

# **POLS/RUSS 4362: RUSSIA TODAY**

## **An Introduction to Russian and Eurasian Studies**

Spring 2016, 09 University Hall

Добро пожаловать! Ласкаво просимо! Laipni lūdzam!

ვეთელ ოცლს თქვენი მოზრდა ნება ! and Xush  
kelibsiz!

All of that is “welcome” to UTA's core course in Russian and Eurasian studies program. You are now in one of the most unique and truly multi-disciplinary courses offered at this University. In here we will introduce you to Russia in the contexts of history, language, politics, culture, film, and virtually everything you can think about that pertains to the world's largest country and one of its most important cultures. This is a survey class designed to stimulate your inner-Russian (or Kazakh, Cossack, Chechen, Korean, or Tatar) sensibilities. We don't have all the answers to what makes Russia so very interesting but we promise you that this will not be boring.

**This** is also about what many term a "critical" area of study. Russia is a country, language, and culture of global importance and understanding. It requires specialized, multi-disciplined instruction and toward that end you get a unique situation: a core group of three regular instructors, as well as numerous guest lecturers who will provide you their expertise regarding the meaning of modern-day Russia. 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. You will be introduced to tsars, commissars, composers, every-day people, climates, economics, and a host of subjects that you would normally need three semesters or more to cover. In this class you will learn of scientific endeavors, analytical techniques, and how opinion about the world's largest country fits into the mosaic of **global studies**. Russia is here revealed for all its contradictions, predispositions, and curiosities which make for one of the most interesting area studies to be found in the college experience.

**Russia** and Eurasia are just too big effectively handled by any one professor. So we have combined the expertise of three UTA instructors: Dr. Mark Cichock (Political Science); Dr. Lonny Harrison (Modern Languages); and Dr. Pete Smith (Russian/Distance Education). As your teachers we will guide you along paths unexpected, unexplored, or maybe already familiar to some of you. In addition, we will introduce you to professionals from the field of Russian studies by means of in-class video conferences with U.S. government agencies, business sector specialists, and commentators from within Russia itself. We expect that your reward for participation will be an experience that you will remember long after graduating from UTA.

**Readings:** There is no specific text for this course due to the very broad subject matter. The class relies very heavily on the use of blogs including one that we provide for the class (<http://blog.uta.edu/russiatoday/>). We regularly post articles, course materials, and notices to **Blackboard** ([elearn.uta.edu](http://elearn.uta.edu)) so students are encouraged to pay attention to these announcements. All exams will include current events items and analytical themes found in these sources, as well as materials posted to Blackboard.

All students are required to read the following blogs on a daily basis:

[http://www.rferl.org/archive/The\\_Power\\_Vertical/latest/](http://www.rferl.org/archive/The_Power_Vertical/latest/)

<http://www.robertamsterdam.com>

Maps: Students are directed to the Maps Collection website of the University of Texas at Austin. 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. POLS research projects are due on April 25.

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; while POLS students will also do research papers. Subjects for papers are decided individually with Drs. Cichock and Harrison. Each professor determines his own standards for quantity, quality, and grading of assignments, and all three instructors contribute to the writing of the exams.

**Attendance:** This course relies on many guest speakers who voluntarily give their time for your learning so class attendance is required. 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. Attendance is taken into consideration in terms of border line grades.

**Academic Honesty:** Students are expected to familiarize themselves with UTA's standards for academic honesty and integrity. Information on academic honesty/dishonesty is available from the Office of Student Affairs.

**Accommodations:** UTA provides accommodations for most academic circumstances whether these are disabilities, tutoring, or illnesses. In all cases, students are

responsible for providing the necessary paperwork and must speak to the professors about their needs. All personal accommodations, as well as grades, are kept in the strictest confidence so that students may feel free to pursue their studies without interference or invasions of privacy. There are no make-up exams

### **Office Hours/Access to Instructors:**

Dr. Cichock: Office, 221 Hammond Hall; Office hours: MWF 10am-10:50am, and by appointment. Phone: 817-272-2388. E-mail: [cichock@uta.edu](mailto:cichock@uta.edu).

Dr. Harrison: Office, 221 Hammond Hall; Office hours: MWF 2:00-3:00pm, and by appointment; Phone: 817-272-9506. E-mail: [lonnyharrison@uta.edu](mailto:lonnyharrison@uta.edu).

Dr. Smith: Office, 300 Nedderman Hall; Office hours: MWF, 11am-12pm and by appointment. Phone: 817-272-5727. E-mail: [pete.smith@g.uta.edu](mailto:pete.smith@g.uta.edu).



## Calendar

(please note that scheduling may change due to the availability of speakers)

## **Unit One: Defining Russia and Eurasia**

Jan. 20 : Introduction Cichock, Harrison, and Smith

Jan. 22, 25: Geography (physical, pol., and eco.) Cichock, Smith, & Milson  
Pre-course survey, including map quiz (posted on **Blackboard**)

Jan. 27, 29: Language and Diversity Smith and Harrison  
Learning tools for the Cyrillic alphabet on Blackboard

Feb. 1: Demographic Issues Smith

Feb. 3, 5, 8, & 10: History Smith, Harrison, and Cichock

Feb. 12 & 15: Ideology (Marxism, capitalism, authoritarianism) Cichock

Feb. 17: Russian Philosophy Dr. Kenneth Williford  
(UTA Philosophy Dept.)

**Feb. 19: OTE #1**

## **Unit Two: The Contexts of Culture, Politics, and Change**

Feb. 22, 24, & 26 Russian and Soviet literature Harrison

Feb. 29 & March 2: "Raspad," or The Breakup of the USSR Smith

March 4, 7, & 9: Politics in Russia Cichock

**(March 13-19 is Spring Break!!)**

March 21 & 23: The Media Smith

March 25: Religion in Russia and Eurasia Cichock

March 28, 30, & April 1: Russian Film Harrison

April 1: OTE #2 (also last day to drop!!!)

## **Unit Three: Russia Seen Through Other Eyes**

April 4 & 6: The Baltics Cichock



April 8 & 11: Modern Ukraine	Cichock
April 13 & 15: Film	Harrison
April 18: Modern Central Asia	Cichock
April 20: The Caucasus	Cichock & Smith
April 22: Study Abroad Experiences	Student speakers
April 25 & 27: Teleconferences (Room TBA)	Radio Free Europe; others TBA
April 29: Architecture in Russia	guest lecturer TBA
May 2 & 4: Youth Culture in Russia	Smith and other guest lecturer
May 6: Summarizing Russia (course review)	Cichock, Harrison, and Smith
<b>May 11: Final OTE, 8-9:15am.</b>	

## **Regulations and Guidelines**

### **Attendance**

Attendance is mandatory and counts for a significant 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.

**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://wweb.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](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

**Title IX:** The University of Texas at Arlington is committed to upholding U.S. Federal Law “Title IX” such that no member of the UT Arlington community shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. For more information, visit [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX)

**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](mailto:resources@uta.edu), or view the information at [www.uta.edu/resources](http://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.

**Emergency Exit Procedures:** Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, which is located at the side of the room. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.