

RUSS 4362
Cross-listed with POLS 4362

RUSSIA and THE SUCCESSOR STATES TODAY
(Introduction to Russian and Eurasian Studies)

Department of Modern Languages

Spring 2014
MWF 9-9:50am



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Office hours: MWF 10-11am

Добро пожаловать! Ласкаво просимо!

Laipni lūdzam! [გეგთლოცებთ და მადლობას გვთქვამთ!](#) and Xush kelibsiz! All of that is "Welcome!", our way of introducing you to one of UTA's few truly multi-disciplinary courses. Within the confines of this class we intend to introduce you to Russia, the land, history, peoples, and cultures that make up this unique part of the world. Russia Today is a survey class that is designed to excite your imagination through lectures, scholarly research, films, music, and interactions with policy-makers and observers of Russia and Eurasia.

This course is the core element of UTA's Russian/Eurasian studies program. It touches upon Russian life, politics, culture, history, and other key features as well as introduces the student to the regions that surround Russia. Not only is the study of all things Russian exciting, it is considered "critical" in terms of modern-day policy; therefore, we expect to help you develop a high level of understanding and discourse beyond what might otherwise be considered introductory. We do this with a core group of three regular instructors, as well as numerous

guest lecturers especially toward the end of the semester. Thus, our "learning objectives" include a broad understanding of the primary means to analyze a part of the world whose significance extends from world politics and trade, to literature, philosophical interpretation, and scientific endeavor. Within this course you will be presented with perspectives designed to take you, the student, well beyond most narrowly-defined subjects. This course will assist you in determining basic cause and effect in terms of social, economic, and political issues relating to a major element of global civilization. Moreover, it will expose you to contradictions, predispositions, and conflict which are essential to the shaping of national and regional identities.

Most courses can only draw from the experiences and learning of one professor. In this course you actually get three: Dr. Mark Cichock (Political Science); Dr. Lonny Harrison (MODL, Russian); and Dr. Pete Smith (Russian/Distance Education). As your instructors we will be hosting you, lecturing to you, and discussing with you over the next several months. In addition, you will benefit from the professional and personal knowledge of other speakers at UTA, as well as from United States governmental agencies, the business sector, and Russia itself. These speakers in particular make this a unique educational experience. We expect that it will be one of the few you will truly remember upon graduating from UTA.

Readings: There is no specific text for this course due to the very broad subject matter. The class is instead very heavy on the use of blogs including one that we provide for the class (<http://blog.uta.edu/russiatoday/>). There are some excellent sources of information and blogs especially that we will be telling you about daily. That, of course, means we expect to use them and their information for the tests so paying attention to these is very important. As well, each written exam will also include current events items and analytical themes found in these sources.

Students are strongly encouraged to read the following blogs/news sites on a regular basis:

<http://www.robertamsterdam.com>
http://www.rferl.org/archive/The_Power_Vertical/latest/
<http://www.eurasianet.org/>

...as well as these recommended background books:

Suzanne Massie, *Land of the Firebird: The Beauty of Old Russia* (Heart Tree Press, 1998);
 Orlando Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia* (Allen Lane/Penguin Press, 2002)

Students are especially encouraged to use the Maps Collection of the University of Texas at Austin to visualize the areas of which we speak. The site is <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/index.html>.

Testing/Evaluation: There are three exams for this course, or what we refer to as Opportunities to Excel (OTE's); this includes the final exam. OTEs combine short answer essays, identifications, fill in the blanks, and multiple-choice questions. In addition, all students will do a research or translation assignment (see below). Each counts as 25% of your total grade and *all must be taken/completed* to receive a final grade for the course. Students are responsible for being on time for exams and in handing in their assignments on time. Make-up exams are only possible with the consent of the individual instructor and must conform to university policy for testing.

5% of your final grade will be determined by the quality of your engaged, articulate participation in classroom and online discussions. Nearly every class period offers the opportunity to ask questions for clarification, raise viewpoints or events from class readings, and to engage the class

leaders in principled discussion. The 4362 class blog will also offer an opportunity for this to take place in written format: 6-8 times over the course of the semester, key topical questions or themes will be posted, and you as an active learner in this class will be asked to write, summarize arguments or viewpoints, persuade, and bring quality participation to the online discussion.

Students are responsible for contacting their respective professor for the details of their assignments. Russian language students will do a research paper using Russian sources assigned by Dr. Harrison. POLS students will do research papers with their subjects decided in consultation with Dr. Cichock. Each professor determines his own standards for quantity, quality, and grading of assignments. All three instructors contribute to the writing of the exams.

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory and counts for a portion of the course grade.

Unexcused absences and late assignments will result in grade deductions at the discretion of the instructor. In the case of unavoidable absences, please notify the instructor *before* the class missed. It is your responsibility to keep up with any work missed as a result of your absence. This course relies heavily on guest speakers so students are expected to show up on time so that speakers may get on with their material/discussions and not be interrupted by late arrivals.



Drop Policy: Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance.** Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://www.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

Americans with Disabilities Act: The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

Academic Integrity: Students enrolled in this course are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.

I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents' Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University.

Student Support Services: UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to resources@uta.edu, or view the information at www.uta.edu/resources.

Electronic Communication: UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this

account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

Student Feedback Survey: At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

Final Review Week: A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

Course Schedule

A more detailed schedule and instructions will be available as the course begins. Scheduling may change due to the availability of guest speakers.

As the instructor for this course, I reserve the right to adjust this schedule in any way that serves the educational needs of the students enrolled in the course. –LH

Unit One: Defining Russia and Eurasia

Jan. 13: Introduction	Cichock, Harrison, and Smith
Jan. 15: Pre-course survey, map quiz	Cichock and Smith
Jan. 17 & 22: Geography (physical, pol., and eco.)	Smith and Cichock
Jan. 24: Language and Diversity (Cyrillic alphabet)	Smith and Harrison
Jan. 27: Demographic Issues	Smith
Jan. 29, 31 & Feb. 3: History	Smith, Harrison, and Cichock

Feb. 5, 7, & 10: Politics in Russia Cichock

Feb. 12: "Raspad": The Breakup of the Soviet Union Smith

Feb. 14: OTE #1

Unit Two: Cultural and Political Change

Feb. 17, 19 & 21: Russian and Soviet literature Harrison

Feb. 24 & 26: Tolstoy and Dostoevsky Harrison

Feb. 28, March 3 & 5: The Media Smith and Cichock

March 7: How Russians live Cichock, Harrison, and Smith

March 10-14: **Spring Break!!!**

March 17 & 19: The Caucasus: Russia's volatile frontier Cichock

March 21: Poland, the Balkans Cichock & Harrison

March 24, 26 & 28: Central Asia Cichock & Smith

March 31: OTE #2

Unit Three: Modern Russia

April 2: Philosophy Dr. Ken Williford

April 4 & 7: Ideology (Marxism, capitalism) Cichock and Harrison

April 14 & 16: Religion in Russia/Eurasia Cichock

April 18: Explaining Orthodoxy TBA

April 21: Teleconference with U.S. Department of State (room location TBA)

April 23: Teleconference with RFE/RL staff, live from Prague (room location TBA)

April 25: Modern Russian Popular Culture Smith and UT-Austin guest lecturer
(Projects due April 25)

April 28 & 30: Russian Film Harrison

May 2: Future Scenarios for Russia and Eurasia Cichock, Harrison, and Smith

Final OTE, TBA