East Central Europe is a fascinating laboratory for ideas about political transition from authoritarianism. The course begins by briefly discussing the region's political, historical, and cultural context. After learning about the state socialist system, we examine alternative explanations for its collapse. We then use our knowledge of East Central Europe and political theory to make sense of how these states address the tough political issues they face during transition. Why did some countries quickly integrate into the EU while others developed quasi-authoritarian regimes for a while? Understanding why some countries experienced violence and others did not requires looking at the interaction of ethnic diversity with interests, values, history, and socio-economic factors. We also examine the unusually large role of external actors, such as the EU, in facilitating or complicating democratization and statebuilding after state socialism and/or war. We close by considering democratic backsliding and analyzing how firmly consolidated democracy is even in those East Central European countries who are EU members.

COURSE GOALS. This course seeks to expand the students’ understanding of political transitions occurring in East Central Europe. Toward that end, this course is organized around themes and theoretical frameworks that help make sense of varied paths of transformation. It does not offer a detailed examination of individual countries in East Central Europe. This course also seeks to improve critical thinking skills and the ability of students to formulate clear and logical written and oral arguments that are supported by convincing evidence. We use books, articles, films, and a simulation as learning tools.

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING.

• Attendance and Participation (13%). Your participation grade consists of your record of attendance and active and informed participation. Lectures, discussions, and other class activities assume that students come to class having completed, having thought critically about, and ready to discuss the required readings. Specifically, students should be prepared to discuss the authors’ arguments, the evidence the authors provide, how well the authors’ arguments hold up against alternative arguments on the topic that you have encountered, and how the readings relate to other course readings. I also encourage students to ask questions directly related to readings and discussion. Please see additional information about class participation in separate handout. In the event that students are not consistently contributing ideas to the class, I reserve the right to give pop quizzes on the substance of assigned readings.

• Attendance at 2 talks by visiting distinguished speakers on East Central Europe and the post-socialist region is a required component of participation. (Students with a work conflict will complete alternative assignments).

  • Thurs., 2/4, 5 p.m.-6:30: “20th Anniversary of the Dayton Peace Accords for Bosnia-Herzegovina: Lessons for Ukraine and the Middle East,” Talk by Dr. Daniel Serwer, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (Morton 220)

  • Mon., 2/29, 5 p.m.-7:– Screening of The Unidentified, a feature-length documentary that reveals the commanders responsible for some of the most brutal attacks of the Kosovo war by the filmmaker, Marija Ristic, editor of Balkan Insight. (Tucker 127A)

  • Tepper “Information Wars” speaker series:

    • Thurs., 2/18, at 4:30 p.m., "Soft Power, Propaganda, or Journalism: Different Roles of the Russian Media Abroad," by Ekaterina Zabrovskaya, Editor-in-Chief of Russia Direct (Washington 201)

    • Thurs., 2/25, at 5 p.m. "Myth Information: Propaganda, Consent, and Context in Today's Russia", by Eliot Borenstein, NYU (Tucker 127A)

    • Thurs., 3/17, at 4:30 p.m., "Polarization and Propaganda as National Policy in Russia: Outsourcing Strategy to the Media," by Anna Arutunyan, Moscow News (Washington 201)

• Midterm (25%). This exam, which will consist of a section on short answers, an essay, and identification of several East Central European countries on a map, will be held on March 3.

• Analytical paper (30%). Students will write an approximately 6 paged paper in which they explore more in-depth the dynamics of a topic in political transition in several countries in East Central Europe. This paper must contain a thesis that is supported by empirical evidence and logical argumentation, and include at least two peer-reviewed, outside references. More specific guidance will be distributed in early March. It is due on Apr. 15.

• Final (32%). This exam will be cumulative, though it will emphasize material covered after the midterm. It will consist of sections on short answers (only on post-midterm material), and essays (cumulative). Final exam: Wed., May, 11, 2 p.m.-5 p.m.
Other policies. To pass this course, students must pass all course requirements listed above. All students are responsible for saving a copy of their papers. To ensure fairness, I will not accept late papers or papers sent by e-mail. Please read and follow the Honor Code, http://www.wm.edu/offices/deanofstudents/services/studentconduct/honorcodeandstudentconduct/index.php. I may make minor alterations to this syllabus in order to improve the course. To enhance the quality of class time, turn off cell phones and use computers only for course-related work.


I encourage students to come talk with me during my office hours to discuss material or pose any questions about readings, lectures, or assignments. Please let me know about any special concerns or needs that you might have. I am here to help you learn about how to do your best in the politics of East Central Europe.

REQUIRED TEXTS.

- Readings marked with * are available on the course blackboard site. Readings in academic journals are available online in electronic databases accessible through the W&M network.

Th., 1/21

I. THE EAST CENTRAL EUROPEAN CONTEXT

- Introduction to the course

Tu., 1/26

DEFINING “EAST CENTRAL EUROPE?” AND EXPLORING ITS PRE-COMMUNIST POLITICAL CULTURE. In what ways is East Central Europe distinctive from Western Europe? What kinds of attitudes about and relationships with governments did East Central European citizens hold prior to communist rule?

- Sharon Wolchik and Jane Curry, “Twenty-Five Years after 1989,” in Wolchik and Curry eds., pp. 3-middle of 15.

Th., 1/28

VIOLENCE. What explains why some localities in interwar Poland experienced pogroms vs. Jews and others did not? What are the implications for understanding this violence for diverse communities in East Central Europe once democracy emerges after the fall of communist rule?


II. STATE SOCIALISM AND ITS COLLAPSE

Tu., 2/2

STATE SOCIALISM AND REACTIONS TO IT. How much control did Communist parties have over East Central European societies? How did East Central Europeans react toward their authoritarian systems? Does the green grocer support communist rule?

Th., 2/4
THE STATE SOCIALIST EXPERIENCE IN YUGOSLAVIA AND ITS VIOLENT COLLAPSE. What factors contributed to the violent collapse of state socialism in Yugoslavia? What role – if any—did history, culture, economic policy, and political elites play?


Th., 2/4, 5 P.M.: 20th Anniversary of the Dayton Peace Accords for Bosnia-Herzegovina: Lessons for Ukraine and the Middle East, Talk by Dr. Daniel Serwer, Professor and Director, Conflict Management Program, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (Morton 220)


Tu., 2/9
THE FALL OF STATE SOCIALISM. Do we know why state socialism fell? Why or why not?


Th., 2/11
III. COMPARING TRANSITIONS: ISSUES AND CASES
RE-WRITING THE RULE AND THE CASE OF POLAND. How did East Central European states begin to redefine their political systems and states? Is it possible to institutionally engineer a democratic state? Why was the balance of power between the President and Parliament contentious in Post-Communist Poland? Did political parties react as expected to incentives contained in new electoral rules?

- Wolchik and Curry, eds., pp. 29-30.
- Vanessa Gera, “Poland expected to turn inward under right-wing party,” Washington Post, October 26, 2015.

Tu., 2/16
POST-COMMUNIST POLITICAL CULTURE AND THE CASES OF THE CZECH & SLOVAK REPUBLICS. Did East Central European peoples quickly and deeply embrace democratic values? Why do new parties keep popping up in the Czech & Slovak Republics? What role did/d0 ethnicity and economics play in the breakup of Czechoslovakia and in current politics?


Th., 2/18
THE POLITICS OF ECONOMIC REFORM. What reform policies encouraged some countries to generate more economic growth more quickly than others? How do the different methods of privatization matter? Who are the losers of reforms?


Tu., 2/23
EVERYDAY EXPERIENCES OF PRIVATIZATION. Why is it hard to determine the value of a socialist-owned factory? What explains how Polish factory workers and managers respond to their new US owners and vice versa? What are tangible consequences of the transition from state socialism to market democracy for the main characters of Goodbye Lenin? Why are some East Central European peoples nostalgic?

• **Watch prior to class:** Wolfgang Becker, *Goodbye Lenin!* (2003) (on reserve at Swem or available through Netflix)

**Th., 2/25**

DEVELOPING THE RULE OF LAW AND THE POLITICS OF JUSTICE. What issues do East Central European societies face in trying to address gross injustices made by past regimes? What is the impact of varying types of anti-Communist justice policies on East Central European societies?


**Mon., 2/29 at 5 p.m.** – Screening of *The Unidentified*, a feature-length documentary that reveals the commanders responsible for some of the most brutal attacks of the Kosovo war by the filmmaker, Marija Ristic, editor of *Balkan Insight*. (Tucker 127A)

**Tu., 3/1**

EXPLAINING THE “SECOND” WAVE. What factors led to democratic revolutions in those East Central European countries that developed illiberal regimes in the 1990s? What factors best explain the timing and depth of democratic reform?


**Th., 3/3**

MIDTERM EXAM

**Tu. 3/15**

THE RE-EMERGENCE OF COMMUNISTS. Why do citizens vote for successor parties of the formerly vilified Communists? Why are some Communist successor parties more thoroughly transformed and successful than others?


**Th. 3/17**

THE IMPACT OF THE DUAL TRANSITION ON POLICIES OF THE POLITICAL “LEFT” AND “RIGHT” Under what conditions are parties willing and able to compromise their ideological views for developing democracy?


**Tu., 3/22**

PROTEST VOTING AND POPULISM. Why do people vote against incumbents and for unorthodox parties? Does electoral support for “new/centrist populists” threaten democracy – why or why not?


**Th., 3/24**

IV. DEMOCRATIZATION IN CULTURALLY PLURAL STATES

THE BALTIC STATES: How has their direct inclusion into the USSR influenced their transition away from Communism? How successfully have the Baltic states managed ethnic diversity during the transition?


**Tu., 3/29**

THE ROOTS OF VIOLENCE. Is Gagnon’s argument about inter-ethnic relations in Socialist Yugoslavia and the transition convincing? What is the most powerful theoretical explanation or combination of explanations for the violence in ethnically diverse former Yugoslavia? Why aren’t voices for moderation more powerful?


In class documentary: Tone Bringa and Debbie Christie, *We are All Neighbours*, 1993.

**Th., 3/31**
EXPLAINING VARYING LEVELS OF CONFLICT. Why did the culturally divided states of Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Kosovo experience varying levels of conflict—only some resulting in violence?


V. INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCE

Tu., 4/5

THE CARROT OF INTEGRATION INTO THE EU. How does the EU influence East Central European countries to reform their political institutions? How successful has the EU been in compelling East European regimes that were initially illiberal to adopt liberal institutions? Why? What are the implications of post-accession hooliganism for theories, like Vachudova’s, about the impact of the EU accession process on democratization in East Central Europe?


Th., 4/7

UNDERSTANDING THE EU’s MUTED INFLUENCE IN SOUTH-EAST CENTRAL EUROPE. Is EU conditionality qualitatively different in South East Central Europe than it is in East Central Europe? Why or why not?


Tu., 4/12

THE POLITICS OF GENDER AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND THE EU’S IMPACT. Have women become more or less politically powerful in the post-communist systems in comparison to the communist systems? Why? How successful has the EU been in encouraging East Central European countries to implement anti-discrimination legislation?


Th, 4/14

LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT CULTIVATING CIVIL SOCIETY? What does the view of an aid practitioner contribute to our understanding of conditions under which Western efforts to encourage democratic activity in the former Yugoslavia can be successful?


IN-CLASS SIMULATION on the challenge of aid for building civil society in post-conflict communities

Fri. 4/15

ANALYTICAL PAPER DUE IN HARD COPY IN MORTON 29 BY 5 P.M.

Tu., 4/19

EXTERNAL INFLUENCE ON POST-CONFLICT DEMOCRATIZATION: THE CASE OF BOSNIA. What has externally led statebuilding been able to achieve after horrific violence in post-war Bosnia? What is the best balance of power between international and domestic officials?


Th., 4/21
POSTCONFLICT JUSTICE. To what extent have international efforts to help bring justice to post-war former Yugoslav peoples been successful? Why?


Tu., 4/26

INTERNATIONAL PROTECTORATES AS ANSWERS FOR POST-CONFLICT SOCIETIES? Can international officials simultaneously govern and help domestic peoples govern over their own peoples?


Th., 4/28

VI. RAISING QUESTIONS ABOUT AND EXPLAINING VARIATION IN DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION

THINKING AHEAD. Are East Central European states still transitioning more than 25 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, as the term “post-socialist” suggests? Do they all embrace liberalism? What are challenges to the quality of democracy in the region?

In general, here is what I consider excellent participation and attendance:

- **Level of involvement:** You make a strong effort to contribute often to large and small group discussions. You kick off discussion at times, but you do not consistently dominate the room. You know when to cut yourself off and to give others a chance to speak.
- **Substance of comments:** Your comments demonstrate knowledge of the readings and not simply your own personal experience or intuition. You bring the readings to class and point us to specific pages to back your points. Your remarks build momentum, are focused and relevant. You do not speak just to get your voice on record.
- **Attendance:** You attend class every day, unless you offer a reasonable explanation such as an documented illness, family emergency, extraordinary work commitment, or your required presence at a non-optional William & Mary event (e.g., class field trip).
- **Common courtesy:** You arrive on time every day and take your seat quietly if you are late. You disable your cell phone and other gadgets before class starts. You do not check email or instant messages, surf the web, do other classes’ homework, or do other similar distracting behaviors during class. You listen carefully to others when they are speaking. You respect the right of your classmates to express their analysis, even if you might disagree.

(adapted from Manna 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade range</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A- A</strong> (90-100)</td>
<td>--Frequent contributor in large group discussions each week. Active and engaged in small groups and paired discussions. --Comments grounded in the readings and demonstrate depth of understanding or attempts to grapple with them; ideas help to build momentum in discussions. --Has self-awareness and does not ramble or try to dominate the room. Attends class essentially every day (e.g., 0-1 absences for the semester), always brings readings &amp; is always courteous.</td>
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<td><strong>B- B B+</strong> (80-89)</td>
<td>--Consistent commenter each week in large group, but some runs of silence or inactivity occasionally detectable. Active and engaged in small groups or pairs, and might excel slightly more there than in the large group. Occasionally may lack good self-awareness. --Comments are helpful and draw upon readings, but less consistently so and occasionally may be more grounded in intuition or personal experience. --Attends class most days (e.g., 3 absences for the semester), brings readings most days, and is always courteous.</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>C- C C+</strong> (70-79)</td>
<td>--Infrequent participant each week in large group, but may be reasonably engaged in small groups. Attentive, but not involved. Often an imbalance between small group and large group effort. May have inconsistent self-awareness. --Comments are infrequently grounded in the readings; more reliant on intuition or personal experience --Absences becoming somewhat frequent (e.g., 4-5 absences for the semester), infrequently brings readings, but is always courteous.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>D- D D+</strong> (60-69)</td>
<td>--Extremely rare or essentially no participation each week in large group. Rarely attentive; largely uninvolved, including in small groups. May have very little self-awareness. --Hard to tell to what extent this person is trying to engage the readings because comments are so infrequent, or nonexistent. --Frequent absences (6 absences for the semester), but is always courteous.</td>
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<td><strong>F</strong> (&lt;60)</td>
<td>--No engagement in large group discussion. During small group or paired time, still tends to work alone or be distracted. May demonstrate no self-awareness. --Impossible to tell to what extent the person has tried to engage the readings. --Excessive absences (7 or more absences for the semester). --May consistently fail to demonstrate courtesy.</td>
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