Welcome to Political Science 4216, the Politics of Eastern Europe! Last autumn marked 25 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall, and over the past two and a half decades, the countries of the former Warsaw Pact have undergone massive political, social, and economic transformations. Today the region is marked by stunning diversity in terms of political outcomes. In this course, we will explore these varied political trajectories and use the cases of post-communist Europe as a laboratory to answer broad questions concerning political transformation and development.

After examining the contours of single-party communist rule and state socialism in Eastern Europe, we will focus on (1) the sources and dynamics of the transitions to post-communism in that area; (2) the elements of the democratic political regime and market economy towards which countries in this region strived; (3) the similarities and differences across the several countries during this period of simultaneous transformations; and (4) the problems of and prospects for deepening democratic rule and a market economy in the twenty-first century.

Course Goals:

This course was designed with a handful of end goals in mind. The first is for all of us to become more critical consumers of political information and arguments. We are going to use the political, economic, and social transformation in the post-communist world as a lens through which to understand theories of political science as well as current events in and beyond the region. As this course features a heavy area studies component, another important goal is that we increase our familiarity with the historic and cultural backgrounds of the countries in Eastern Europe and (hopefully) come to better appreciate the diversity of the region and its citizens. In all of this we will wrestle with the immense complexity of political outcomes such as the formation of democratic political systems, the dissolution or survival of states and regimes, and European integration.

On a more practical note, this class is an opportunity to hone key analytical skills that will serve you well regardless of the path you choose upon completing your degree at Ohio State. Thus, we will work throughout the term to ensure that we are all careful researchers who can make and critique arguments through clear speech and writing. To that end, we will pursue independent research projects and work throughout the course to apply the language and methods of scientific research to the study of political phenomena.
Evaluation:

In-class assignments, quizzes, and participation 25%

Each class period will feature a mixture of lecture, discussion, and interactive assignments. We are fortunate to have a small class size that will make discussion and more dynamic class activities possible. There will be periodic reading quizzes at the beginning of class, and group work, in-class writing prompts, research workshops, and role-play simulations will feature heavily throughout the course. Thus, it is imperative to come to class having completed the assigned reading and ready to interact with the subject matter and one another. All in-class assignments that factor in to this portion of your final grade will be posted on Carmen quickly after we complete them in class, so you will be able to keep tabs on this portion of your grade easily. If you are not in class for one of these assignments, you will receive a 0 for that assignment. I will drop the lowest participation grade. Thus, you have a free pass on class attendance, no questions asked. There will also be extra credit to improve the participation grade. Beyond that, there will be absolutely no exceptions or makeups outside of officially documented, university approved absences.

Exams (2 at 17.5% each) 35%

There will be two exams, each covering half of the course material. Thus, the final exam is not cumulative and focuses on materials presented after the midterm. Exams will include a mix of essays and concept identifications drawn from the “key terms” listed at the start of each lecture. I will distribute study guides in advance of each exam.

Research Paper 40%

The most significant portion of the course grade will be determined by a cumulative research project. This project will give you the opportunity to pursue your own interests in a research area of your choice and to hone your analytic thinking, research, and writing skills. We will work on this research project all term, tackling it bit by bit as the course progresses through progressive assignments and in-class research workshops. The following individual elements will go into the final research paper grade:

- Research question brainstorming and consultation 2% course grade bonus
- Research question and thesis statement 5%
- Annotated literature review 5%
- Argument Outline 5%
- Final paper: 25%
Grades:

Letter grades are assigned according to the standard OSU grading scheme:

- **“A”** (100-93.3), **“A-”** (92.99 – 90.00):
  - Student satisfied course objectives in an excellent manner.
- **“B+”** (89.99 – 87.00), **“B”** (86.99 – 83.00), **“B-”** (82.99 – 80.00):
  - Student satisfied course objectives in an above-average manner.
- **“C+”** (79.99 – 77.00), **“C”** (76.99 – 73.00), **“C-”** (72.99 – 70.00):
  - Student satisfied course objectives in an average manner.
- **“D+”** (69.99 – 67.00), **“D”** (66.99 – 60.00):
  - Student satisfied course objectives in a low but acceptable manner.
- **“E”** (< 59.00%):
  - Student did not satisfy course objectives.

NOTE: 10% will be deducted for each day an assignment is turned in late

Academic misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct: (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp).

Disability Services

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/.
Course Schedule

Note: this schedule and readings/assignments are subject to change, but students will always be consulted and given advanced notice

June 15: What are we doing in this course?
What is “Eastern Europe?” What will we learn by studying this region?

June 17: What was state socialism?
What was communism? What was it like for the people living under this system? How does political ideology become social reality, and vice versa?
***MAP QUIZ***
- Extra Credit: Watch Goodbye Lenin! (on reserve at the Thompson Library) and take the quiz on Carmen for 5 participation points. Due by the midterm.

June 22: How and why did communism collapse in Eastern Europe?
What happened in 1989? What can this region teach us about revolutions and regime changes?
Research workshop: intro to the project; asking and answering questions in the social sciences.

June 24: Replacing communist regimes with...what?
What is democracy? What are the unique challenges of building democracy after state socialism?
***Last day for research question consultation with Paul (2% course grade bonus!!)***
- Essay: “What’s gone wrong with democracy?” The Economist, 2015:
Sunday, June 28  

**Research project: thesis statement due in Carmen dropbox by 11:59PM**

**June 29: Post-communist political culture and civil society**  
What role does culture play in political development? How do culture and civil society affect democratization in (and beyond) Eastern Europe? Do citizens in the region support democracy?


**July 1: The economic transition and the simultaneity problem**  
How do you build a market economy from scratch? What was the best strategy for reform and economic prosperity? What did these transitions mean for normal people?


**July 6: The economic transition and the problem of corruption**  
How do you create a private firm from a state owned enterprise? What potential exists in this process for corruption, and how can it be combated?

Research workshop: finding and using academic sources.


**July 8:**  

**Midterm Exam**

**Sunday, July 12**  

**Research project: annotated bibliography due in Carmen dropbox by 11:59PM**
July 13: How well do these new democracies represent citizens?
How do democracies represent citizens in general, and in the post-communist world in particular?
Research workshop: making and critiquing arguments; the problems of inference and causation.

July 15: Global and international forces
How can outside actors influence domestic politics? What is the European Union, and how did it affect political development in Eastern Europe? What does the EU mean for democracy in Eastern Europe?

Sunday, July 19 ***Research project: argument outline due in Carmen dropbox by 11:59PM***

July 20: Nationalism and political violence in the region
What happened in the former Yugoslavia? Why does violence between groups break out in some places but not in others?
Research workshop: scientific writing.
July 22: Russia, the West, and the crisis in Ukraine
What is happening in Ukraine? Is a new Cold War on the horizon?
  o Current events piece(s) TBA

Sunday, July 26 ***Final paper due in Carmen dropbox by 11:59PM***

July 27: The crisis in Ukraine (part 2): Documentary Maidan and discussion
No readings – finish your papers!

July 29: Lessons learned, challenges remaining
What can the Eastern European experience tell us about democratization in general? Are “Eastern Europe” and “Post-Communist” useful terms anymore? When can we start calling “new democracies” simply democracies?

Monday, August 3, 2PM ****Final Exam****
Your primary accomplishment for this class will be your research paper. The goal of this paper is to produce a high-quality piece of scholarship that highlights your capacity for excellent research, writing, and argumentation. As research is a process of trial and error, we will complete this project gradually so we can learn from mistakes, redirect our efforts as needed, and end up with a finished product to be proud of. It will proceed in the following four steps:

1: Research question and thesis statement

**Goal:** Identify a question that interests you and will sustain your efforts in completing your own independent research over the term. This will also be your opportunity to take a first stab at making your argument.

**Assignment:** Draft a specific research question that is situated in a broad topic area and would make some contribution to our understanding of that topic. Then provide a thesis statement that will argue for some resolution to your question.

Use this template for your question to obtain full credit:¹

**Title of the question/topic**

i. (General topic) I am studying ________ your topic here ________...

ii. (Specific question) ... because I want to find out ___ your research question here _____...

iii. (Significance) ... in order to help my readers understand ____ what we will learn from your research.

Next, construct a thesis statement that makes an argument. This may take several forms, but you will want to ensure that you clearly identify your dependent variable and independent variable(s). It can be a single sentence, and should be something along the lines of:

My dependent variable is ___ outcome of interest ________, and I argue that ___ your argument logic and independent variable. ___

¹ This template comes from *The Craft of Research* by Booth, Colomb, and Williams (http://www.amazon.com/Research-Edition-Chicago-Writing-Publishing/dp/0226065669). For any of you interested in pursuing a career that involves research, I would highly recommend picking it up!
Strategies for thinking of a good question:
- Think about what is **most interesting to you** about the subject matter of the course and work from there. What do you care about?
- Think about some sources of **variation in an outcome** that you could explain. That is, what is different among countries? In the same country over time? Among groups within a country?
- Try thinking about outcomes that are **surprising**, either from the perspective of common sense or from the perspective of existing research on the topic. What is perplexing? How might you explain exceptions?
- Political outcomes are very complicated animals, so trying to be as **specific** as possible will pay off in the end because things always get more complex as you learn more about them.
- Try and find something you can research! **Can you find information** on this topic? Do a quick search on Google Scholar or another source for academic research and make sure there are some published sources you can draw upon.

Submit a word document with your research question and thesis statement in the formats above to Carmen’s dropbox by 11:59PM Sunday, June 28th. From there I will provide you with written feedback on both your research question and thesis statement. By no means are these questions set in stone, and upon completing this assignment and receiving my feedback, you may very well decide to pursue another topic. The point here is to get the ball rolling because very soon we will start doing the research in earnest.
2: Annotated literature review

Goal: Reading existing scholarship is integral to the process of doing research. This portion of the project will get you searching a bit more broadly for sources relevant to your research question. The idea is that you gather these sources and do a quick skim of them so you are ready to put your literature review together in short order. Keep your research question and thesis statement in mind while doing this, both so you get the most pertinent sources and so you can update your question or variables if you learn new information.

Assignment: Provide 4 academic sources that you will build upon for your research project. For each, provide a citation and a brief overview of what the article says and how it connects to your article. For each article, briefly summarize the main point and show how it connects to your argument or has affected your thinking on the matter. While you are certainly encouraged to bring evidence from current events under consideration in your research paper, here please stick to peer reviewed research published in academic journals or books. We will discuss what this means, and how to find these sources, in great detail in our research workshop on July 6th.

Example: If I was working on a research paper examining support for democracy in EE, I might draw upon the piece we read by Richard Rose for one of my citations. Here’s what that entry would look like:


Rose argues that support for governments in Eastern Europe is not tied to that government being a democracy, as many countries with non-democratic governments are supported by their populace. Still, he does show that support for the ideal of democracy is high across the region. This is pertinent for my argument because it rules out the degree of democracy as an independent variable, though I might still argue that the types of democratic institutions are important for support.

Things to look for:
- Gaps – What’s missing? From your survey of the work on your research question, are there big
- Contradictions – Do different studies come to different conclusions? This is a great opportunity to make a contribution! You can argue for the superiority of one theory over others, or bring your own new perspective that bridges the gap between contradictory findings.
- Anomalies – what’s weird? In looking over the literature, does anything stick out or deviate from a common pattern?

At the top of the assignment, include an updated thesis statement. Please upload this document to Carmen by 11:59PM on Sunday, July 12.
3: Argument outline

Now that you have thought in great detail about your research question and gathered appropriate scholarly sources, it is **time to start constructing your argument in greater detail**. The goal of your outline is to help you organize your thoughts about your paper and to give you the opportunity to get feedback on your argument, evidence, and structure. This will ensure that you end up with a strong paper (and a high grade!).

By **11:59PM, Sunday, July 19**, upload a paper outline (1-2 pg) including the following 6 elements to the dropbox on Carmen:

1. **Motivation**: What is the research question? What can we gain by thinking about it?
2. **Thesis**: Clearly state your argument’s independent and dependent variables in a single, succinct sentence.
3. **Overview of supporting points**: Provide at least 4 main points or bits of evidence that you use to support your thesis. More points may be necessary in the final product, but this is your chance to get going.
4. **Overview of each specific point**: For each bit of evidence, provide a short description of the logic of this point and how it supports your thesis statement. Where possible, provide citations or real world examples/data. No need for nice writing or even complete sentences; bullet points are fine.
5. **Consideration of potential problems**: Is there reverse causation? The potential for omitted variables? What alternative explanations are there? Note that these problems are almost always present in research, and often they cannot realistically be fully vanquished. The key is to acknowledge them and convincingly argue that your thesis statement still stands and helps us understand the world more fully.
6. **Conclusion**: What have we learned from this argument? Why is it important? What other questions does it raise?

**Peer review**: You will be paired with another student. Each of you will read the other’s outline and then you will do your best to provide constructive criticism that will add to your partner’s research. Refer to the research paper rubric to anticipate issues your partner might face. Upload to drobox on **July 22**.

**Evaluation:**
- **Outline**:
  - Good (5/5): All six elements are present. The argument is clearly spelled out and demonstrates evidence of critical thinking in the structure and content of points.
  - Acceptable (4/5): All six elements are present and the argument is presented clearly
  - Unacceptable (1-3/5): Argument is not clear, points are missing, and/or assignment not turned in on time
- **Peer review**:
  - Good (5/5): Provide insights that are highly constructive and critical, yet polite. Clear evidence of full consideration of the partner’s argument and evidence. Review will add great value to partner’s project.
  - Acceptable (4/5): Provide constructive criticism and relevant insight. Review will add value to partner’s project.
  - Unacceptable (1-3/5): Insights are lacking and/or assignment is not turned in on time.
4: Final Paper

Your final paper will be worth **25% of the course grade**, and the standards for this paper will be very high. It should be **10 to 15 pages (not including works cited)**, though longer papers are by no means a promise of a higher grade. **The key is a clear, logical argument that draws upon appropriate scholarly evidence and is expressed through clear writing.**

This paper should do the following things:

1. **Introduction**
   a. Clear introduction to the topic of your paper and clear articulation of the research question to be addressed.
   b. Clear statement of your main claim/thesis statement as it relates to your question.
   c. Answer the “So What?” question. Why should your reader care about this question or your argument about it?
   d. Preview: Briefly let the reader know where the paper is headed. Give a preview of the reasons you will use to support your thesis and the organization of the paper.

2. **Body of the Paper**
   a. This is the bulk of the paper. Papers will vary but all papers must demonstrate the following:
      i. Understanding of the existing literature and evidence that pertains to your question.
      ii. All papers must present at least 3-4 reasons that support their main claim/thesis. Furthermore, each reason will need to be supported with appropriate evidence.
      iii. Acknowledge and respond to potential criticisms/alternatives to your argument. Why would others disagree with what you argue? Why are they wrong and you right?

3. **Conclusion**
   a. Restate the main claim/thesis of the paper.
   b. Briefly summarize the reasons you have which support your main claim/thesis.
   c. Briefly discuss the ramifications of your argument. Here is where you revisit the “so what” question. If what you argue is correct, what does this mean for the big picture? Finally, since all papers are limited in what they can accomplish, you might also mention a few unanswered questions with regard to your topic and suggest avenues that future scholars working on this topic should pursue.

4. **References (Not Counted towards final page total)**
   a. This paper should have at least 5 sources. This isn’t a hard total but papers that are under-researched typically don’t turn out well.
## Grading Rubric for Final Paper

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Excellent (90-100%)</th>
<th>Good/Acceptable (75-90%)</th>
<th>Unacceptable (under 75%)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Argumentation</strong></td>
<td>The paper explains a clearly defined outcome (dependent variable) with a specific cause or set of causes (independent variable(s)). These variables are connected by rigorous, logical argumentation that identifies and fully explores causal mechanisms. Problems of potential omitted variables and reverse causation are thoroughly considered, as are alternative hypotheses.</td>
<td>The paper explains an outcome (dependent variable) with a specific cause or set of causes (independent variable(s)). The argument connects these variables logically. Some attention is given to problems of potential omitted variables, reverse causation and alternative hypotheses.</td>
<td>The key independent and dependent variables of the paper are muddled or unclear. The points that the author makes do not always logically lead to the conclusions he/she draws. Little to no attention is paid to alternative explanations or to problems of omitted variables and reverse causation.</td>
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<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td>The author presents evidence appropriate to making his/her point. This evidence is both broad enough to cover the topic fully and deep enough to completely analyze the proposed hypotheses. Moreover, it is absolutely free of factual errors. Evidence is drawn from peer-reviewed scholarship (at least 4 pieces). Real world examples and data are used as appropriate and current events pieces are used only illustratively.</td>
<td>The author presents enough appropriate evidence to make his or her point convincingly. This evidence is free of factual errors, and is mostly drawn from peer-reviewed scholarship (at least 4 pieces). Real world examples and data are used as appropriate and current events pieces are used only illustratively.</td>
<td>There is sparse evidence, or the evidence that is present does not support the author’s point. There are important theories or real world examples missing from the evidence, and factual errors are present. The author relies on current events pieces for primary evidence instead of appropriate peer-reviewed scholarship.</td>
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<td><strong>Structure &amp; writing</strong></td>
<td>The introduction paragraph includes a clear thesis statement linking the independent and dependent variables and an overview of the points that will support the argument. The evidence is organized logically, and sentences and paragraphs flow well and support the argument in structure. The paper then concludes with an overview of what has been established in the argument as well as its implications. Throughout, the writing is clear and correct, and attention to detail and editing is apparent.</td>
<td>The introduction paragraph includes a clear thesis statement linking the independent and dependent variables, as well as an overview of the points that will support the argument. The evidence is organized logically, and sentences and paragraphs typically flow well and support the argument in structure. The paper concludes with an overview of what has been established by the argument. Throughout, the writing is clear and correct.</td>
<td>The paper’s structure, or lack thereof, obscures the argument. Divisions between sentences and paragraphs appear arbitrary and detract from readability. Grammatical errors, awkward sentence structures, and other editing foibles are present.</td>
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