

# Eastern European Politics (CPO 3614-7241/EUS 3930-13HC)

Class Meetings: MWF 1:55 – 2:45pm  
Instructor: Anna Weissman

Location: Anderson 0034  
Email: [aweissman@ufl.edu](mailto:aweissman@ufl.edu)

Office Hours: AND 206 Fridays 12-1:45pm and by appointment

## What is this class about?

This is an intermediate undergraduate course in Comparative Politics that will introduce students to social, economic, and political issues of Eastern and Central Europe, both historical and contemporary. We will cover topics of revolution, democratization, economics, and nationalism. This is a large region with a long and varied history, so this course will provide a sampling of the important themes and issues.

## What will I learn about?

- Communism and the command economy, what life was like before and after economic “reform”
- The famous 1989 revolutions and how they set the stage for Eastern European politics today
- The politics of nationalism and national identity in ethnic conflict particularly in Central/Eastern Europe
- European Union accession and national reactions
- Populism, gay rights, and other contemporary issues in the region

## Required books:

- Gale Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe*, second edition (2011), ISBN: 9780199732630 (~\$35 on amazon)
- Slavenka Drakulic, *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed* (from \$5 used on amazon)
- Slavenka Drakulic, *Café Europa: Life After Communism* (from \$11 used on amazon)
- Timothy Garten Ash, *The Magic Lantern: The Revolution of '89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin, and Prague* (\$11 on amazon)

All other sources will be available on canvas.

## Responsibilities

### **1. Attendance and participation:**

Students are required to be in class for each of our meetings and prepared to discuss the material. Students will be permitted to miss **two** of these sessions without penalty. Each subsequent absence will result in a loss of points from the attendance grade. Attendance is integral to success in this class and accounts for 20% of the total grade. Ten attendance points will be deducted for each additional class missed (if you have missed 3 classes you will receive a 90% for attendance; 4 missed classes - 80%, 5 classes- 70%, 6 classes- 60%, 7 classes- 50%).

### **2. Weekly reading summary + discussion question:**

Students will be required to submit a **2-page summary of all the weekly readings via canvas before class on Monday**. This is a combination of summarizing all of the readings and critically evaluating the most important themes. **For full points, students must include all of the readings, and also provide one question/issue/idea meant for class or group discussion.** This can be a question or prompt for further dialogue, something you disagree with, something you don't understand, some interesting tie-in with popular culture or recent news from the region.

**The weekly reading analysis document must be submitted via canvas before class meets on Monday. The assignment will close on canvas at 1:55pm on Monday.**

Suggestions: As you read, take notes – jot down key ideas or concepts, any themes that you see woven throughout the pieces. Identify similarities and differences between the readings... do they speak to one another? Write down a discussion question that you think would be interesting to consider. Is there something that you disagree with? Have questions about? Write it down, we will discuss them in class.

**No late submissions** will be accepted, and excuses regarding internet/computer glitches/e-dogs eating e-homework will not be accepted. I advise you not to wait to the last minute.

[note: I found that summaries are the best way to do active reading and retain important information. Also, we do these summaries instead of quizzes...same effect of helping you work through the chapters, without the added stress of surprise questions. So use these wisely! These will also help immensely for the exams. Ultimately, the more you put into them, the more you will get out of them.]

### **3. Weekly groupwork:**

Research has shown that active participatory learning is more effective than passive listening, so my approach to teaching incorporates more student-led activities that empower students to share, analyze, and reflect, which enhances their grasp of the material. As a multi-dimensional approach to studying political, social, economic and cultural issues, part of the strength of this class is incorporating a multitude of perspectives. Everyone picks up on different themes and concepts, you can learn a lot from your peers!

Every Monday (or the first day of the week if there is a holiday), students will get into small groups and discuss together the prompts for that week's material. The group will share their analysis, discussion questions, and ideas with the entire class the next class meeting.

Each member of each group will submit one page of notes/ideas/thoughts taken during the groupwork at the end of the class period. (**I will not accept one page of notes collectively from the group, each person submits their own notes for participation points**). Group members are held accountable both for their individual efforts as well as their contribution to their group.

*But I hate group work!!* Group work embodies all the challenges of human social interaction—personality conflicts, differing expectations, worries about criticism, and varying levels of buy-in or resistance. But working in a group will help you develop important communication and processing skills that will aid you in future classes, your career, in your relationships and beyond. Recognize the diversity of views on an issue, hear people out, take this time to consider another perspective and refine your own. I promise it'll be more interesting than listening to me drone on! (Note: if there are any issues, please see me)

### **4. and 5. Midterm Exam and Final Exams:**

Both the midterm and final exams will be blue book, essay question exams. Students will choose three out of the five question prompts. You may use your own, handwritten notes during the exams; no photocopies or typed notes will be allowed.

**Midterm Exam: Friday, Oct. 12**

**Final Exam: Monday, Dec. 10, 3pm-5pm**

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Grading Scale</u>			
Attendance	20%	A	93-100	C	73-76
Weekly Reading Summary	20%	A-	90-92	C-	70-72
Groupwork	20%	B+	87-89	D+	67-69
Midterm Exam	20%	B	83-96	D	63-66
Final Exam	<u>20%</u>	B-	80-82	D-	60-62
	100% total	C+	77-79	E	below 60

**Due Dates** The dates for assignments are final, unless modified by the instructor.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

### **Students with Disabilities (Americans with Disabilities Act ADA)**

In compliance with UF policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss academic accommodations that you may require as a student with a disability. Request for academic accommodations should be made during the first week of the semester (except for unusual circumstances) so arrangements can be made. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to me when requesting accommodation. Let me know if you have any questions about this, I am here to help.

### **Campus Resources, Health and Wellness**

**U Matter, We Care:** If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

**Counseling and Wellness Center:** <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu> 352-392-1575

**Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)** Student Health Care Center, 352-392-1161

## Phone and Laptop Policy

I don't mind if you use a laptop to take notes, but a huge component of this class is discussion and social interaction with your neighbor and myself – harder to do when looking down. As you can imagine, the potential for distraction is also very high. Please commit to being focused for the very short time we are together. For a mere 50 minutes, I know you can do it! If I do observe consistent instagramming or other distractions, you will be asked to leave the laptop at home. A phone does not a good note-taking-device make, so please keep those quiet and out of sight. If you need to make an important call or text, please excuse yourself from the classroom.

## Academic Dishonesty

Any evidence of cheating or plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment, and an academic dishonesty case report will be filed with UF administration. All work will be checked online for evidence of plagiarism, so be sure to cite your sources. **When in doubt, CITE! Unintentional or intentional plagiarism is *still* plagiarism.**

Acts of Plagiarism include:

- Turning in a paper or another assignment that was written by someone else (i.e., by another student, by a research service, or downloaded off the internet);
- Copying, verbatim, a sentence or paragraph of text from the work of another author without properly acknowledging the source through a commonly accepted citation style and using quotation marks;
- Paraphrasing (i.e., restating in your own words, changing select words) text written by someone else without citing that author)
- Using a unique idea or concept, which you discovered in a specific reading, without citing that work

## About Me

I am originally from Chicago, IL and a first-generation Polish-American, both of my parents were born in Poland. I spent part of my undergraduate career in Canterbury Christchurch College in Canterbury, England and SKEMA in Sophia Antipolis, France, and received my Bachelor's degree in International Relations from Lake Forest College in Lake Forest, IL. I have a Master's degree in Political Science from UF, and I am completing my PhD in International Relations, Comparative Politics, and Gender Studies. My work is on nationalism, reproductive rights, and LGBTQ politics in Poland, Sweden, France, and the Czech Republic. In my spare time, I watch crappy British reality TV, try to grow stuff, and hang out with my awesome dog Mimo. I am really looking forward to learning more about you and spending time together this semester!

## Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last 2-3 weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>

## Course Schedule

\*Please have the reading and weekly reading summaries completed before class on Monday.

\*Be advised, the canvas modules do not include all readings, just the ones that aren't on the book list.

\*\*\*The syllabus on the canvas page will be the most updated version.

**Week 1** (8/22-24) Syllabus overview and introduction to course

**Week 2** (8/27-31) **Introduction to Eastern European Politics**

We are just meeting on Monday 8/27; **no class Wed 8/29 and Fri 8/31** (I am at the APSA conference)

Readings:

-Wolchik and Curry, Ch 1 "Democracy, the Market, and the Return to Europe: From Communism to the European Union" (on canvas)

-Batt, Introduction, "Defining Central and Eastern Europe" in *Developments in Central and East European Politics* 3 (canvas)

*Further reading:*

-Jan Gross, "Social Consequences of War: Preliminaries to the Study of Imposition of Communist Regimes in East Central Europe," *East European Politics and Societies* 3 (1989): 198-214

**Week 3 (9/5-7; no class Mon 9/3, Labor Day; reading analysis due Wed) What was communism and the command economy?**

Readings:

- Verdery ch 1 "What was Socialism, and Why Did it Fall?" (canvas) from *What was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* Katherine Verdery (Princeton Univ Press 2012)
- White, ch. 1 "What Was Communism?" (canvas) from *Communism and its Collapse*, Stephen White (Routledge 2001)
- Paul Gregory, "Stalinist Command Economy," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (January 1990): 18-25. (canvas)

*Further reading:*

Andrew Janos, "What Was Communism: A Retrospective in Comparative Analysis," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 29(1): 1-24.

**Week 4 (9/10-14) Life under Communism: The Politics of Everyday life**

Readings:

- Bracewell, "Eating Up Yugoslavia: Cookbooks and Consumption in Socialist Yugoslavia"
  - Mazurek, "Keeping it Close to Home: Resourcefulness and Scarcity in Late Socialist and Postsocialist Poland"
- (both from *Communism Unwrapped: Consumption in Cold War Eastern Europe* - on canvas)
- selections, Slavenka Drakulic, *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed*

**Week 5 (9/17-21) Czech Prague Spring and Polish Solidarity Movement**

Readings:

- Revolution 1989: p. 28-57 (Solidarity, The Electrician, Civil War) (canvas)
- Revolution 1989: p. 64-78 (The Power of the Powerless) (canvas)
- Václav Havel, "The Power of the Powerless"
- [film](#) for Friday

*Democratization*

**Week 6 (9/24-28) 1989 Revolutions – Poland and Hungary**

Readings:

- Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down*: Poland: 123-150
- Ash, "Warsaw" in *The Magic Lantern*
- Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down* - Hungary: 95-117, 158-162

**Week 7 (10/1-5) 1989 Revolutions – E Germany, Czechoslovakia**

Readings:

- Ash, "Berlin" and "Prague" in *The Magic Lantern*
- Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down*
  - East Germany: 69-75, 162-168
  - Czechoslovakia: 174-183

***Revolution...Then What?***

*Economic Reform?*

**Week 8 (10/8-12) Daily Life After Communism**

Monday and Wednesday: *Café Europa*, Slavenka Drakulic (selections)

**Friday: Midterm**

**Week 9 (10/15-19) Centrally Planned Economy, gradualism vs. shock-therapy, privatization**

Readings:

Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down*:

- The Reform Leaders, 269-278 (Poland and Hungary)
- The Reform Laggards, 306-317, 282-287 (Romania, Bulgaria,
- Pine, Ch. 5 "Retreat to the Household? Gendered Domains in Postsocialist Poland," in *Postsocialism: Ideals, Ideologies, and Practices in Eurasia* (2002 Routledge) (canvas)

*Further Reading/Viewing:*

- Andrew Barnes, "Comparative Theft: Context and Choice in the Hungarian, Czech, and Russian Transformations, 1989-2000," *EEPS* 17 (2003): 533-565.
- Jeffrey Sachs, *Poland's Jump to the Market Economy* (MIT Press, 1993)
- Documentary on economic reform in Russia and Poland "The Commanding Heights" (Episode 2, Chapters 12-21); available at [http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/commandingheights/lo/story/ch\\_menu\\_02.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/commandingheights/lo/story/ch_menu_02.html)
- B. Eichengreen, *The European Economy Since 1945*, (Princeton UP: 2007), Ch. 5 "Eastern Europe and the Planned Economy": pp. 131-162.

*Nationalism, National Identity and Ethnic Conflict*

**Week 10 (10/22-26) Politics of Nationalism in Eastern/Central Europe**

Readings

- Ignatieff, ch. 1 Croatia and Serbia, in *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism* (canvas)
- Csergo, ch. 4 in Wolchik and Curry, "Nationalism, Ethnicity, and the Expansion of Democracy" (canvas)
- Verdery, ch. 3 "From Parent-State to Family Patriarchs: Gender and Nation in Contemporary Eastern Europe" in *What was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* (Princeton Univ Press 2012) (canvas)

**Week 11 (10/29-31; no class 11/2, homecoming) Ethnic Conflict: Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia**

- Hoare, ch. 6 "The War of Yugoslav Succession," in *Central and Southeast European Politics since 1989* (canvas)
- Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down*: 203-235; 278-282; 317-336

Film: Death of Yugoslavia

Fri: no class, homecoming

*Return to Europe? Issues in Modern Politics*

**Week 12 (11/5-9) European Union Accession**

- Stokes, *The Walls Came Tumbling Down*: 287-298.
- Grzegorz Ekiert, Jan Kubik and Milada Anna Vachudova (2007) "Democracy in the Postcommunist World," *East European Politics and Societies* 21, 1 (Winter): 7-30.
- Rupnik, Jacques, and Jan Zielonka. 2013. "Introduction: The State of Democracy 20 Years on. Domestic and External Factors." *East European Politics & Societies* 27(1): 3-25.

**Week 13 11/14-16; no class Monday 11/12 (Veterans Day)**

**Post-accession – Europeanization, backlash, or both?**

- Krzysztof Jasiewicz, (2008). "The New Populism in Poland: The Usual Suspects?" *Problems of Post-Communism* 55, no. 3 (May/June): 7-25. (canvas)
- Conor O'Dwyer. (2012) "Does the EU Help or Hinder Gay-Rights Movements in Postcommunist Europe? The Case of Poland," *East European Politics* 28(4): 332-52 (canvas)
- Binnie and Klesse, "Transnational Solidarities and LGBTQ Politics in Poland," in *LGBT Activism and the Making of Europe: A Rainbow Europe?* (Ayoub and Paternotte, editors) (canvas)

**Week 14 11/19; no class 11/21-23 (Thanksgiving break)**  
(Week 13 continued)

**Week 15 11/26-30 Populism and Right-Wing Politics**

Selections from Ruth Wodak, *The Politics of Fear: What Right-Wing Populist Discourses Mean* (canvas)

**Week 16 12/3-5 Review**

(no class Friday, Reading Day)

**Final Exam: Monday, Dec. 10 - 3pm-5pm**