

Course Information

Course Number:	INTA 689
Course Title:	East European Politics
Section:	650
Time:	Tuesdays, 6:30-9:10pm
Location:	1620 L St, NW, Suite 700 Washington DC in-person
Credit Hours:	3.0

Instructor Details

Instructor:	Professor Kateryna Shynkaruk
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Office Hours:	By appointment, virtual or in-person

Course Description

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 brought the East European region back into the spotlight of global politics and a new security reality raising the specter of a new Cold War. This course will review East European states' history and political culture, state- and nation-building experiences, and the role of identities in shaping their geopolitical futures. We will look into case studies of the different trajectories of post-communist transformations in interplay with their domestic and international politics. The course will explore Russia's evolving confrontation with other great powers over its privileged role in the region. We will analyze and build upon the first lessons learned from the security challenges and vulnerabilities of the transatlantic security architecture exposed with Russia's war on Ukraine.

The fall of the Iron Curtain in 1991 raised high hopes for democratic transitions of the post-communist states. This proved to be a complex process involving multiple domestic and external factors. We will discuss the questions: what worked in democratic transitions and what didn't? How this led to the rethinking of the democratic transition paradigm? Why the rule of law and social trust are such 'big ideas' in the region? How some of the illusions about regional democratization overlooked the risks from Russia's growing revisionist ambitions? And why today, 30 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union and a century after its formation, the East European states again find themselves in the epicenter of tectonic shifts in global security and politics?

Students will be able to hone their analytical, writing, and presentation skills; develop a multidisciplinary approach to the analysis of the problems discussed, and develop the skills of theorizing, formulating hypotheses, and justifying their views about the course topics. The practical coursework will be based on interactive learning techniques and will comprise individual and group presentations, and written assignments.

Course Prerequisites

Graduate Classification

Course Learning Outcomes

By completing this course, students will be able to:

- Understand major academic and policy debates related to post-communist trajectories of the East European states;
- Evaluate factors that helped implement or hampered democratic reforms by the states;
- Demonstrate working knowledge of regional political and security landscape;
- Analyze the role of regional and global actors in shaping East European politics;
- Apply analytical frameworks and methodologies suitable for this area of research;
- Demonstrate effective analytical, writing, and presentation skills.

Grading Policy

Grades are based on participation and attendance (10%), three in-class presentations (60%, each graded 20%), and final research paper (30%).

The following scale will be used for calculating final grades for this course:

- 90-100 A;
- 80-89 B;
- 70-79 C;
- 60-69 D;
- 0-59 F.

Grades will be determined based on the following:

Participation and Attendance (10%)

All students are expected to attend each class, and to participate actively in the discussion of the assigned reading materials.

In-class presentations (60%)

Two- or three-person teams will each give a presentation (each member brief for 10 minutes) discussing a specific case study related to that week's topic, beginning week #4. The professor will assign a topic two weeks in advance of each team's presentation. This briefing will count for 20%. Each student will have an opportunity to give three 10 minutes presentations, individually or in teams.

Final Research Paper (30%)

Students will write a 20-page research paper to explore an empirical case of their choice related to the themes of the course. The specific topics for the paper will be discussed with students individually to

meet their research and policy interests. The professor will work closely with students to help formulate the research question and suitable analytical framework, as well as academic and policy literature.

Late Work Policy

- Late submission of the written assignment will be penalized by 5 points per day (based on 100-point grading scale) following the deadline.
- In exceptional cases qualifying for excused absences, an assignment deadline may be changed upon prior arrangement with the professor.

Work submitted by a student as makeup work for an excused absence is not considered late work and is exempted from the late work policy. Late work policies must clearly link to [Student Rule 7](#).

Course Schedule

Please note that all readings are subject to change that will be communicated to students in advance.

Week 01: Setting the Scene: East European Bloodlands and Emergence of the Nation States

- Kenez P. A history of the Soviet Union: From the beginning to the end. Third edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. P. 103-213.
- Snyder T. Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin. New York: Basic Books, 2010. P. 1-154.
- Rothschild J., Wingfield N.M. Return to Diversity: A Political History of East Central Europe Since World War II. 4th ed. Oxford University Press, 2007. P. 1-124.
- Plokhy S. The Last Empire: The Final Days of the Soviet Union. New York: Basic Books, 2014. Chapters 3, 8, 10, 14, 17.

Week 02: The Fall of the Iron Curtain and Broader European Context I

- Rothschild J., Wingfield N.M. Return to Diversity: A Political History of East Central Europe Since World War II. 4th ed. Oxford University Press, 2007. P. 147-263.
- Kenez P. A history of the Soviet Union: From the beginning to the end. Third edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. P. 214-277.
- Barnes A. "Three in One: Unpacking the 'Collapse' of the Soviet Union," Problems of Post-Communism 61, no. 5 (Sep-Oct 2014): 3-13.
- Darden K., Grzymala-Busse A. "The Great Divide: Literacy, Nationalism, and the Communist Collapse." World Politics 59, no. 1 (2006): 83-115.

Week 03: The Fall of the Iron Curtain and Broader European Context II

- Plokhy S. The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine. New York: Basic Books, 2015. P. 201-322.
- Swain, Geoffrey, and Nigel Swain. Eastern Europe Since 1945, Fourth Edition. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009. Chapter 9.

- Ramet S. P. Central and Southeast European Politics since 1989. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Chapters 2-6, 22, 24.
- Berend I. T. From the Soviet Bloc to the European Union: The Economic and Social Transformation of Central and Eastern Europe Since 1973. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. Chapters 3, 6.
- Dimitrov, M. Why communism did not collapse: understanding authoritarian regime resilience in Asia and Europe. New York: Cambridge University, 2013. Chapters 1-3, 11.

Week 04: Introducing Key Actors. East European Politics and Society

- Vachudova, M. Europe Undivided: Democracy, Leverage, and Integration after Communism. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. P. 1-62.
- Wilson A. Virtual Politics. Faking Democracy in the Post-Soviet World. New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2005. Chapters 2-5.
- Wolchik S. L., Curry J.L., eds. Central and East European Politics: From Communism to Democracy. Second ed. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014. P. 43-234.
- Wilson A. The East Europeans: Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. White, S., Batt J., Paul G. L., eds. Developments in Central and East European Politics, 5. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013. P. 79-101.
- Kudelia S. Society as an Actor in Post-Soviet State-Building. *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 20.2 (2012): 149-56.

Week 05. Post-Communist Reform Trajectories

- Blokker P. Post-Communist Modernization, Transition Studies, and Diversity in Europe. *European Journal of Social Theory*. Vol. 8/4 (2005): 503-525.
- Kuzio T. Transition in Post-Communist States: Triple or Quadruple? *Politics*. Vol.21/3 (2001): 168-177.
- Bunce, V. Rethinking recent democratization. Lesson from the post-communist experience. *World Politics*, 55 (2003),167-192.
- Way L. A. "Authoritarian State Building and the Sources of Regime Competitiveness in the Fourth Wave: The Cases of Belarus, Moldova, Russia, and Ukraine," *World Politics* (2005): 231-61.
- Way L. A. *Pluralism by Default, Weak Autocrats and the Rise of Competitive Politics* Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2015. Chapters 3-7.
- Bunce V., McFaul M.A., Stoner-Weiss K., eds., *Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Post-Communist World*. Cambridge University Press, 2009. Chapters 1-2, 9, Epilogue.
- Carey H.F., Raciborski R. Postcolonialism: A Valid Paradigm for the Former Sovietized States and Yugoslavia? *East European Politics and Societies*. Vol.18, No. 2. (2004): 191-235.

Week 06: European Union's Enlargement and Reform Promotion

- Vachudova, M. Europe Undivided: Democracy, Leverage, and Integration after Communism. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. P. 63-260.
- Grabbe H. A Partnership for Accession? The Implications of EU Conditionality for the Central and East European Applicants. EUI Working Paper 99/12 / European University Institute., 1999. 34 p.

- Zagorski, A. EU Policies towards Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus. Geneva Centre for Security Policy, Occasional Paper Series, No 35, 2003. 14 p.
- Popescu N., Wilson A. The limits of enlargement-lite: European and Russian power in the troubled neighbourhood. Policy Report. London: ECFR, 2009. 64 p.

Week 07: Ukraine: Three Revolutions and a War I

- Wilson A. The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation. - New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015. Chapters 4-7.
- Moroney J.D.P., Kuzio T., Molchanov M. (eds.). Ukrainian foreign and security policy: theoretical and comparative perspectives. Westport, Praeger, 2002. Chapters 3, 5, 7, 11.
- Whitmore S. State and Institution Building under Kuchma. Problems of Post-Communism. Vol. 52, 5. (2005): 3–11.
- Kuzio T. Nationalism, Identity and Civil Society in Ukraine: Understanding the Orange Revolution. Communist and Post-Communist Studies 43.3 (2010), 285-96.
- Wilson A. Ukraine's orange revolution. New Haven: Yale University. Press, 2005. Chapters 5-10.
- Wolczuk K. Implementation without Coordination: The Impact of EU Conditionality on Ukraine under the European Neighbourhood Policy. Europe-Asia Studies. Vol. 61, 2 (2009), 187–211.

Week 08: Ukraine: Three Revolutions and a War II

- D’Anieri P. Nationalism and International Politics: Identity and Sovereignty in the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict. Nationalism & Ethnic Politics. Vol. 3, № 2. (1997) P. 1–28.
- Bukkvoll T. Off the Cuff Politics – Explaining Russia’s Lack of a Ukraine Strategy. Europe-Asia Studies. Vol. 53, 8 (2001), 1141–1157.
- Aslund A. How Ukraine Became a Market Economy and Democracy. Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2009. Chapters 8, 9.
- Wynnyckyj M. A Chronicle and Analysis of the Revolution of Dignity. Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2019. Chapters 7- 11.
- Sasse G., Lackner A. (2018) War and identity: the case of the Donbas in Ukraine, Post-Soviet Affairs, 34:2-3, 139-157.

Week 09: Belarus at an Autocratic Impasse?

- Balmaceda M. M., Clem J. I., Tarlow L. L. (Eds.), Independent Belarus: domestic determinants, regional dynamics, and implications for the West. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2002. Chapters 3, 6, 7, 10.
- Lewis A. (Ed.), The EU and Belarus: between Moscow and Brussels. London: Kogan Page, 2002. Chapters 1-2, 10, 25.
- Eke, S., & Kuzio, T. (2000). Sultanism in Eastern Europe: The Socio-Political Roots of Authoritarian Populism in Belarus. Europe-Asia Studies, 52(3), 523-547.
- Bedford S. The 2020 Presidential Election in Belarus: Erosion of Authoritarian Stability and Re-Politicization of Society. Nationalities Papers 49, no. 5 (2021): 808–19.
- Marples D.R. Changing Belarus, Canadian Slavonic Papers, 63:3-4 (2021), 278-295.

Week 10: Georgia and Moldova: Balancing on the Shoulders of Giants

- Kakachia K, Minesashvili S. Identity politics: Exploring Georgian foreign policy behavior. *Journal of Eurasian Studies*. 2015; 6(2):171-180.
- Welt C. The Thawing of a Frozen Conflict: The Internal Security Dilemma and the 2004 Prelude to the Russo-Georgian War. *Europe-Asia Studies* 62, no. 1 (2010), 63-97.
- Cornell S. E., Starr S. F., eds., *The Guns of August 2008: Russia's War in Georgia*. M.E. Sharpe, 2009. Chapters 1, 6, 10, 11.
- Charles King C. Marking time in the middle ground: Contested identities and Moldovan foreign policy, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 19:3 (2003), 60-82.
- Cristian Cantir C., Ryan Kennedy R. Balancing on the Shoulders of Giants: Moldova's Foreign Policy toward Russia and the European Union. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, Volume 11, Issue 4. (2015), 397–416.

Week 11: Elephant in the Room: Russia's Neo-Imperialism in the Eastern Neighborhood

- Wallander C. Russian Transimperialism and Its Implications. *The Washington Quarterly*. Vol. 30, no. 2 (2007), 107–122.
- Samokhvalov V. Relations in the Russia–Ukraine–EU triangle: 'zero-sum game' or not? *EUISS Occasional Paper*, 68, September 2007. 39 p.
- M. Emerson M., Checchi A., Fujiwara N., Gajdosova L. *Synergies vs. Spheres of Influence in the Pan-European Space*. Brussels: CEPS, 2009. 104 p.
- Mankoff J. *Russian Foreign Policy: The Return of Great Power Politics*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010. Chapters 4, 6.
- Hill F., Gaddy C.G. *Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin*. Brookings Institution Press, 2013. Chapters 1-2, 10-14.
- Radin A., Demus A., Marcinek K. *Understanding Russian Subversion: Patterns, Threats, and Responses*. RAND Corporation, February 2020. 32 p.

Week 12: U.S. Policy and Security Interests in the Eastern Europe

- Herbst J. E., Åslund A., Kramer D.J., Alexander Vershbow A., Whitmore B. *Global Strategy 2022: Thwarting Kremlin aggression today for constructive relations tomorrow*. Atlantic Council, 2022.
- Stoner K. E. *Russia Resurrected: Its Power and Purpose in a New Global Order*. Oxford University Press, 2021. Chapters 2-5.
- Welt C. *Ukraine: Background, Conflict with Russia, and U.S. Policy*. Congressional Research Service. Report R45008, October 5, 2021.
- Pifer S. *The Eagle and the Trident: U.S.-Ukraine Relations in Turbulent Times*, Brookings Institution, Brookings Institution Press, 2017. Chapters 1-2, 4, 8.
- Bugajski J. *The Eastern Dimension of America's New European Allies*. Strategic Studies Institute, October 2007. P.1-163.

Week 13: A New Cold War? Regional Security Landscape after 2014

- Wilson A. *Ukraine Crisis: What it Means for the West*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014. Chapters 6 - 10.
- Biersack J., O'Lear S. The Geopolitics of Russia's Annexation of Crimea: Narratives, Identity, Silences, and Energy. *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 55, no. 3 (May 2014): 247-69.
- Snyder T. Integration and Disintegration: Europe, Ukraine, and the World, *Slavic Review*, Vol. 74, No. 4 (Winter 2015), pp. 695–707.
- Delwaide J. Identity and Geopolitics: Ukraine's Grappling with Imperial Legacies, *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, Vol. 32/33, (2011–2014): 179–207.
- Munich Security Report 2020: Westlessness. Munich Security Conference, 2020. 102 p.

Week 14: Re-Setting the Scene: Russia's Invasion of Ukraine and its Global Ramifications

- Gershman C. A Fight for Democracy: Why Ukraine Matters, *World Affairs*, Vol. 177, No. 6 (March / April 2015), pp. 47–56.
- Hall Gardner H. The Russian annexation of Crimea: regional and global ramifications. *European Politics and Society*, 17:4 (2016), 490-505.
- Krastev I., Leonard M. The Crisis of European Security: What Europeans Think About the War in Ukraine, Policy Brief from the European Council on Foreign Relations, February 2022.
- Aslund A., Haring M., Taylor W.B., Herbst J.E., Fried D., Vershbow A. Biden and Ukraine: A Strategy for the New Administration, Issue Brief. Atlantic Council, March 2021.

University Policies

Attendance Policy

The university views class attendance and participation as an individual student responsibility. Students are expected to attend class and to complete all assignments.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about excused absences, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Makeup Work Policy

Students will be excused from attending class on the day of a graded activity or when attendance contributes to a student's grade, for the reasons stated in Student Rule 7, or other reason deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about makeup work, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Absences related to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 may necessitate a period of more than 30 days for make-up work, and the timeframe for make-up work should be agreed upon by the student and instructor” ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.1](#)).

“The instructor is under no obligation to provide an opportunity for the student to make up work missed because of an unexcused absence” ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.2](#)).

Students who request an excused absence are expected to uphold the Aggie Honor Code and Student Conduct Code. (See [Student Rule 24](#).)

Academic Integrity Statement and Policy

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do.”

“Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all work submitted to an instructor. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is indeed the work of that student. Students must keep appropriate records at all times. The inability to authenticate one’s work, should the instructor request it, may be sufficient grounds to initiate an academic misconduct case” ([Section 20.1.2.3, Student Rule 20](#)).

You can learn more about the Aggie Honor System Office Rules and Procedures, academic integrity, and your rights and responsibilities at aggiehonor.tamu.edu.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy

Texas A&M University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, please contact the Disability Resources office on your campus (resources listed below) Disabilities may include, but are not limited to attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability related needs with Disability Resources and their instructors as soon as possible.

Disability Resources is located in the Student Services Building or at (979) 845-1637 or visit disability.tamu.edu.

Title IX and Statement on Limits to Confidentiality

Texas A&M University is committed to fostering a learning environment that is safe and productive for all. University policies and federal and state laws prohibit gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

With the exception of some medical and mental health providers, all university employees (including full and part-time faculty, staff, paid graduate assistants, student workers, etc.) are Mandatory Reporters

and must report to the Title IX Office if the employee experiences, observes, or becomes aware of an incident that meets the following conditions (see [University Rule 08.01.01.M1](#)):

- The incident is reasonably believed to be discrimination or harassment.
- The incident is alleged to have been committed by or against a person who, at the time of the incident, was (1) a student enrolled at the University or (2) an employee of the University.

Mandatory Reporters must file a report regardless of how the information comes to their attention – including but not limited to face-to-face conversations, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. Although Mandatory Reporters must file a report, in most instances, a person who is subjected to the alleged conduct will be able to control how the report is handled, including whether or not to pursue a formal investigation. The University’s goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and to ensure access to the resources you need.

Students wishing to discuss concerns in a confidential setting are encouraged to make an appointment with [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS).

Students can learn more about filing a report, accessing supportive resources, and navigating the Title IX investigation and resolution process on the University’s [Title IX webpage](#).

Statement on Mental Health and Wellness

Texas A&M University recognizes that mental health and wellness are critical factors that influence a student’s academic success and overall wellbeing. Students are encouraged to engage in healthy self-care by utilizing available resources and services on your campus

Students who need someone to talk to can contact Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) or call the TAMU Helpline (979-845-2700) from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. weekdays and 24 hours on weekends. 24-hour emergency help is also available through the National Suicide Prevention Hotline (800-273-8255) or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

College and Department Policies

The Bush School of Government and Public Service supports the Texas A&M University commitment to diversity, and welcomes individuals of all ages, backgrounds, citizenships, disabilities, ethnicities, family statuses, genders, gender identities, geographical locations, languages, military experiences, political views, races, religions, sexual orientations, socioeconomic statuses, and/or work experiences (see <http://diversity.tamu.edu/>). Accordingly, all of us in this class are expected to respect the different experiences, beliefs, and values expressed by others, and to engage in reasoned discussions that refrain from derogatory comments or dehumanizing language about other people, cultures, groups, or viewpoints.

Intellectual argument and disagreement are a fundamental element of both the academic world and the policy process. Disagreement does not, in and of itself, mean disrespect. However, the way that disagreement is expressed can be disrespectful. Unprofessional, insensitive, or disrespectful behaviors

(such as using dehumanizing, derogatory, or coarse language; dismissing ideas based on the characteristics of the speaker/writer; or expressing threat or intent to harm, even if framed “as a joke”) are inconsistent with the Bush School's commitment to diversity and will not be tolerated by faculty or students participating in this class. This applies both inside and outside of the classroom and includes electronic venues such as GroupMe.