

East European Politics
Summer 2016
EUS 4950 & POS XXX
3 credits

- **Instructor:** Magda Giurcanu magiur@ufl.edu
- **Course Meetings:** Monday & Wednesday, 2:00-5:10 PM
- **Course Room:** 2.03
- **Office Hours:** After each class for 1 hour: MW (5:10-6.10 PM)
- **Office Location:** same classroom

Course Description

This course aims to provide students with a survey of communist regimes and post-communist evolutions in Eastern Europe, from WWII up to present day. Since the region transformed itself a lot in the past twenty years--for instance it changed from 9 nation-states before 1989 to 27 today -- we will not cover the entire range of cases in this course. Instead, we will focus in detail on a few countries from East Central Europe and the Balkans and we will address the broader themes specific to comparative politics. Given that the course is taught in Prague, we will aim to understand the specific developments of Czech Republic, drawing therefore extensively on Czech writers, sources, and Czech topics. The course is divided into three distinct sections:

- First, we will delve into the history of the region, trying to understand the core characteristics and differences of the communist regimes. In addition, we will consider the 1989 *events*, where various terms such as 'transitions from below', 'transitions from above', 'revolutions', 'transformation' will be used to distinguish between various regime changes in the region.
- The second part will cover in detail the democratic transitions of a few cases, such as Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Romania, and Bulgaria, in addition to the former Yugoslav states, with the goal of assessing differences within the post-communist region. We will notice that despite the unique communist legacies, the region differs greatly in terms of "*successful*" economic, political, and social transformations.
- The last part is focused on thematic issues across Eastern Europe that are important to comparative politics more broadly. Major themes covered in the last part will consist of EU accession, democratization and political participation, economic development, institutional design and parties, and fringe politics. We will also consider the influence of the EU in other Eastern European countries not studied here and formally defined as the 'Eastern Neighborhood'.

Course Materials

There is one textbook required for this class.

- Stephen White, Judy Batt, and Paul G. Lewis(eds.), *Developments in Central and East European Politics 5* (Raleigh: Duke University Press, 2013) [**older editions should not be considered**]

Additionally, excerpts from the following books will be used (provided to students in electronic format).

- Stephen White. 2001. *Communism and its Collapse* (New York: Routledge)
- Gale Stokes. 1993. *The Walls came tumbling down. The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe* (Oxford University Press)
- Marci Shore. 2013. *The Taste of Ashes: The Afterlife of Totalitarianism in Eastern Europe* (Crown)
- Timothy Garton Ash. 1990. *The Magic Lantern. The Revolutions of '89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin, and Prague* (Random House, New York)

Course Requirements

- 3 tests (2 in-class and 1 take-home. 60% of the final grade--20% each)
- 1 film review (10% of the final grade)
- Class attendance and participation (20% of the final grade).

Tests 60%:

There will be 3 tests--**2 in-class (20% of the final grade each) and 1 final take home (30% of the final grade)**

- The **two in-class tests** will consist of short answer, multiple choice, identification, true/false and fill-in the blank questions, in addition to 1-2 very short essay questions (20% each of the final grade)
- **The final test will be a take-home exam. (30% of the final grade)** Students will be provided with set essay topics (some choice among topics *may* be provided) and will be expected to write two (2) essays of approximately **600** words (roughly 2-3 pages) each. **These essays must be typed.** Students will receive the essay topics at the beginning of the last week. Ample citations from in class reading and other sources (including newspapers and other electronic journals etc.) should be used. More details on the take home final exam will be provided in class. *The final deadline for the take-home essay will be Thursday, July 28, 5pm.*

1 Movie Review 10%: The review should be about 600 words, and will consist of comparisons of different sources (the film and a written text) and of answers to a few questions. The film I consider including is *Czech Dream* (Czech: *Český sen*) (2004), Directed by Vít Klusák and Filip Remunda.

Class Attendance and Participation 20%:

10% applied to regular attendance and participation--There are only 12 days of class (each two periods long). As a result, students are allowed only one unexcused absence. Each additional unexcused absence will result in 5 points being deducted from the student's final grade (100 point scale). Students are required to engage in classroom discussions and be active participants in all class activities to receive full credit for participation; simple attendance is not sufficient.

10% applied to attendance and active participation to the 3 visits part of the syllabus—Museum of Communism, Radio Free Europe, and Czech Parliament (the Chamber of Deputies)

Policies

- **Assignments:** All assignments must be submitted on line by the deadline, and handed in to the instructor, at the beginning of the class (for movie reviews and research papers). Extensions will be granted **at my discretion** and, if granted, they will require **proper documentation**. Make sure you ask for an extension only **PRIOR** (at least 24 hours) to the deadline date.
- **Read:** Read the assigned materials for the week-- The success of this course depends upon your active participation in class. Therefore, having read all the material before each class and having thought about the readings is crucial to having a meaningful conversation.
- **Cheating/plagiarism:** Any student caught violating the honor code will fail the class. For more information, read the Code of Student Conduct <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcode.php>
- **Courtesy:** Don't come late and have your US cell-phones on silent or vibrate. Any disruptive behavior (reading newspapers or materials related to other courses, talking outside of class discussions) will not be tolerated and you will be asked to leave the class.
- **Special Needs:** If you have a disability that requires special arrangements (e.g. note-and/or test-taking), please register with the Office of Students with Disabilities and contact me **within the first week** of class. Every effort will be made to accommodate those with registered disabilities.

Grading scale, based on UF policies:

(<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>):

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
94-100	90-93.99	87-89.99	83-86.99	80-82.99	77-79.99	73-76.99	70-72.99	67-69.99	63-66.99	60-62.99	< 59.99

Course Schedule

Week 1 June 20-June 22

Topics:

- Course introduction
- Communism and main characteristics
- Development of different communist regimes

Readings:

- White et al. Chapter 1
- Stokes, pp1-14; 15-46 (pdf online)
- White (2001) Chapter 1: What was communism and its establishment
- White (2001) Chapters 3-5 (pdf online)

Visits:

- Museum of Communism, Prague (*confirmed for June 22, 2.30pm*) – meet at the MALOSTRANSKA tram stop at 2.00pm
- The Batalion Bar & Museum (read more here <http://cbldf.org/2016/06/how-czech-underground-comic-art-beat-communism/>) (recommended)

Week 2 June 27-June 29

Topics:

- The Fall of Communism, differences across the region
- Unaddressed issues during the collapse of communism
- 1989 moment

Readings:

- Stokes. pp 79-94; 157-202 (pdf as hardcopies)
- Timothy Garton Ash, The Magic Lantern (pp 25-130) (pay particular attention to the Prague moment) (pdf online)

Visits: Radio Free Europe. Radio Europe headquarters in Prague (*confirmed, June 29, 3pm. We need to arrive at least 20 min earlier and bring an ID*)

Week 3 July 4 (short week)

Topics:

- Democratic Transitions and Regional Patterns
- Transitions from communism (I) Reflections and the new order

Readings:

- Adam Michnik. 2000. “Reflections on the Collapse of Communism”. *Journal of*

Democracy 11(1): 119-26. (pdf online)

- White et al. Chapter 2 The Czech republic, Hungary and Poland

July 6, no school. National Czech Holiday! Celebrate!!!

Week 4 July 11- July 13 In-class Test 1 on July 13.

Topics:

- Yugoslav transitions
- EU Accession and Increased Euroscepticism

Readings:

- White et al. Chapters 3 (The Other Europeans), 4 (Western Balkans), and Chapter 6 on the EU
- Stokes: Chapters 6 (pdf online)
- Marcy Shore, excerpts (pdf online)

In-class test 1 on July 13—the first hour of the course. This test covers the material of Weeks 1, 2, and 3.

Film: Czech Dream (2004) on July 13, followed by a film discussion. The film review will be due the first meeting after having watched the film in class.

Week 5 July 18 - July 20

Topics:

- Comparing Institutions across the region
- Presidents and Prime-Ministers, conflictual relationship
- Party System Development and Political Instability

Readings:

- White et al. Chapters 8 & 9
- White et al. Chapters 10 & 11
- “Is Poland Taking an Authoritarian Trend?” Available @ https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/is-poland-taking-an-authoritarian-turn-its-new-president-explains/2016/03/24/f29e8830-f114-11e5-89c3-a647fccc95e0_story.html?postshare=2641458946158478&tid=ss_fb-bottom
- “Hobbesian Catholicism on the rise in Poland?” available @ <http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/2016/06/08/hobbesian-catholicism-on-the-rise-in-poland/>

Essay topics given this Wednesday (July 20)

Film review due at the beginning of class on July 18 (bring a hard copy to class)

Visit: The Czech Parliament (The Chamber of Deputies, confirmed, July 20, 1pm)

Week 6 July 25 – July 27. In class test 2 on July 27

Topics:

- Social and economic issues
- Minorities in Eastern Europe
- Eastern Europe and the Economic Recession
- The Eastern Neighborhood

Readings:

- White et al. Chapters 13 & 15
- Matthew T. Loveland and Delia Popescu. 2015. "The Gypsy Threat Narrative: Explaining Anti-Roma Attitudes in the European Union" (pdf online)
- "Bulgarians lack faith in rule of law" available at <https://euobserver.com/justice/132998>
- Mahama Tawat. 2016. "Towards an ever closer union? Refugee Policy and Social Cohesion in Eastern EU Member States" (pdf online)
- Russia and Brexit? <https://theconversation.com/fact-check-does-vladimir-putin-really-want-a-brexite-from-the-european-union-60831>
- Nelli Babayan. 2015. "The Return of the Empire? Russia's counteraction to transatlantic democracy promotion in its near abroad" (pdf online)

In class test 2 on July 27—the last hour of the course. This test covers the material of Weeks 4, 5, and 6 (first meeting).

The final papers will draw from everything covered in this course, and will be due by Thursday, July 28, 5pm (via email).