

Fall 2019

Tues/Thurs 3:00-4:15pm

Krug Hall 210

Office Hours: Tues. 1:30-2:30pm, Thurs 4:30-5pm,
or by appointment.**Professor Johanna Bockman**

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jbockman@gmu.edu**GLOA 400/HIST 388/RUSS 354/SOCI 321: Post-Soviet Life around the World**
Syllabus

In this course, we will explore the “fall of communism” and how the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have transformed since 1989. What exactly happened in the late 1980s and specifically in 1989? Why did the Soviet Union end? We then turn to the ways that people have sought to survive and create new cultural and political practices within the market relations and commodification in the post-Soviet era. We will explore a wide range of topics, including nationalism, environmentalism, politics, oligarchs, violence, vampires, workers, gender, the self, religion, vacation houses, memory, and socialism today. We will compare experiences across post-Soviet space: Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans, the former Soviet Union (including Central Asia and the Baltics), Cuba, Nicaragua, and Mozambique. We will also consider the United States as part of post-Soviet life. Finally, how do people remember the socialist past? How are they reestablishing relations with the Soviet past to envision their future?

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Understand the historic events and the changing social life since 1980s in the former Soviet Bloc.
- Discuss major terms, themes, and debates in post-socialist studies.
- Explore post-Soviet life as a global phenomenon, which can be understood through cultural, economic, environmental, historical, and political approaches and theories.
- Learn basic information about a wide range of countries of the former Soviet Bloc.
- Make a presentation on current events in a country of your choice.
- Write a Fulbright application to study in a country of your choice.

Required Texts:

- Students must order the course reader from The Print Hub (in the Hub on campus) and bring it in print form to every class. All the required readings are in the reader. It costs about \$32 and has all the required readings for the course (except one).

Course Schedule and Readings**Week 1 / Tues, August 27 / Introduction to the course**

- Ghodsee, Kristin. “Comrades, 2000,” pp. 101-106. (6 pages)
- “Ronald Reagan: The Man who Beat Communism.” *The Economist* (July 12, 2004). (3 pages)
- Countries of the day: East Germany, West Germany, and Germany.

I. What happened in 1989?

Week 1 / Thurs, August 29 / What was socialism?

- Suny, Ronald. 2011. "Reform and the Road to Revolution." Pp. 479-514 in *The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States*. Oxford University Press. (35 pages)
- Country of the day: Soviet Union

Week 2 / Tues, September 3 / What was 1989?

- Kenney, Padraic. 2002. *A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe 1989*. Princeton University Press, Chapter 4, Scene 7, Scene 12. (44 pages)
- Country of the day: Poland.

Week 2 / Thurs, September 5 / What was 1989? (Most important reading)

- Krapfl, James. 2013. *Revolution with a Human Face: Politics, Culture, and Community in Czechoslovakia, 1989–1992*. Cornell University Press, chapter 3. (36 pages)
- Country of the day: Czechoslovakia, Czech Republic, and Slovakia.

Week 3 / Tues, September 10 / Shock Therapy

- Murrell, Peter. 1993. "What is Shock Therapy? What did it do to Poland and Russia?" *Post-Soviet Affairs* 9(2): 111-140. (29 pages)
- Country of the day: Russia.

Week 3 / Thurs, September 12 / What was 1989?

- Ghodsee, Kristin. "Contraband, 1990," pp. 21-35.
- Woodward, Susan L. 1995. "Introduction." Pp. 1-20 in *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War*. Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution. (40 pages)
- Country of the day: Yugoslavia.

Week 4 / Tues, September 17 / What was 1991?

- Gorbachev, Mikhail. [December 25, 1991] 2014. "Speech of Resignation." Pp. 537-540 in *The Structure of Soviet History*, edited by Ronald Suny. New York: Oxford University Press. (3 pages)
- "Castro Interviewed on Soviet Collapse, Stalin," June 3, 1992, *El Nuevo Diario*. (4 pages)
- Country of the day: Cuba.

II. What is/was the transition?

Week 4 / Thurs, September 19 / Survival

- Ghodsee, "Hair," pp. 61-82. (21 pages)
- Country of the day: Bulgaria.

Week 5 / Tues, September 24 / Crisis

- Shevchenko, Olga. 2009. *Crisis and the Everyday in Post-socialist Moscow*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 35-61, pp. 172-177. (30 pages)

- Country of the day: Kazakhstan.

Week 5 / Thurs, September 26 / Money and Continuities

- Pine, Frances. "Dealing with Money: Zlotys, Dollars and Other Currencies in the Polish Highlands." Pp. 75-97 in *Markets and Moralities: Ethnographies of Postsocialism*. Berg Publishers. (23 pages)
- Country of the day: Hungary.

Week 6 / Tues, October 1 / The Environment and the Transition?

- Alexievich, Svetlana. [1997] 2005. *Voices from Chernobyl*. Pp. 165-177, 206-221. (27 pages)
- Country of the day: Ukraine and Belarus.

Week 6 / Thurs, October 3 / Foreign consultants, aid, and NGOs

- Wedel, Janine. 2001. *Collision and Collusion: The Strange Case of Aid to Eastern Europe*. New York: Palgrave, pp. 15-43. (28 pages)
- Country of the day: Georgia.

Week 7 / Tues, October 8 / Return of Communist Parties within Capitalism

- Grzymala-Busse, Anna. 2002. "The programmatic turnaround of communist successor parties in East Central Europe, 1989-1998." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 35(2): 51-66. (16 pages)
- Country of the day: Albania and Serbia.

Week 7 / Thurs, October 10 / Midterm

III. Post-Soviet Individuals

No Class / Tues, October 15 / Fall Break

Week 8 / Thurs, October 17 / Vampires (+ discussion of Fulbright project)

- Lukyanenko, Sergei. [1998] 2006. *Night Watch*. New York: HarperCollins Publisher, pp. 3-8, 16-27, 49-55. (23 pages)
- Country of the day: Romania.

Week 8 / Tues, October 22 / The Middle Class and Gender

- Yurchak, Alexei. 2003. "Russian Neoliberal: The Entrepreneurial Ethic and the Spirit of "True Careerism,"" *The Russian Review* 62:72-90. (18 pages)
- Country of the day: Estonia.

Week 9 / Thurs, October 24 / Putin

- Wood, Elizabeth. 2016. "Hypermasculinity as a Scenario of Power: Vladimir Putin's Iconic Rule." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 18(3): 329-350. (21 pages)
- Country of the day: United States.

VI. Post-Soviet States and States of Mind

Week 9 / Tues, October 29 / World War II and 1989

- Evans, Martin. 2006. "Memories, Monuments, Histories: The Re-thinking of the Second World War since 1989." *National Identities* 8(4): 317-348. (31 pages)
- Visiting lecturer: Claire Anderson Bowlby.
- Country of the day: Armenia.

Week 10 / Thurs, October 31 / Memory, amnesia, and unsmooth transitions

- "My Pink City," Yerevan, Armenia. (No class today; watch this on your own.)

Week 10 / Tues, November 5 / Organized Forgetting

- Pitcher, M. Anne. 2006. "Forgetting from Above and Memory from Below: Strategies of Legitimation and Struggle in Postsocialist Mozambique." *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 76(1): 88-112. (25 pages)
- Country of the day: Mozambique.

Week 11 / Thurs., November 7 / Workers, Nostalgia, and Industrial Heritage

- Ozolina-Fitzgerald, Liene. 2016. "A state of limbo: the politics of waiting in neo-liberal Latvia." *British Journal of Sociology* 67(3): 456-475. (20 pages)
- Petrović, Tanja. 2013. "Museums and Workers: Negotiating Industrial Heritage in the Former Yugoslavia." *Nar. umjet.* 50(1): 96-120. (25 pages)
- Country of the day: Latvia and Lithuania.

Week 11 / Tues, November 12 / Religion

- Wanner, Catherine. 2007. *Communities of the Converted: Ukrainians and Global Evangelism*. Cornell University Press, pp. 1-7, pp. 210-248 (43 pages)
- Country of the day: Uzbekistan.

Week 12 / Thurs, November 14 / Religion

- Buyandelgeriyn, Manduhai. 2007. "Dealing with Uncertainty: Shamans, Marginal Capitalism, the Remaking of History in Postsocialist Mongolia." *American Ethnologist* 34(1): 127-147. (20 pages)
- Country of the day: Mongolia.

Week 12 / Tues, November 19 / Belonging

- Isakov, Baktybek and John Schoeberlein. 2014. "Animals, Kinship, and the State: Kyrgyz Chabans Rebuilding Herds and Reorienting Belonging after the Soviet Collapse." *Anthropology of East Europe Review* 32(2): 33-48. (15 pages)
- Country of the day: Kyrgyzstan.

Week 13 / Thurs, November 21 / Common Space and Private Space

- Shevchenko, Olga. 2018. "Putting the 'Public' into the Public Goods: Space Wars in a Post-Soviet Dacha Community." Pp. 117-143 in *The Future of (Post)Socialism: Eastern European Perspectives*. (28 pages)

- Country of the day: Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Week 13 / Tues, November 26 / The Fragments of Global Socialist Trade

- Burton, Eric. 2017. "Socialisms in Development: Revolution, Divergence and Crisis, 1917–1991." *Journal für Entwicklungspolitik* 33(3): 4-20. (16 pages)
- Country of the day: Nicaragua.

No Class / Thurs, November 28 / Thanksgiving Day

Week 14 / Tues, December 3 / Students' Choice

- Students choose the topic.
- Country of the day: TBD.

Week 14 / Thurs, December 5 / Socialist and Soviet Life Today

- "Speech of Chairman Prachanda on 9th Asia Pacific Regional Conference of Solidarity with Cuba." (3 pages)
- Country of the day: Nepal

Mon, December 16 at 1:30 pm – 4:15 pm: Fulbright Proposal due and final exam.

Course Requirements

- Class participation: 10%
- Presentation: 5%
- Midterm exam: 35%
- Final project (Fulbright application): 40%
- Final exam: 10%
- Extra-credit printed reader check (4 out of 5): 1%

Class participation: Participation includes attendance, being on time, bringing the reading, asking questions, and participating in discussion. Also, you **must** meet with me once in office hours to talk about your Fulbright proposal, anytime on or before November 7th.

Presentation: Each student will make a 5-minute presentation on one of the countries of the day. The presentation must include powerpoint (or other related application) with a map of the country, three basic facts, and something else interesting to you. After the presentation, submit the powerpoint and a Word document with all the information (no map) to BB.

Final project: Students will complete a Fulbright application to a country in the former Soviet Bloc of their choice. In the midterm exam, students will state a country and a research topic for the Fulbright application, which they can change at any time before the final exam.

Midterm and final exams: These two tests are intended to evaluate your understanding of the main concepts in the course and basic information about the countries of the day. The

midterm exam will have multiple choice and essays, as well as a separate section in which to state your country and research topic chosen for the Fulbright application. The final exam will only be multiple choice.

Extra-credit article check: I will check to make certain that students have the required printed reader four times during the semester. Three of these checks will go towards a 1% extra credit.

Final Items:

- **Technology in the classroom:** Laptops, tablets (e.g., iPads), mobile phones, and other communicative devices are not allowed in this class. Please keep them stowed away and out of sight.
- **Academic Integrity:** I will not tolerate plagiarism. Mason has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. Plagiarism means using the opinions, factual information, or exact words from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as in-text citations, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited.. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.
- **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS):** (703) 993-2380, <https://caps.gmu.edu/>
- **Learning Services:** <https://learningservices.gmu.edu/>
- **Mason Email Accounts:** Mason uses only Mason e-mail accounts to communicate with enrolled students. Students must activate their Mason e-mail account, use it to communicate with their department and other administrative units, and check it regularly for important university information including messages related to this class. See <http://masonlive.gmu.edu> for more information.
- **Office of Disability Services:** Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students by upholding the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. If you are seeking accommodations for this class, please first visit <https://ds.gmu.edu/> for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Then please discuss your approved accommodations with me.
- **University Libraries** “Ask a Librarian,” <https://library.gmu.edu/ask>
- **University Policies:** The University Catalog, <https://catalog.gmu.edu>, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university academic affairs. Other policies are available at <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/>. All members of the university community are responsible for knowing and following established policies.
- **Writing Center:** Robinson Hall B213, (703) 993-1200, <https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>