REES 615-10: The Economics and Politics of Transition
Summer Course
May 21-June 29, 2018

Lectures: Monday and Wednesday, 6:00 PM - 9:10 PM
Instructor: Dr. Vadim Grishin

Contacts

E-mail address: vg155@georgetown.edu
Office phone: (202) 687-6080

Office Hours

9:10-10:00 PM after each lecture

Overview

The purpose of this course is to provide graduate students with a broad understanding on the economics and politics of transition, and under what conditions it would be sustainable, inclusive and irreversible.

Based on empirical and thematic overview, the course will incorporate comparative analysis of post-communist economic and political transformations in Central and Eastern Europe, in the former republics of the Soviet Union, and in regions of Asia with particular focus on China. A theoretical framework on transition policy will be examined in the context of globalization, including the ramifications of the global financial crisis and current populist, anti-establishment trends in politics.

In the course we will discuss the collapse of communism, the models of post-communist development, and the role of internal and external factors in transition -- the effects of liberalization and privatization, governance and corruption, the role of oligarchy and bureaucracy, social policies and informal practices, and alternative reform programs.

Beyond economics, the course will cover disruption within institutions, as well as cultural evolution and changes in values. It has three major goals: first, to help students understand the nature of transition, particularly into post-communist transformation; second, to become familiar with the main challenges and disputes of transition practices; and third, to perceive and evaluate the existing differences between transition countries.

Overall, the course is designed for graduate students coming from various social sciences, and while not necessary, some knowledge of the Russian language would be useful.

Instructional methods: lectures combined with discussions and simulations.

Course requirements: completion of a mid-term exam and a final. Grade distribution will include 35% for the mid-term, 35% for the final and 30% for class participation.
- The mid-term (35%) will cover the first half of the course and will be administered during regular class hours. It will consist of two essays chosen out of five topics relevant to assigned literature.
- The final paper (35%) should focus on a concrete issue in a specific country or on a crosscutting topic related to the transition agenda. It will also be based on assigned literature and won’t exceed 15 double-spaced pages. While additional research will not be required, it will no be discouraged. Topics will be specified in class on June 13 and students can pick one of them or choose their own. My prior approval will be required if you decide to choose your own.
- For matters related to attendance and participation (30%), significant time will be set aside for discussions, and students will be judged according to their participation. Students will also be encouraged to prepare questions on the readings and follow new developments in transition countries.

Make-up policy and homework deadlines: Students will not be allowed to take an exam in advance of its scheduled date. Anyone who misses a test will be allowed to do a make-up if he or she provides a medical certificate excusing attendance.

Readings

The readings for this course consist of texts, book chapters, and articles. All readings will be made available through the CERES library and/or the Canvas.

Out of environmental respect, the course is entirely paperless. Slides and syllabus will be made available electronically. I will not be directly providing such handouts. Students will be responsible for downloading, reading, and printing if desired any prior material to be covered.

Texts


Course Outline

* Note: The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the readings and discussion topics during the course of the semester.
Class 1. Monday May 21

Inevitable Collapse of the Socialist System


Rapid vs. Gradual Transformations


Class 2. Wednesday May 23

From Shock to Recovery: Transformational Recession vs. Cyclical Slowdown


Liberalization and Macroeconomic Stabilization: Washington/Post-Washington Consensus vs. Beijing Consensus


**Class 3. Wednesday May 30**

**Privatization and Its Limits**


**The Rise of State Capitalism**


Class 4. Monday June 4

Corruption and Governance


Oligarchy vs. Democracy


**Class 5. Wednesday June 6**

**Social Policies & Practices**

**Role of the Informal Sector**


Class 6. Monday June 11
Mid-Term Exam

Class 7. Wednesday June 13
Final Topics Distributed

Financial Crisis as a Stress Test, and
Post Crisis Challenges (2007-2018)


Class 8. Monday June 18
International Assistance and EU Integration


Ukrainian Euromaidan: Social, Economic & Institutional Dimensions


Class 9. Wednesday June 20

Russia and China in the Global Economy: Comparative Analysis


Class 10. Monday June 25

Geopolitics in Current Cold War Times.

New Economic World Order?


**Guest Lecturer: Ambassador Daniel Fried** (TBD), discussing The Role of Economic Sanctions


**Class 11. Wednesday June 27**

**New Transition: Battle of Concepts and Reality**


Overall Discussion of Post-Communist Transitions: Quo Vadis?

Where is the post-communist world going? Future Scenarios? Which are the key problems for the future?

Sunday, July 1

Final Paper Due by Midnight Eastern Time via e-mail:
vg155@georgetown.edu

Additional Sources:


**Relevant Websites:**
