NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
Department of Politics

The Government and Politics of Russia
Fall 2006

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COURSE OUTLINE AND READING LIST

Course Requirements:

1. **Mid-Term Essay:** An essay question will be distributed mid-way through the semester. You will have one-week to complete the assignment. (Your entire work should be no more than 12 pages and should be double-spaced, in 12-point font, preferably Times Roman, with one inch margins all around.)

2. **Policy Proposal for President Putin:** You are to write a brief policy memorandum to President Vladimir Putin. You are to name one crucial problem facing Russia today. You are to argue why this problem is especially pertinent to Russia and its future as well as to propose a specific policy or set of policies that will remedy this problem. Consider the benefits as well the negative impacts of your policy, if it were to be implemented, and whether negative “side-effects” of your proposal can be remedied or overcome. (Your entire work should be no more than 3 single-spaced pages, and should be in 12-point font, preferably Times Roman, with one inch margins all around.) The assignment will be handed in at the beginning of Week XI.

3. **Final Research Paper:** You will be asked to write a term paper that will address a particular aspect of the current state of governance and politics in Russia today. Your topic should be approved by me. (Your entire work should be no more than 25 pages and should be double-spaced, in 12-point font, preferably Times Roman, with one inch margins all around.) The assignment will be handed in at the end of the semester.

**TOPICS AND READINGS**

**Week I: Introduction: Understanding the Challenges of Governing Russia Today**

No reading assignments.
PART I: WHAT WAS STATE SOCIALISM? WHAT WAS THE SOVIET UNION? WHY DID THE SOVIET UNION COLLAPSE?

Week II: A (Short) History of the Soviet Union: Economic and Political Life Under State Socialism


Week III: Attempts to Reform State Socialism


Week IV: Why Did the Soviet Union Collapse?


PART II: THE DIFFICULT DUAL TRANSITION

Week V: What Accounts for the Diversity in Postcommunist Outcomes?


Week VI: The Politics of Economic Reform I: Building a Market Economy


**Week VII: The Politics of Economic Reform II: What Was Shock Therapy? What was Privatization?**


**Week VIII: Institutional Reforms I: Presidential vs. Parliamentary Systems**


**Week IX: Institutional Reforms II: Federalism**


**Week X: Institutional Reforms III: Political Parties and Electoral Systems**


PART III: PUTIN’S RUSSIA

Week XI: The Yeltsin Era and Putin’s Rise to the Presidency


Week XII: Political Parties and Civil Society under Putin


Week XIII: Corruption under Putin


Week XIV: International Responses to Putin’s Russia


