

## Course Information

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

## Instructor Details

Instructor: Senior Lecturer Kateryna Shynkaruk  
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Office Hours: By appointment

## 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 did not? 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 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 policy 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 & exercises (60%)**

Each student will give a 15-minute presentation, individually or in a team of two, discussing a specific topic related to the class, beginning week #3. Students will coordinate the topics of their interest with the professor at least one week in advance of each presentation. The presentation will count for 20%. As an alternative to in-class presentations, students will be able to write 1,500 words essays on the assigned topics. All students will participate in two simulation team exercises assigned by the professor at least one week in advance. The 20 points for the presentations, exercises or essays will be graded as follows: content – 7%, analysis – 7%, presentation / format, style – 6%.

**Final Policy Paper (30%)**

Students will write a 3,000-word policy 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 research questions and suitable analytical framework, as well as relevant literature. The 30 points for the paper will be graded as follows: content – 11%, policy analysis – 11%, format, style – 8%. The final exam papers are due by *November 20, 2023*.

**Late Work Policy**

- Late submission of the written assignment will be penalized by 2 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, August 24: Introduction.**

Course overview, discussing your research focus and policy interests and topics for the coursework. Beginning of readings.

- Snyder T. *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin*. New York: Basic Books, 2010. P. 1-154.
- Yekelchik S. *Ukraine: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford University Press, 2020. Chapter 3.

**Week 02, August 31: East European Bloodlands and Emergence of the Nation States**

- Plokhy S. *The Last Empire: The Final Days of the Soviet Union*. New York: Basic Books, 2014. Chapters 3, 8, 10, 17.
- D'Anieri, Paul J. *Ukraine and Russia: From Civilized Divorce to Uncivil War*. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019. Chapter 3.
- Plokhy S. *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine*. New York: Basic Books, 2015. P. 201-322.

**Week 03, September 7: Setting the Scene: The Fall of the Iron Curtain and Broader European Context**

- Yekelchik S. *Ukraine: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford University Press, 2020. Chapter 4.
- Vachudova, M. *Europe Undivided: Democracy, Leverage, and Integration after Communism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. P. 11 -24.

- Bunce V. Rethinking Recent Democratization: Lessons from the Postcommunist Experience. *World Politics* 55 (January 2003), 167-92.

**Week 04, September 14: Introducing Key Actors. Post-Communist Reform Trajectories**

- Kuzio T. Transition in Post-Communist States: Triple or Quadruple? *Politics*. Vol.21/3 (2001): 168-177.
- 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.
- Zagorski, A. EU Policies towards Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus. Geneva Centre for Security Policy, Occasional Paper Series, No 35, 2003. 14 p.

**Week 05, September 21: Elephant in the Room: Russia's Neo-Imperialism in the Eastern Neighborhood I**

- Popescu N., Wilson A. The limits of enlargement-lite: European and Russian power in the troubled neighbourhood. Policy Report. London: ECFR, 2009. 64 p.
- 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.
- Peter Pomerantsev. Nothing is True and Everything is Possible: The Surreal Heart of the New Russia. Public Affairs, 2014.

**Week 06, September 28: Elephant in the Room: Russia's Neo-Imperialism in the Eastern Neighborhood II**

- D’Anieri, Paul J. Ukraine and Russia: From Civilized Divorce to Uncivil War. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019. Chapter 6.
- Hill F., Gaddy C.G. Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin. Brookings Institution Press, 2013. Chapters 1-2, 10-14.
- Stoner K. E. Russia Resurrected: Its Power and Purpose in a New Global Order. Oxford University Press, 2021. Chapters 2-5.

**Week 07, October 5: Ukraine: Three Revolutions and a War I**

- Serhy Yekelchuk. Ukraine: What Everyone Needs to Know. Oxford University Press, 2020. Chapter 4-5.
- 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.
- Marci Shore. The Ukrainian Night: An Intimate History of Revolution. Yale University Press, 2018.

**Week 08, October 12: Ukraine: Three Revolutions and a War II**

- Serhy Yekelchuk. Ukraine: What Everyone Needs to Know. Oxford University Press, 2020. Chapter 6-7.
- 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.

**Week 09, October 19: U.S. Policy and Security Interests in Eastern Europe**

- Eugene M. Fishel. The Moscow Factor: U.S. Policy toward Sovereign Ukraine and the Kremlin. HURI, 2002. Introduction, Chapters 5-6.
- 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.
- 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.

**Week 10, October 26: 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.
- Snyder T. Integration and Disintegration: Europe, Ukraine, and the World, Slavic Review, Vol. 74, No. 4 (Winter 2015), pp. 695–707.
- D’Anieri, Paul J. Ukraine and Russia: From Civilized Divorce to Uncivil War. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019. Chapters 7-8.

**Week 11, November 2: 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.
- Bedford S. The 2020 Presidential Election in Belarus: Erosion of Authoritarian Stability and Repoliticization of Society. Nationalities Papers 49, no. 5 (2021): 808–19.
- Marples D.R. Changing Belarus, Canadian Slavonic Papers, 63:3-4 (2021), 278-295.
- 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.

**Week 12, November 9: Georgia and Moldova: Balancing on the Shoulders of Giants I**

- 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.
- 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.

**Week 13, November 16: Georgia and Moldova: Balancing on the Shoulders of Giants II**

- 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 14, November 23: Thanksgiving break****Week 15, November 30: Re-Setting the Scene: Russia's War on Ukraine and its Global Ramifications**

- Greminger T., Vestner T. The Russia-Ukraine War's Implications for Global Security: A First Multi-Issue Analysis. Geneva Centre for Security Policy, August 2022.
- 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](http://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](http://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](https://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.