Accord, Fear Grows of New Ethnic Conflict in Divided Bosnia”
11. Macedonia, Pond Ch. 7
12. Serbia/Montenegro, Pond Ch. 9, NYT “Pro-West Incumbent Wins Serbia’s Presidential Runoff,” “Serbia, Still Seething, Recalls NATO Airstrikes of 1999”
13. Kosovo, Pond Ch. 4, NYT “US and Much of Europe Recognize Kosovo, Which Draws Expected Rejection”

12/10 IX. Conclusion: Generalizations, Prospects for the Future, Implications for US Policy, W/C Ch. 16, Pond Chps. 10-11, NYT “Eastern Europe is Uneasy over US Ties with Russia”

FINAL EXAM TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22 12-3 PM

Students are responsible for avoiding three exams on one date by use of prudent scheduling.