Russia after Communism: Great Power or Regime in Decline?

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Learning in Retirement, winter 2018. Thursdays, March 1-April 5, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Course Overview: Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia has endured dramatic changes. Experiments with market economic reform and democratization in the 1990s transformed the political arena, but left many citizens facing hardship and insecurity. In 2000, Vladimir Putin became Russia’s President, and he has ushered in reforms aimed at strengthening the state and reviving national pride – but his leadership has also been associated with authoritarianism, tense relations with other countries, and economic stagnation. There are also signs of a new restiveness in civil society, especially among young people. How can we explain Russia’s tumultuous political development?

Suggested Readings: There is no required reading, but I have some suggestions for those who would like to read further. I recommend two recent books on Russian politics. Both books are very up-to-date and available in paperback. Each of the authors is a leading expert on Russia, and each offers a different interpretation from the other.


Schedule of Lectures:

Week 1: Russia in Historical Perspective (March 1)

Week 2: Russia in the 1990s: Cooperative Foreign Policy – Confrontational Domestic Politics (March 8)


Week 3: The Putin Presidency: From Reform to Nationalism (March 15)


**Week 4:** Elections and Political Parties (leading to a focus on 2018 election) (March 22)

**Suggested Reading:** Yana Gorokhovskaia, “Electing Putin: Looking forward to the 2018 Presidential Race,” *Harriman Magazine*, fall 2017, pp. 4-9.

**Week 5:** Civil Society and Oppositions: Trends since 2011 (March 29)


**Week 6:** Russia in the World since 2014. Focus on two case studies: Ukraine and the United States (April 5)