

CARLETON UNIVERSITY
Institute of European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies
EURR 5107/4107

RUSSIA'S REGIONAL AND GLOBAL AMBITIONS

Tuesdays 6:05 PM – 8:55 PM

This course is offered in the synchronous online format (virtual seminars).

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Name: Jean-François Ratelle

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Office Hours: Zoom by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar examines the drivers, tools, and ambitions of Russian foreign policy in the post-Soviet era. From military intervention and energy diplomacy to cyber warfare and influence operations, students analyze how Russia projects power across Eurasia, the West, China, and the Global South. Particular attention is devoted to the global consequences of Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine and its impact on the international order.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Critically evaluate the historical, geographic, political, and economic drivers of post-Soviet Russian foreign policy.
2. Understanding Russia's diplomatic, economic, and military strategies across distinct theaters, including the "Near Abroad" (Eurasia), the West (US and Europe), the Global South, and with China.
3. Understand Russia's foreign policy instruments, distinguishing between conventional military assets (hard power), cultural and ideational appeals (soft power), and asymmetric tools like cyber operations, energy leverage, and disinformation (hybrid power).
4. Assess the systemic impact of the 2022 invasion of Ukraine.
5. Formulate policy analysis and recommendations addressing Russia's global and regional ambitions.

TEXTS & COURSE MATERIALS

Tsygankov, Andrei P. *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2025.

The textbook can be purchased at the Carleton University Bookstore and on Amazon.ca for \$54.50. Please note that prices are subject to change, and the instructor is not responsible for price accuracy.

COURSE CALENDAR

Week 1 (September 15, 2026): Introduction and Course Plan

Week 2 (September 22, 2026): The Schools of Russian Foreign Policy

Tsygankov, Andrei P. "Understanding Change and Continuity in Russia's Foreign Policy." *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2025. 1–32.

Gunitsky, Seva, and Andrei P. Tsygankov. "The Wilsonian Bias in the Study of Russian Foreign Policy." *Problems of Post-Communism* 65, no. 6 (November 2, 2018): 385–93.

Tsygankov, Andrei P. "The Cold War Crisis and Soviet New Thinking, 1986–1991." *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2025. 33–56

Week 3 (September 29, 2026): The Yeltsin Era, the Soviet Legacies and the Post-Soviet Shock (1991–1999)

Tsygankov, Andrei P. "The Post-Soviet Decline and Attempts at Cooperation, 1991–2004." *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2025. 57–107.

Jean Radvanyi and Marlene Laruelle. *Russia : Great Power, Weakened State*. Second edition. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2023, pp.157-173.

Kubicek, Paul. "Russian Foreign Policy and the West." *Political Science Quarterly* 114, no. 4 (December 1, 1999): 547–68.

Oral presentation topics:

- NATO intervention in former Yugoslavia
- Russian Peacekeeping in Moldova (Transnistria Conflict, 1992)
- Budapest Memorandum (1994)
- First Chechen War (1994-1996)
- Russian Military Intervention in Tajikistan Civil War (1992-1997)
- The NATO-Russia Founding Act (1997)
- Russia-Belarus Union Treaty (1997)
- Kosovo Crisis and NATO Bombing of Yugoslavia (1999)

Week 4 (October 6, 2026): The Rise of Vladimir Putin (2000–2007)

Tsygankov, Andrei P. "The Post-Soviet Decline and Attempts at Cooperation, 1991–2004." *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2025. 107-126.

Jean Radvanyi and Marlene Laruelle. *Russia : Great Power, Weakened State*. Second edition. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2023, pp.174-181.

O'Loughlin, John, Gearóid O' Tuathail, and Vladimir Kolossov. "A 'Risky Westward Turn'? Putin's 9–11 Script and Ordinary Russians." *Europe-Asia Studies* 56, no. 1 (January 1, 2004): 3–34.

German, Tracey. "Harnessing Protest Potential: Russian Strategic Culture and the Colored Revolutions." *Contemporary Security Policy* 41, no. 4 (October 1, 2020): 541–63.

Oral presentation topics:

- NATO's First Enlargement (1999)
- Second Chechen war (1999-2009)
- Formation of the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) (2000)
- Russia and 9/11 (2001)
- Russia and the Iraq war (2003)
- The Rose Revolution in Georgia (2003)
- Orange revolution in Ukraine (2004)
- NATO Enlargement (2004)

- Russia-Ukraine Gas Dispute (2006)

Week 5 (October 13, 2026): The Munich Speech, Recovery, and the 2008 Georgia War (2007-2011)

Tsygankov, Andrei P. "Recovery and Assertiveness, 2005–2011." *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2025. 127–170.

Paikin, Zachary. "The War in Ukraine and the Dawn of Russian Revisionism: An English School Approach." *International Journal* 78, no. 4 (December 1, 2023): 539–55.

Petro, Nicolai N. "How the West Lost Russia: Explaining the Conservative Turn in Russian Foreign Policy." *Russian Politics* 3, no. 3 (September 29, 2018): 305–32.

Forsberg, Tuomas, and Graeme Herd. "Russia and NATO: From Windows of Opportunities to Closed Doors." *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 23, no. 1 (January 2, 2015): 41–57.

Oral presentation topics:

- Vladimir Putin's Munich Security Conference Speech (2007)
- Kosovo's Declaration of Independence (2008)
- Russia-Georgia War (August 2008)
- Recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia (2008)
- Gas Dispute with Ukraine (2009)
- U.S.-Russia "Reset" Policy (2009)
- New START Treaty (2010)
- Creation of the Customs Union (Russia-Belarus-Kazakhstan) (2010)
- Kyrgyzstan Crisis (2010)
- NATO Intervention in Libya (2011)

Additional readings:

Abushov, Kavus. "Explaining Foreign Policy Deviations: The Strategic Rationale of Russia's Recognition of Abkhazia's and South Ossetia's Independence." *Ethnopolitics* 21, no. 4 (August 8, 2022): 401–22.

Souleimanov, Emil Aslan, Eduard Abrahamyan, and Huseyn Aliyev. "Unrecognized States as a Means of Coercive Diplomacy? Assessing the Role of Abkhazia and South

Ossetia in Russia's Foreign Policy in the South Caucasus." *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 18, no. 1 (January 2, 2018): 73–86.

Week 6 (October 20, 2026): Civilizational Turn, Ukraine, and Russia-West Relations (2012-2020)

Tsygankov, Andrei P. "Civilizational Turn and New Assertiveness, 2012–2020." *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2025. 171–202.

Arel, Dominique, and Jesse Driscoll. *Ukraine's Unnamed War: Before the Russian Invasion of 2022*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023, pp. 100-170.

Nitoiu, Cristian. "The Path to Russia's 2022 Invasion of Ukraine: Moscow's Framing of Conflict and Cooperation with the West under Putin's Rule." *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 26, no. 1 (January 2, 2026): 65–83.

Oral presentation topics:

- The Maidan revolution (2013-2014)
- Annexation of Crimea (2014)
- The Minsk Agreements (2014-2015)
- Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) Created (2015)
- Russian Interference Allegations in the 2016 U.S. Election
- Nagorno-Karabakh Four-Day War (2016)
- Sergey Skripal Poisoning Crisis (United Kingdom, 2018)
- Collapse of the INF Treaty (2019)

Additional reading:

Snegovaya, Maria. "Guns to Butter: Sociotropic Concerns and Foreign Policy Preferences in Russia." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 36, no. 3 (May 3, 2020): 268–79.

Fall Break (October 26-30, 2026)

Week 7: (November 3, 2026): Midterm Oral Exam

Week 8 (November 10, 2026): The 2022 Invasion of Ukraine and its Geopolitical Consequences

Tsygankov, Andrei P. "The Russia–West Conflict, the War in Ukraine, and a Post-western World, 2021–." *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2025. 203–242.

Lukin, Alexander, and Vladimir Lukin. "Russia's Foreign Policy After the Ukrainian Crisis." *The Washington Quarterly* 48, no. 4 (October 2, 2025): 133–45.

Knott, Eleanor. "Existential Nationalism: Russia's War against Ukraine." *Nations and Nationalism* 29, no. 1 (January 1, 2023): 45–52.

Oral presentation topics:

- Sanctions
 - Economic sanctions
 - Energy sanctions
 - Financial sanctions
- NATO Enlargement
 - Sweden
 - Finland
- Turkey's Mediation Role in the Ukraine War & Istanbul Accord
- EU Candidate Status for Ukraine (June 2022)
- The EU's Decision to Open Accession Negotiations with Ukraine (December 2023)
- The Nord Stream Pipeline Sabotage (September 2022)
- NATO Military aid to Ukraine
 - Germany's Decision to Send Leopard 2 Tanks to Ukraine (2023)
 - U.S. Foreign Policy on ATACMS Long-Range Missiles
 -
- The Black Sea Grain Initiative (2022-2023)
- The end of the START Treaty (February 2026)

Additional readings:

Tsouloufas, George, and Matthew Rochat. "Revisiting the Effectiveness of Economic Sanctions in the Context of Russia's Invasion of Ukraine." *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 29, no. 3 (September 2, 2023): 285–300.

Cottey, Andrew. "NATO and the Russia–Ukraine War: Geopolitics, Ideology, and the New Politics of the Alliance." *Defence Studies* 25, no. 4 (October 2, 2025): 800–824.

Week 9 (November 17, 2026): Russia, China, and the Pivot to the East

Shirayev, Eric. *Russian Foreign Policy*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2026, pp.243-262

Samokhvalov, Vsevolod. "Russia and Its Shared Neighbourhoods: A Comparative Analysis of Russia-EU and Russia-China Relations in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood and Central Asia." *Contemporary Politics* 24, no. 1 (January 1, 2018): 30–45.

Läänemets, Märt. "The Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership: Historical Background and Current State." *Journal of Contemporary East Asia Studies* 14, no. 2 (July 3, 2025): 330–54.

Düben, Björn Alexander. 2023. "Omnibalancing in China-Russia Relations: Regime Survival and the Specter of Domestic Threats as an Impetus for Bilateral Alignment." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 39 (6): 462–86.

Oral presentation topics:

- Creation of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) (2001)
- Russia-China Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation (2001)
- Negotiations on the Kuril Islands (2012-2020)
- The Power of Siberia Gas Pipeline Agreement (2014)
- Russia's Support for China's Belt and Road Initiative (2015)
- The Russia-China "No Limits" Partnership Declaration (February 2022)
- CSTO Intervention in Kazakhstan (2022)
- Russia-North Korea Strategic Partnership (2024)

Additional readings

Alimov, Rashid. "The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation: Its Role and Place in the Development of Eurasia." *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 9, no. 2 (July 1, 2018): 114–24.

Ambrosio, Thomas. "The Architecture of Alignment: The Russia–China Relationship and International Agreements." *Europe-Asia Studies* 69, no. 1 (January 2, 2017): 110–56.

Wishnick, Elizabeth. "In Search of the 'Other' in Asia: Russia–China Relations Revisited." *The Pacific Review* 30, no. 1 (January 2, 2017): 114–32.

Zakharov, Aleksei. "The Geopolitics of the US-India-Russia Strategic Triangle." *Strategic Analysis* 43, no. 5 (September 3, 2019): 357–71.

Week 10 (November 24 2026): Russia and the Middle East

Jean Radvanyi and Marlene Laruelle (2023) *Russia : Great Power, Weakened State*. Second edition. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, pp.181-202.

Geukjian, Ohannes. "The Geopolitics of the Russian, Iranian and Turkish Involvement in the Syrian Civil War." *The Maghreb Review* 45, no. 3 (January 2, 2023): 556–81.

Waller, Julian G., et al. *The Evolving Russia-Iran Relationship: Political, Military, and Economic Dimensions of an Improving Partnership*. Center for Naval Analyses, Jan. 2025, www.cna.org/reports/2025/01/The-Evolving-Russia-Iran-Relationship.pdf

Heibach, Jens, and Luíza Cerioli. "Saudi Arabia's Ambivalent Stance on the Russia-Ukraine War: Balancing Regime Stability and Equal Sovereignty." *Contemporary Security Policy* 45, no. 4 (October 1, 2024): 670–83.

Oral presentation topics:

- Russia's Response to the Arab Spring (2011-2012)
- Russian Military Intervention in Syria (2015)
- Russia and the Iran Nuclear Agreement (JCPOA) (2015)
- Russia-Turkey Crisis After the Downing of a Russian Jet (2015)
- Russia-Pakistan Joint Military Exercise "Druzhba" (2016)
- Russia's Role in the Syrian Peace Process (Astana Process) (2017)
- Nagorno-Karabakh Wars (2020-2023)
- The Fall of the Assad Regime in Syria (2024)
- Azerbaijan and Russia diplomatic tensions (2025)
- Armenia's 2026 elections
- Russia's Relations with the Taliban

Additional reading:

Byman, Daniel, and Seth G. Jones. "Legion of Doom? China, Russia, Iran and North Korea." *Survival* 66, no. 4 (July 3, 2024): 29–50.

Kofman, Michael, and Matthew Rojansky. "What kind of victory for Russia in Syria?." *Military Review* 24.2 (2018): 6-23.

Week 11 (December 1, 2026): Russia, the Arctic, and the Global South

Shirayev, Eric. *Russian Foreign Policy*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2026, pp.287-314

Pokalova, Elena. "The Wagner Group in Africa: Russia's Quasi-State Agent of Influence." *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, July 2023, pp. 1–23.

Bøås, Morten, and Francesco Strazzari. "Borders Ending Nowhere: The Geopolitical Imaginaries and Practices of Russia's Spheres of Interest in Africa." *Geopolitics* 31, no. 4 (August 8, 2026): 1319–43.

Devyatkin, Pavel. "Arctic Exceptionalism: A Narrative of Cooperation and Conflict from Gorbachev to Medvedev and Putin." *The Polar Journal* 13, no. 2 (July 3, 2023): 336–57.

Oral presentation topics:

- BRICS Formation (2009)
- Russia's Intervention in Libya (2015-)
- Opening of the Yamal LNG Project (2017)
- Russia's Military Cooperation Agreement with Sudan (2017)
- Northern Sea Route Policy (2018)
- Central African Republic Security Partnership (2018)
- Russia-Africa Summit in Sochi (2019)
- Russian Security Cooperation with Mali (2021-)
- Suspension of Arctic Council Cooperation After the Ukraine War (2022)
- The Russia-Africa Summit (St. Petersburg, 2023)
- Expansion of BRICS (2023-2024)
- Russia and Venezuela (2019-2026)

Additional readings:

Almeida Neto, Getúlio Alves de. "Security Cooperation in the Arctic after Ukraine: How the War Affected the Security Dilemma in the Polar Region." *The Polar Journal* 15, no. 1 (January 2, 2025): 183–202.

Verma, Raj. "Interests Trump Principles and Values: India's Neutrality in the Russia-Ukraine War." *Contemporary Security Policy* 45, no. 4 (October 1, 2024): 585–98.

Week 12 (December 8, 2026): Conclusion

Tsygankov, Andrei P. "Conclusions and Lessons." *Russia's Foreign Policy: Change and Continuity*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2025. 243–266

Kofman, Michael. "The Next Russia Threat: Moscow's Military Power After Ukraine." *Foreign Affairs*, 23 June 2026, www.foreignaffairs.com/russia/next-russia-threat-michael-kofman.

Jean Radvanyi and Marlene Laruelle (2023). "Russia and the World in a Time of War" in *Russia : Great Power, Weakened State*. Second edition. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, pp.203-219.

EVALUATION

Class Participation and Attendance (20%)

Attendance and active participation in class discussions are mandatory (except in the case of documented emergencies). Attendance will be recorded at the beginning of each class. Your participation grade is based on both your level of engagement during class and the quality of your contributions to our discussions. Strong contributions should demonstrate an understanding of the readings, keep the conversation moving forward, and offer critical analysis of the weekly topic. Please note that missing more than two seminars without proper justification can result in a grade of zero for the attendance portion of this mark.

To foster an engaged, interactive learning environment, students are expected to keep their cameras turned on at all times during online classes. If you experience technical difficulties or have privacy concerns, please contact the professor before class.

Oral presentation (20 %)

Each student will deliver one short oral presentation during the semester (8 to 10 minutes **maximum**). You will choose a topic of interest from the list provided in this course plan. Your presentation should aim to stimulate class discussion and bring a fresh perspective to the week's required readings.

Email your top three topic choices to the professor by **September 20th**. Assignments are first-come, first-served. The presentation schedule will be posted on Brightspace on **September 22nd**.

Midterm Oral Exam (30%)

The exam will take place on Zoom and will consist of a long-form question addressing the themes, concepts, theoretical debates, and case studies covered during the course. Students will be expected to demonstrate their in-depth understanding of the material, their ability to mobilize relevant theoretical approaches, and their capacity to develop a structured, critical argument grounded in the seminar readings.

The evaluation criteria will include:

- Understanding of the concepts and theories studied;
- the quality of analysis and argumentation;
- empirical knowledge on Russia;
- the ability to draw connections between the different topics of the course;
- the clarity and coherence of the answer;
- the appropriate use of required readings and seminar discussions.

This exercise aims to assess not only the acquisition of knowledge, but also the students' ability to apply it to contemporary issues on Russia's foreign policy.

The oral examination will last 10 to 15 minutes and will take place on November 3, 2026. The professor will provide students with a schedule during the first week of October.

Policy Brief (30%)

For this assignment, you will write a 2,500-word policy brief on a course-related topic of your choice. To give you hands-on experience as an analyst, your brief should be written with the goal of publication in a professional think tank or specialized journal. Students are encouraged to use open-source intelligence sources for their brief.

Sample Topics Include:

- Military and security cooperation between Russia and China
- Ethnic mobilization within the Russian Federation
- The impact of international economic sanctions on Russia
- Russia's growing presence in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Russia's Arctic strategy and the militarization of the High North
- Russia's relations with Central Asian states in the post-Soviet era
- Energy diplomacy and the geopolitics of Russian oil and gas exports

Please ensure you clear your topic choice with the professor before you begin writing. Detailed instructions and resources will be provided in class and on Brightspace.

Your brief must be submitted to Brightspace before December 15th, 2026, at 11:59 PM.

LATE ASSIGNMENT

All assignments are to be submitted by their due date and time.

All late submissions will be immediately docked 5%, with an additional 5% for each subsequent day late to a maximum of 3 days, including weekends. After 3 days all outstanding assignments will be given a zero (0%) grade.

FINAL GRADE APPROVAL

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean

APPENDIX

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as ‘presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.’ This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, artworks, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT)
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment
- using another’s data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement
- failing to acknowledge sources with proper citations when using another’s work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course’s instructor. The

Associate Dean of the Faculty follows a rigorous process for academic integrity allegations, including reviewing documents and interviewing the student, when an instructor suspects a violation has been committed. Penalties for violations may include a final grade of “F” for the course.

POLICY ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Artificial intelligence can be a tool for learning. It can help to summarize complicated ideas and improve understanding of human knowledge. It can assist with research on specific topics. Students are encouraged to use AI as a research assistant in these ways.

Students may use AI tools for basic word processing and formatting functions, including:

- Grammar and spell checking (e.g., Grammarly, Microsoft Word Editor).
- Basic formatting and design suggestions (e.g., Microsoft Word’s formatting tools, PowerPoint Design editor).

However, students must refrain from using AI to generate written work for submission. In this course, the usual rules against cut-and-pasting apply to AI generated text. A student's words and thoughts must be their own.

STATEMENT ON STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

As a student you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. For more information, please consult <https://wellness.carleton.ca/>

Emergency Resources (on and off campus)

- Crisis/Urgent Counselling Support: 613-520-6674 (Mon-Fri, 8:30-4:30)
- Suicide Crisis Helpline: call or text 9-8-8, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- For immediate danger or urgent medical support: call 9-1-1

Carleton Resources

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
- Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>
- Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
- Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
- Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
- Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

Off Campus Resources

- Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: call 613-238-3311, text 343-306-5550, or connect online at <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: call 613-722-6914 or toll-free 1-866-996-0991, or connect online at <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Good2Talk: call 1-866-925-5454 or connect online at <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: for online or on-site service
<https://walkincounselling.com>

REQUESTS FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the *Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances*, are outlined on the Academic Accommodations website (students.carleton.ca/course-outline).

POLICY ON CLASSROOM RECORDING

This class or portions of this class will be recorded by the instructor for educational purposes. These recordings will be shared only with students enrolled in the course. Your instructor will communicate how you can access the recordings.

GRADING SYSTEM

Grade	Point Equivalence	Percentage Conversion
A+	12	90-100
A	11	85-89
A-	10	80-84
B+	9	77-79
B	8	73-76
B-	7	70-72
C+	6	67-69
C	5	63-66
C-	4	60-62
D+	3	57-59
D	2	53-56
D-	1	50-52
F	0	less than 50