Course Description
Throughout history Russia has had an ambiguous relationship with the Western world. Sometimes the West has been vilified as a threat or an enemy, and other times it has been held up by Russians as a model to emulate. Russia and the West have never treated each other with indifference, and this love/hate relationship is in full force today. Historical memories and parallels abound in popular discussions. In this course, we will examine why this has been the case and what it means for Russian foreign and security policy today. Drawing on contributions from philosophers, historians and international relations scholars and practitioners, we will discuss whether Russia’s interaction with the West has been driven by realist great power considerations, by a cultural cycle of Orthodox Slavic nationalism or “Eurasianism” vs. pro-Western internationalism, by domestic economic pressures, or by the idiosyncratic visions and interests of individual Russian leaders—and in turn, how choices made by the West have affected all of these things. Students will be encouraged to come up with their own answers to these riddles, in class discussions and assignments including a final independent research paper. This is not a survey course, but no background knowledge is required—only a deep interest in understanding Russia and its relationship to the West. There are no prerequisites.

Learning Objectives
Students who complete this course successfully will be able to:

- Demonstrate broad factual knowledge of selected key current and historical Russian political, foreign policy, and security issues.
- Apply causal theories drawn from the political science literature and other sources, to analyze, compare, and evaluate events and trends in Russian relations with the West.
- Synthesize facts and arguments across cases in order to reason critically and argue creatively, through both in-class oral discussions and written assignments.
- Perform rigorous and independent research, including through use of sources available electronically through the Columbia Library system.
- Write a compelling independent research paper.

Course Requirements and Grading
All written assignments should be double-spaced, in 12pt Times New Roman font with normal margins, and must be in either MS Word or PDF format. All assignments will be submitted via Courseworks/Canvas. Please note that undergraduates and graduates will be graded separately (in other words, undergraduates are not competing against the graduate students in the course.)

Midterm Exam: All students will complete a take-at-home midterm exam, writing two essays of approximately 1,000 words each (2,000 words total), on their choice among several assigned topics. Questions will be emailed to students on Wednesday Feb. 21, and the exam will be due via Courseworks at 5pm on Friday March 9 (i.e., the day before the official start of Spring Break).
**Research Paper:** All research papers are due via Courseworks at **noon on the last day of class, Monday Apr. 30.** All students will turn in a one-page research proposal on their paper topic, outlining their research question and what their preliminary reading has led them to think about the subject; due via Courseworks by **noon on Wednesday Feb. 21.** Performance on this research proposal assignment will be folded into the final course grade, and should be taken seriously; Prof. Marten will provide extensive comments on the proposal, which should help in creating the final paper.

**Undergraduate students** will complete an independent research paper of approximately 3,000 words (10-12 double-spaced pages), comparing at least two theories of the student’s choice, to explain one or more Russian or Soviet foreign policy outcome of the student’s choice.

**Graduate students** will complete an independent research paper of approximately 5,000 words (15-20 double-spaced pages), on a topic related to course materials that they choose in consultation with Prof. Marten. Grad students must make significant use of Russian/Soviet primary-source materials, such as memoirs, press or television interviews, government documents, etc. Students who read Russian are encouraged to use these sources in the original; students who do not read Russian are expected to use English translations of Russian materials.

**Final Exam:** All students will complete a take-at-home final exam, completing two essays of 1,000 words each (2,000 words total). On one question there will be a choice of topics; the second question will ask students to defend their preferred theoretical explanation for Russia’s relations with the West. Questions will be emailed to students on Monday April 24; the exam will be due via Courseworks at the date and time set by the university for the final exam in this course: Wednesday **May 9 at 4pm** (please note the earlier hour; Barnard rules require all take home finals to be due at the close of the regularly scheduled exam).

**Class participation:** Discussion is a crucial component of this course. Students are expected to attend all class sessions, to have completed the assigned course readings before class, and to be prepared to comment on assigned readings. For many classes Prof. Marten will hand out discussion questions in advance. Most class sessions will have Prof. Marten lecturing in the first half, and open discussion in the second half.

**Midterm exam:** 25% of total course grade  
**Research paper:** 30% of total course grade  
**Final exam:** 25% of total course grade  
**Discussion participation:** 20% of total course grade

**Exams and papers must be submitted when due; late work will be significantly penalized.** Up to 24 hours late, 1/3 grade off (e.g., an A- paper will earn a B+); up to 48 hours late, 2/3 grade off (e.g., an A- paper will earn a B); beyond that, 1 full grade off (e.g., an A- paper will earn a B-). **No late work will be accepted after one week.** If you face a medical or family emergency that prevents your turning in work on time, you must get Prof. Marten’s permission for an extension (in advance, if at all possible), and provide documentation of the emergency.

**Prof. Marten has served on the Barnard College Honor Board, and takes the issues of academic integrity and plagiarism very seriously.** For all written assignments, students may consult whomever they want about anything they wish, until they begin outlining and writing. Both the organizational structure and the written content of each assignment must be the student’s alone. Students (whether or not they are Barnard College students) must sign the Barnard College Honor Code statement on all submissions, affirming that their written work is completely their own. All sources used in the research papers must be fully and accurately referenced, including all web-based and unpublished sources (for example, prior student papers). Any student violating the Honor Code will receive an F as the final
course grade, and will face the disciplinary rules of his or her home college or school. All undergraduate students are welcome to use the Barnard or Columbia Writing Centers for all assignments.

Readings
Students should finish the assigned readings before class, so that we can discuss them in class. Many of the assigned pieces are short newspaper or blog articles. On longer and complex assignments in particular, students are not expected to read things word-for-word. Instead, it is important to learn the skill of strategic skimming—reading for the key arguments and content of each piece. Remember that you can refer back to all readings when writing the exams—and class discussions will likely highlight new aspects of assignments for all students. Please read them in the order that they are listed on the syllabus, as items listed earlier within each class session will provide important background for those that follow.

The following books have been placed on reserve at Barnard’s Wollman Library; all are also available for purchase at the Book Culture Bookstore (536 West 112th Street). Students are welcome to purchase used copies elsewhere.

Cracraft, James, ed. *Major Problems in the History of Imperial Russia*. New York: Houghton/Mifflin, 1994. (Please note that this book is out of print, so only used copies are available.)

Riasanovsky, Nicholas V. *A History of Russia*. New York: Oxford University Press. Any relatively recent edition is fine, 5th and higher. Please note that page numbers will vary by edition. (Please note that the split-volume edition is not a good choice for this course.)


In addition, many journal articles available through the Columbia Library Website and other web sources are also required, as are book excerpts posted on eReserves. These articles are just as important as the books.
CLASS SCHEDULE

Please read these pieces before our first class if possible. They are short, and bring up course themes we will return to all semester.

Columbia eLibrary:
Fyodor Lukyanov, “Putin's Foreign Policy: The Quest to Restore Russia’s Rightful Place,” *Foreign Affairs* 95, no. 3 (May/June 2016): 30-37.

**Section I. Theoretical Models: Does Putin Matter? Does Trump?**

Jan. 22: The theory of realism and Russian foreign policy

Columbia eLibrary:

Courseworks Files:

Jan. 24. Domestic politics: the informal patronage system and Russian foreign policy

Courseworks Files:

Columbia eLibrary:
Kimberly Marten, “Informal Political Networks and Putin’s Foreign Policy: The Examples of Iran and Syria,” *Problems of Post-Communism* 62 (2015): 71–87. (Note: This was published before Russia’s September 2015 military intervention in Syria.)

Jan. 29. Individual psychology: Putin as decision-maker.

**Note: at the start of class today, we will discuss some of the terrific research resources available via the Columbia eLibrary. You will be expected to use these sources in your research papers, and hence attendance at this class session is absolutely mandatory.**

Courseworks Files:

Columbia eLibrary:

Open web:
Jan. 31. Status, emotions, decline, and nationalism

Columbia eLibrary:

Coursesworks files:

Feb. 5: Philosophical roots, part I: Slavophiles versus Westernizers

Riasanovsky: “Ideologies,” located within chapter 28 (pp. 360-66 in 6th ed.).

Coursesworks Files:

Feb. 7: Philosophical roots, part II: The Eurasianists

Coursesworks Files:

Cracraft: pp. 21-31 (N.S. Trubetzkoy, “The Legacy of Genghis Khan”)

Columbia eLibrary:

Coursesworks Files:

Feb. 12-14 A case-study: Russia’s intervention in Ukraine, 2014-15

Columbia eLibrary:
Samuel Charap & Timothy J. Colton, “Breaking Point,” chap. 3 in Everyone Loses: The Ukraine Crisis and the Ruinous Contest for Post-Soviet Eurasia, Adelphi Series [electronic journal—note, this was also published as a book, but the Adelphi Series version is accessible online] 56, no. 460 (2016): 113-50. (This provides a definitive description of exactly what happened when in the Ukraine crisis.)


Open web:


Section II. The Russian Empire: Selected Cases and Historical Legacies

Feb. 19: Peter the Great: Putin’s hero, or a Westernizing villain?
   Riasanovsky: chapter 20 (pp. 213-41 in the 6th ed.)
   Cracraft: pp. 82-109 (E.V. Anisimov, “Peter I: Birth of the Empire,” and Cracraft, “Kliuchevsky on Peter the Great”), pp. 224-34 (Cracraft, “Empire versus Nation”), pp. 243 and 245-8 (“P.P. Shafirov Justifies the Empire, 1717”, plus the prior paragraph explaining it); and the documents “Peter Changes the Calendar,” “Peter’s Decree on Wearing German Clothes,” “Peter’s Decree on Shaving” (pp. 110-11), and “Peter Funds an Academy of Arts and Sciences,” “Reforming the Church” (pp. 116-23).

   Courseworks Files:
   Open web:

Feb. 21: Catherine the Great: the most realist Russian tsar of them all (even though she was a Prussian princess named Sophia).
   Riasanovsky: chapter 22 section on Catherine the Great (pp. 254-73 in 6th ed.)
   Cracraft: pp. 249-51 (“Russia Annexes Crimea”).
   Columbia eLibrary:
   Open web:

Feb. 26: The West as political polarizer: the Decembrists and Nicholas I
   Riasanovsky: chapters 25-27
   Courseworks Files:
   Open web:

Feb. 28, Mar. 5: Halfway revolutions and the international system: Alexander II and Gorbachev (two interwoven sessions).
   Riasanovsky: chapter 29
   Columbia eLibrary:
Mar. 7: No class meeting, so that students have extra time to work on the midterm exam--due on Courseworks at 5pm on Friday, March 9.

Mar. 12-14: Spring Break, no class meetings.

**Section III. The Cold War Overhang.**

**Mar. 19.** Stalin: popular villain, or misunderstood hero?

**Open web:**
https://www.ciaonet.org/catalog/31319

**Columbia eLibrary:**


**Mar. 21.** The origins of the Cold War from a Russian perspective

**Zubok:** Chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-93).

**Mar. 26.** Détente and the late Cold War from a Russian perspective.

**Zubok:** Chapters 6-8 (pp. 163-264).

**Mar. 28.** Why did the Soviets choose to end the Cold War?

**Zubok:** Chapter 10 (pp. 303-335).

**Columbia eLibrary:**

**Apr. 2.** The end of the USSR: legacies of empire.

**Courseworks Files:**
Serhii Plokhy, “Epilogue,” in *The Last Empire: The Final Days of the Soviet Union* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), pp. 388-408. Note: concentrate on his argument that the end of the Cold War was not causally related to the breakup of the USSR.
Apr. 4. NATO expansion, the Balkan wars, and Russia in the 1990s

Columbia eLibrary:

Open web:
Kimberly Marten, “Reconsidering NATO Expansion: A Counterfactual Analysis of Russia and the West,” *European Journal of International Security* 3, no. 2 (June 2018). “Online first” version here (from this cite you can click on either the HTML or PDF; open access):
https://doi.org/10.1017/eis.2017.16

Section IV. Russia and the West Today (topics and readings subject to change based on current events)

Apr. 9. International sanctions and Russian politics

Open web:

Columbia eLibrary:

Open web:


Apr. 11. Oil, natural gas, and Russia-West relations

Columbia eLibrary:


Open web:

April 16. The failure to reform the KGB—and its criminal aftermath.

Open web:

Columbia eLibrary:

Apr. 18. “Information war” and cyber conflict.

Open web:


Apr. 23. Russia, the 2016 U.S. election, and its aftermath.

Open web:


Apr. 25. A post-Western world order?

Open web:


Columbia eLibrary:

Apr. 30. There is nothing so difficult to predict as the future….

Because the research paper is due before class today, there are no assigned readings for this last class. Instead students should come prepared to debate what they think the future of Russia and the West will look like. Hint: this will be the basis for the second question on the final exam!