Russia and the West
POS GU4875
Spring 2020
Mon. and Wed. 2:40-3:55pm
Room: TBA
Prof. Kimberly Marten
Office: Milstein Center 1106

Office Hours:
Most Tuesdays, by appointment through my Google calendar account:
(Nota please be sure your own Google calendar is open, and set to the US East Coast time zone.)
https://calendar.google.com/calendar/selfscheid?stoken=UU40NNUVZZE42NkIffGRIZmF1bHR8ZGJhZWE3MTNkNTlhM2Q3M2JkYWQ3ZDNkZTNmMTkzNz
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Course Description
Throughout history Russia has had an ambiguous relationship with the Western world (defined more or less geographically as Europe, the United States, Canada, NATO, and the EU). 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 Western world have never treated each other with indifference, and this love/hate relationship is in full force today—even as longstanding Western liberal democratic norms and values are under challenge from within. 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 political and economic interests, or by the idiosyncratic visions and interests of individual Russian leaders—and in turn, how choices made by “the West” have affected all 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 will be submitted online via Courseworks/Canvas, and must be in either Word or PDF format. Please note that undergraduate and graduate students 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 an essay of up to 2,000 words in response to a single prompt focused on applying theories to make predictions about Russian policy toward Ukraine. It will be due at 5pm on Friday, Mar. 6. The prompt will be emailed to students at least two weeks in advance.

Final Exam: All students will complete a take-at-home final exam, completing two essays of approximately 1,000 words each (2,000 words total). There will be a choice of questions on each essay. One set of prompts will focus on the historical sections of the syllabus; the other set will focus on the recent and current events sections of the syllabus outside of Ukraine (including topics from earlier in the semester). 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 13 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). Questions will be emailed to students at least two weeks in advance.

There are two major purposes of the exams: (1) to monitor whether the student is doing the assigned readings and is analytically engaged with the material, and (2) to measure the student’s capacity to independently synthesize concepts across sections of the syllabus and make a coherent, original argument. In-class discussions allow students to practice these skills.

Research Paper: All students will also write an independent research paper. The purpose of the paper is to explain a particular recent or historical event or decision (or a related series of events or decisions) in Russian (or Soviet) foreign or security policy, of the student’s choice. (The only topic that is off-limits is Russian policy toward Ukraine since 2013, since that is the focus of the midterm exam.) The topic need not relate to the West (so a paper on a Russian policy decision toward China, for example, would be fine), but must focus on the question of why Moscow did what it did. The topic should be narrowly focused so that deep research can be done. (If you are struggling to think of a topic, you might get some ideas by reading ahead on the syllabus.) The paper must present two or three contending arguments from the literature that attempt to explain Moscow’s policies or decisions, and then present evidence that allows the student to analyze which explanation is best and why. A separate handout will present ideas for a good paper outline.

Students are strongly encouraged to make an office hours appointment with Prof. Marten to talk about their proposed topic before March 11, both to ensure they are on track, and so that their topic area is included in the in-class presentation of research materials on that day. For those who are unable to make an office hours appointment, 45 minutes of class time on Feb. 26
w will be set aside for open discussion on paper topics. The research paper is due via Courseworks by 5pm on Friday, Apr. 24. All research papers must make use of materials presenting Russian (or Soviet) viewpoints, such as memoirs, press reports 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 that are available on CLIO or the open web. Undergraduate students will complete an independent research paper of approximately 3,000 words (10-12 double-spaced pages). Graduate students will complete an independent research paper of approximately 5,000 words (15-20 double-spaced pages).

Class participation: Discussion is an important 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. Roll will be taken. Please email Prof. Marten in advance if you must miss class. Everyone is allowed to miss one class without penalty, for any reason. If you must miss more than one class, please plan to submit a one-page answer to one of the day’s discussion questions to make up for class participation that day. For most sessions, Prof. Marten will lecture for 30-45 minutes, followed by discussion.

Grading:
Separate handouts specify grading criteria for the exam and paper essays and for discussion participation.

Midterm exam (due Friday, Mar. 6): 20% of total course grade
Research paper (due Friday, Apr. 24): 30% of total course grade
Final exam (due Wednesday, May 13): 30% of total course grade
Discussion participation: 20% of total course grade

PLEASE READ This Entire Section: Honor Code and Plagiarism
All assignments in this class are to be completed in accordance with the Barnard Honor Code, whether or not the student is a Barnard student. Courseworks will utilize Turnitin.com to check all essays for plagiarism. “Plagiarism” is the use of someone else’s words or ideas without full and proper attribution. It is, at its core, the act of falsely implying or claiming credit for intellectual work that someone else did—and it is a violation of the Honor Code.

A paper is not “written” by cutting and pasting phrases from the work of others. Even if a cite is included to say where the cutting and pasting came from, and even if a word is changed here and there to make what some might call a “paraphrase,” that’s still plagiarism. One plagiarized phrase or sentence is plagiarism, even if the rest of the paper is original.

A paper is written by reading the work of others with an open and critical mind, taking notes in your own words on that writing, thinking about the issues independently and deeply, and then using your own words to analyze issues, while citing (not quoting) the contributions of others to your thinking. You should only be using word-for-word quotations from a published source when the exact words matter greatly. Such quotations should be brief, rare, and placed in quotation marks. All students receive in-depth briefings on plagiarism and proper citation techniques as part of their introductory days at Barnard and Columbia, and the definition here is
standard not merely in the United States but globally (for example, at Sciences Po in Paris); it should not come as a surprise to anyone. Any student who nonetheless has any remaining questions about proper citation technique or about how to avoid plagiarism should discuss these questions and concerns with Prof. Marten before turning in the assignment in question. Plagiarism is often committed as an act of desperation under pressure. If you ever feel so pressured on an assignment that you are tempted to plagiarize, please contact Prof. Marten instead. Together we can work out a fair extension.

Any essay which contains cut-and-pasted or “paraphrased” phrases or sentences where the source is correctly cited, but without quotation marks, will earn the lowest passing grade of 70. Any essay which contains similar phrases and sentences that are NOT properly cited will earn a zero. Any student who violates the Honor Code on any assignment, including through plagiarism, will face dean’s discipline at their home college. Students affirm that all work turned in is their own, and that they have fully and accurately cited every written source, including web-based sources and unpublished sources (such as prior student papers), used in their writing. Students are allowed to consult with anyone they like as they begin thinking about their exam essays and research papers, but no further collaboration is allowed once they begin outlining and writing. In other words, both the argumentative structure and the wording of all essays must be completely the student’s own work.

All students may use the Barnard and Columbia Writing Centers with no restrictions. If you know that you have problems with your writing—and especially if you get comments on an assignment indicating that there are problems with your writing—you are strongly encouraged to use the Writing Centers. Please note that appointments there fill up fast, so you need to be proactive in scheduling them [hint: you know the due-dates of assignments already…].

Academic Accommodations Statement
If you are a student with a documented disability and require academic accommodations in this course, you must register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS) for assistance. Students requesting accommodations will need to first meet with an ODS staff member. Once registered, students are required to request accommodation letters each semester to notify faculty. Accommodations are not retroactive, so it is best to contact ODS early each semester to access your accommodations. If you are registered with ODS, please schedule an appointment with Prof. Marten via her Google calendar, to bring your faculty notification letter and discuss your accommodations for this course. Students are not eligible to use their accommodations in this course until they have met with me. Barnard ODS is located in Milbank Hall, Room 009/008.

Please note that all written assignments in this class are take-at-home essays, and that time-and-a-half disability accommodations do not apply to take-at-home assignments. Please explicitly discuss with ODS the fact that this class has no in-class exams.

Barnard Wellness Statement
It is important for students to recognize and identify the different pressures, burdens, and stressors they may be facing, whether personal, emotional, physical, financial, mental, or academic. We as a community urge you to make yourself—you own health, sanity, and wellness—your priority throughout this term and your career here. Sleep, exercise, and eating well can all be a part of a healthy regimen to cope with stress. Resources exist to support you in
several sectors of your life, and we encourage you to make use of them. Should you have any questions about navigating these resources, please visit these websites:

- [http://barnard.edu/primarycare](http://barnard.edu/primarycare)
- [http://barnard.edu/counseling](http://barnard.edu/counseling)
- [http://barnard.edu/wellwoman/about](http://barnard.edu/wellwoman/about)
- [Stressbusters Support Network](http://barnard.edu/counseling)

**Electronic devices and laptops:** Laptops and other electronic writing devices are not permitted in class, except in special circumstances with Prof. Marten’s written permission. You should expect to take notes by hand. (Because this course is largely discussion-based, audio recording is not allowed, to protect the privacy of students.) If you require an exception to the laptop rule, please come and talk to Prof. Marten in office hours. In that case you will be expected to sit at the far back of the classroom, so that your computer screen doesn’t bother other students.

Note: you will likely learn more and retain information better if you take notes by hand! See: [https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/](https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/)

**Required Readings**

Students should finish the assigned readings before class, so that we can discuss them in class. 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 things 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.

All readings are assigned because they are important elements in ongoing debates—not because they necessarily present the “truth.” In other words, read each piece critically and with a grain of salt. In discussion and in your essays, you will be expected to analyze and critique the readings, not merely summarize them.

Many assignments are found on [CLIO](https://clio.library.columbia.edu), the Columbia Library online system. They are easily accessible to anyone with a Columbia or Barnard ID. Start by searching by the article title to see if it comes up; if it does not, try putting in the journal title, and then searching chronologically within the journal for the date the article was published. Please access PDF versions of articles when available, so that you can cite specific page numbers in exam essays that might use them. Other items, such as book chapters, have been uploaded as PDFs to the [Courseworks Files](https://courseworks.columbia.edu) webpage for the course. Some items are available on the open web.

**Course readings are subject to change** in response to current events, or as new academic articles are published. Therefore please consider this syllabus a living document that may change as the semester progresses.
CLASS SCHEDULE

Please read these pieces before our first class if possible. In the discussion today, students will be asked to apply the theories outlined by Walt to the arguments made by Gurganus and Rumer.

Columbia Library online (CLIO):
Stephen M. Walt, “One World, Many Theories,” Foreign Policy 110 (Spring 1998): 29-46. Note: even though this piece is old, and concentrates on issues that are long past, many of the theoretical themes it raises are still used by international relations scholars today—and the competing theories are explained well here. We will be returning to this framework all semester.

Open web:

Section I. Theoretical Models: What Explains Russia’s Policy Choices?

Jan. 27: The theory of realism as interpreted by Russian analysts—and why “neoclassical realism” can be an analytic trap.

CLIO:
Dmitry Trenin, “Russia Leaves the West,” Foreign Affairs, 85, no. 4 (July/Aug. 2006): 87-96.

Open web:

Courseworks files:

Jan. 29. The role of personality in an authoritarian system.

CLIO:


Feb. 3. The impact of domestic informal patronage networks on foreign policy.

**Courseworks Files:**

Feb. 5. Constructivism part I: Status, emotions, decline, and nationalism.

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

Feb. 10: Constructivism part II: Slavophiles, Westernizers—and the role of the Russian Orthodox Church.

**Courseworks Files:**

**CLIO:**


**CLIO:**
- 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.)

**Open web:**

Courseworks Files:

CLIO:

Feb. 19: Case-study: Russia and the intervention in Ukraine, part I: Background. The European Union, NATO, and Russia.

Courseworks Files:

Open web:


Feb. 24: Case-study: Russia and the intervention in Ukraine, part II: What happened when?

CLIO:
- 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 fairly objective description of exactly what happened when in the Ukraine crisis.)

Open web:
Feb. 26: Case-study: Russia and the intervention in Ukraine, part III: Recent and current events. Note: today’s class will have a different framework. The first half hour will be open discussion about current and recent events in Ukraine, which will be relevant for the midterm. The last 45 minutes will be “open office hours” for students to discuss their research paper topic ideas with Prof. Marten.

Open web:


Section II. Tsarist and Soviet Experiences with the West: Selected Historical Legacies

Mar. 2: Peter the Great and Catherine the Great: Opening to, and Competing with, the West.
Courseworks Files:
Open web:

CLIO:

Mar. 4: The Decembrists, Nicholas I, and Alexander II
Courseworks Files:
Riasanovsky and Steinberg, pp. 316-36, 363-75.
Open web:

Friday March 6, 5pm: Midterm due on Courseworks.
Mar. 9: Stalin, the purges, the Great Patriotic War—and historical memory.

Open Web:

CLIO:


Mar. 11: The Cold War and the correlation of forces.
Note: at the start of class today, Prof. Marten will review sources available on CLIO and the open web that are relevant for the topics of student research papers.

Open web:

CLIO:

Mar. 16, 18: Spring Break, no class meetings.

Mar. 23: Two different Cold War eras: the leadership of Khrushchev and Brezhnev

CLIO:
Mar. 25. Halfway measures: Gorbachev and “Westernization” at home.

CLIO:

Mar. 30. The end of the Cold War.

CLIO:

Open Web:

Apr. 1. The 1990s: Yeltsin and the West

CLIO:

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

Apr. 6. The failure to reform Soviet intelligence agencies—and the criminal aftermath.

CLIO:

Open web:

Apr. 8. The Wagner Group, the West, Syria, and Africa

**CLIO:**

**Open web:**

**CLIO:**

**CLIO:**

Apr. 13. Oil, natural gas, and Russia-West relations.

**Open web:**

**Climate Action Tracker, “Russian Federation,”** https://climateactiontracker.org/countries/russian-federation/

Apr. 15. International sanctions and Russian politics.

**CLIO:**

**Open web:**


**CLIO:**


**Open web: Recommended, not required:** CSIS Russian Sanctions Tracker, https://russiasanctionstracker.csis.org/ has a detailed list of all US sanctions against Russia.

Apr. 20. The collapse of nuclear arms control.

**CLIO:**

**Open web:**


Apr. 22. “Information war” and cyber conflict

**Open web:**


Apr. 24: Research paper due on Courseworks.

Apr. 27. Russia and the West in the Arctic

Open web:

Courseworks files:

Open web:


Apr. 29. Russia’s relations with China (and why it matters to the West)

Courseworks files:

CLIO:

Open web:

May 4. There is nothing so difficult to predict as the future…

Open web:

CLIO:
Chris Miller, “Putin’s Not Ready to Call It Quits,” ForeignPolicy.com, July 22, 2019.

Open web: