

GOVT S-1240. Politics and Social Policy in Post-Communist Russia (CRN: 31306)

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The course deals with political conflict, policy-making, and social policy in post-Soviet Russia. We will briefly examine the major developments and institutions of the Soviet era, but our focus will be on the period since Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin came to power. We will devote particular emphasis to five issues: (1) attempts to transform the political system from one based on authoritarianism to one based on democracy; (2) efforts to shift from a centrally planned economy to one based on market forces; (3) relations between Russians and non-Russians (including the Chechens) in Russia; (4) the role of the Federal Security Service (the successor to the KGB) and the military; and (5) social questions such as the position of women, the crisis in public health (including an examination of alcoholism, drug abuse, AIDS, and environmental deterioration), and the state of organized religion. We will look not only at the factors promoting change, but also at those which impede it.