Politics of East Central Europe
POLI 4072

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION
Dr. Jonathan C. Nickens
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Office Hours: M 11:30a-12:30p,
or by appointment

COURSE INFORMATION
Louisiana State University
Spring 2022
Section 001
121 Allen Hall
Tu 6:00p-8:50p

Course Overview

Course Description
This course provides a regional analysis of political systems in the states of East Central Europe. Emphasis is given to the evolution of domestic institutions and political parties, as well as the current political climate, elections, and the legacies of communism. This comparative politics course is designed to focus on the development of the bloc as a whole, but also features discussion of individual states as case studies. In addition, attention is also given to ethnicity, nationalism and certain aspects of the economy, namely the transition of states from communism to market economies.

LSU Learning Competency Statement for the Social Sciences
LSU graduates will demonstrate an understanding of the informing factors of global interdependence, including economic forces, political dynamics, and cultural and linguistic difference.

Course Objectives
1| Obtain an advanced understanding of the core institutions in East Central Europe
2| Improve your general understanding of comparative government and governance
3| Become equipped with the theoretical knowledge necessary to explain the evolution of East Central European states from the communist era to contemporary times
4| Enhance your analytical skills and your ability to think critically

Required Reading

There are required readings for this course. It is the student's responsibility to obtain, access and review the appropriate materials for the assigned class period.

1) The textbook listed below is required for this course. It can be found at university and area bookstores. The textbook is also available online at various online bookstores and websites. You can purchase a used copy or rent the textbook, if possible. You must use the edition indicated.

> Csergo, Eglitis and Pickering (2022). **Central and East European Politics: Changes and Challenges, Fifth Edition.** Rowman and Littlefield. (ISBN: 9781538142806)

2) Several topics and class meetings for this course will require book chapters not found in the textbook. These chapters are listed by date on the Topics and Readings Schedule, and will be uploaded to the

course Moodle site in .pdf format for download. It is the student's responsibility to access and read the appropriate materials for the assigned class period. If the documents are unavailable or cannot be accessed for any reason, inform the instructor so that technical issues can be corrected/modified.

3) Students will also be required to read select current events & news articles provided by the instructor. See 'Graded Items' → 'Quizzes' below for more information.

Graded Items

Composition of Course Grade
Scores for each graded item will be based on a range of 0-100, and weighted according to the table below.

Graded Item	Percentage of Grade (Weight)
Attendance	20%
Participation (in-class)	5%
Quizzes (2 x 7.5%)	15%
Midterm Exam	30%
Final Exam	30%

Attendance
Attendance is mandatory in this course, and student roll will be taken for class meetings, at the discretion of the instructor. This policy is in conjunction with a University-wide effort to bolster student attendance, as research has shown that students who attend class regularly have improved performance scores. Attendance scores are based on 100 total points. Each student is allowed one unexcused absence before it affects their attendance score. After one unexcused absence, your attendance score drops 20 points for each unexcused absence. See table below:

Unexcused Absences	Attendance Score		Unexcused Absences	Attendance Score
1 or less	100		4	40
2	80		5	20
3	60		6 or more	0
→continued →	→continued			

Participation (in-class)
Student participation in class discussions help to facilitate learning and is a required component of this course. This includes comments related to lectures and assigned readings, as well as appropriate questions that contribute to the discussion. Students are expected to contribute to in-class discussion via their comments and questions on an occasional basis. I don't expect you to contribute to every class discussion, but I expect you to do so periodically.

Quizzes (2)
Students will take two in-class quizzes on dates noted by the instructor in the Course Calendar. Content for quizzes will be taken from select news articles or other readings provided by the instructor. These articles will be posted on Moodle in a labeled quiz folder. Quizzes be multiple-choice and you will need a small scantron for quizzes.

Exams (2)
Content for exams are taken from in-class lectures and assigned chapter readings (textbook chapters & other chapter readings). Note that news articles are not required reading material for exams, although some of the material may overlap. The format for exams will be multiple choice and short answer essay.

-Midterm Exam-
This exam will test for content covered from the beginning of the course to the point of the Midterm Exam. The format for this exam will be multiple choice and short answer essay. The Midterm Exam will be administered in-class on **March 8, 2022.** You will need a small scantron and a bluebook for this exam.

-Final Exam-
This exam will test for content covered after the Midterm Exam. While this exam is not cumulative, you will still need a fundamental grasp of the concepts and ideas discussed in the first half of the semester to be effective on this exam. The format for this exam will be multiple choice and short answer essay. The Final Exam will be administered on **Tuesday, May 10, 2022 at 8:00pm**. The location for the Final Exam will be the normal classroom. You will need a small scantron and a bluebook for this exam.

*Note: This exam date/time is set by the University and cannot be moved, modified, or made-up. You must attend this testing session, and you cannot take the Final Exam early or at any different time.

Grade Calculation
A graded item is an exam, quiz, attendance, etc. Each graded item is based on a point total (0-100). Your score for each graded item is the number of points received. Final grades for students will be calculated by multiplying their score for each graded item times (x) the weighted percentage for each graded item. The weighted graded items are then added together and a final grade given based on 100 point totals.

SAMPLE FOR FINAL GRADE (note that weights might not be the same for this course)

Graded Item	**% of Grade (Weight)**	**Score (Example)**	
Attendance	15%	90	13.5
Participation (in-class)	5%	100	5
Quizzes (4 x 5%)	20%	85 (avg.)	17
Midterm Exam	30%	95	28.5
Final Exam	30%	83	24.9
FINAL GRADE			88.9 B+

Grading Policies

Absences, Missed Exams and Make-ups
Allowance for the excusing of missed class and make-ups of missed exams & quizzes will be in accordance with University policy, which outlines valid reasons for such occurrences. Valid reasons include, but are not limited to, serious illness, death in the immediate family, religious observances, and scheduled trips for academic purposes. Proper documentation is required for any excused absence or missed examination period. If possible, let the instructor know before missing class. If you miss a class lecture, feel free to obtain notes from a classmate. You can then ask me specific questions concerning the material, but I cannot provide you with notes or presentation slides.

If you miss an exam or quiz, contact the instructor immediately so that the situation can be evaluated and arrangements made, if applicable. If you have documentation that notes your excused absence, email me a scanned version or photo of the document. In cases where make-ups are allowed, you will be given an alternate make-up exam different from the in-class examination. You should not delay in contacting me to provide documentation and to make arrangements. If you wait in excess of 48 hours after the scheduled exam/quiz to contact me, you will not be able to make-up the missed assignment. Note that the Final Exam schedule is set by the University and cannot be amended, meaning that make-ups are not allowed for this exam. For complete information on the University's attendance and exam make-up policy, see the Regulations section of the LSU Catalog.

General Grading Policy
Grades are based on the academic performance of the student, as it pertains to assigned coursework and examinations, and in accordance to the grading scale, weighting, and policies listed in this syllabus. Any questions or concerns about graded work are welcome, and should be directed toward the instructor in-person during office hours or by appointment.

Grading Scale
Grading for this course will be consistent with the plus/minus grading scale adopted by the University, and as outlined in the LSU General Catalog.

Letter grade	Score				
A+	100-97.00	A	96.99-94.00	A-	93.99-90.00
B+	89.99-87.00	B	86.99-84.00	B-	83.99-80.00
C+	79.99-77.00	C	76.99-74.00	C-	73.99-70.00
D+	69.99-67.00	D	66.99-64.00	D-	63.99-60.00
F	<60				

Course Policies & Expectations

Note on Participation and Preparation
Students are expected to come to class on-time, prepared and ready to engage in material comprehension, as well as ready to participate in classroom discussions concerning the week's topics. This means that assigned readings should be completed before each class meeting. Students should frequently check the course Moodle page in order to access additional readings or supplemental materials posted by the instructor at an on-going basis.

Diversity
Diversity is fundamental to LSU's mission and the University is committed to creating and maintaining a living and learning environment that embraces individual difference. Cultural inclusion is of highest priority.

Special Accommodations
LSU is committed to providing adequate accommodations to all students with documented and approved disabilities. As per University policy, special accommodations approved by LSU Disability Services will be incorporated into individual student learning, and will remain confidential. Eligible students should contact Disability Services (115 Johnson Hall, 225-578-5919), so that proper documentation can be processed. Eligible students should also notify the instructor as soon as possible.

General Statement on Academic Integrity
Louisiana State University adopted the Commitment to Community in 1995 to set forth guidelines for student behavior both inside and outside of the classroom. The Commitment to Community charges students to maintain high standards of academic and personal integrity. All students are expected to read and be familiar with the LSU Code of Student Conduct and Commitment to Community, found online at www.lsu.edu/saa. It is your responsibility as a student at LSU to know and understand the academic standards for our community.

Students who are suspected of violating the Code of Conduct will be referred to the Office of Student Advocacy and Accountability. For undergraduate students, a first academic violation could result in a zero grade on the assignment or failing the class and disciplinary probation until graduation. For a second academic violation, the result could be suspension from LSU. For graduate students, suspension is the appropriate outcome for the first offense.

Note that academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) viewing other students' answers during quizzes/exams, accessing & viewing testing materials from previous courses or previous semesters, sharing notes through group email chains, note swapping websites, et cetera. I have no problem with you obtaining notes from an individual classmate on an occasional basis when you miss class. But this must not be on a regularly recurring basis and may not be done through any type of collective group effort (exceptions are made for students with appropriate and documented Special Accommodations).

Plagiarism
Students will refrain from plagiarizing the academic property of others and to utilize appropriate citation method for all coursework. For this course, it is recommended that you use the APSA citation style. Ignorance of the citation method is not an excuse for academic misconduct. Remember there is a difference between paraphrasing and quoting, and how to properly cite each respectively.

Technology Use
Laptop use in class is for note-taking, research purposes and academic-centered use. This privilege is contingently permitted, but may be rescinded at any time. It is an obvious concern that laptop use is a distraction to students during lectures, and I encourage you to keep electronic use to a minimum. Sustained abuse of laptop privileges may result in punitive adjustments to a student's participation grade when it becomes apparent to the instructor that technology is being used for purposes other than academic learning. Cell phone use is not allowed and should be avoided. Likewise, use of other technological devices is prohibited, unless approved by the instructor. Students may not record lectures or class discussions using any type of electronic device. Concerns related to this or any policy listed above should be discussed with the instructor, as amicable modifications will be based on genuine needs of the student, as it relates to learning in a university environment.

Communication and Conduct
All communication with the instructor and all written work should be prepared using formal, standard language. In other words, do not use "texting" language or other abbreviated jargon to communicate your thoughts and ideas for this class.

Additionally, all students are required to conduct themselves appropriately at all times and in a professional, courteous manner. This means it is necessary for you to treat others with respect and courtesy. Talking while the instructor or another student is talking will not be tolerated. Conduct that is disruptive and/or not respectful of an academic environment will also not be tolerated. Severe violation of these guidelines will be reported to the LSU Office for the Dean of Students.

General Statements
If in doubt about any policy, requirement, or content-related matter, please contact the instructor. Also, it would greatly benefit students to read and become familiar with the LSU General Catalog. This catalog contains the official policies and regulations of the University. I am more than willing to provide additional information or explanation to questions related to course content posed by students. Questions or concerns may be addressed in-class, through email, in-person during office hours, or by appointment. I will respond to emails within a timely manner, but allow up to 24 hours for responses. I am also available to meet before/after class to discuss questions or concerns.

LSU provides each student with a University-affiliated email (ex. jsmith4@lsu.edu) which you should have already activated and currently use. If you have not activated your University email account, you should do so immediately, as all course communication will be sent to this email address.

Check your email, check the course Moodle page, and check the Course Calendar (see below) on a regular basis. Be proactive!

The instructor reserves the right to amend any of the policies, requirements, or statements pertaining to this course/syllabus. Any modification of the syllabus or class schedule (for unexpected events such as emergencies, extenuating circumstances, etc.) will be conveyed to student either in-class or via email, with as much advance notice as reasonably possible.

Covid-19 Protocols & Student Learning
It is the individual's right to decide what is best for them. However, LSU strongly encourages all students, faculty and staff to get vaccinated for COVID-19. Visit www.lsu.edu/roadmap/vaccines/ to learn how to get vaccinated on campus. Vaccination helps keep our campus community safe, helps protect those among us who are most vulnerable to COVID-19, and is our path back to more normal operations and the full college experience that our students deserve.

For the Spring 2022 semester, LSU is scheduled to hold traditional, on-campus learning. Note that if the university mandates a return to remote/online learning, the instructor will transition the course to an online class. I will provide a detailed and thorough plan if this were to be the case.

There are two appendices to this syllabus:
1) **Lecture Topics**, which provides topical information that is to be discussed during the course, along with assigned reading chapters. It is your responsibility to keep with where we are in terms of topics and lecture material.
2) **Course Calendar**, which list the dates for: class meetings, exams & quizzes, university holidays, and other notations needed by the student.

Have a great semester and Geaux Tigers.

LECTURE TOPICS [Spring 2022]

(in order of class discussion)

Topic I. **Introduction to East Central Europe |**
Early Twentieth Century States and Context of World War II
Required Reading: Textbook, pp. 3-16

Topic II. **The Sovietization of East Central Europe |**
Life Under Communism
Required Reading: Textbook, pp. 16-20
Bialer, pp. 175-185 & pp. 191-212

Topic III. **The Cold War in East Central Europe and Elsewhere |**
Revolutions of 1989
Required Reading: Textbook, pp. 20-24
"1989 Intro Essay"

Topic IV. **Challenges of Transformation: Democratic Systems**
Required Reading: Ramet & Hassenstab, Ch. 2,, Post-Socialist Models

Topic V. **Challenges of Transformation: Economy**
Required Reading: Textbook, Ch. 5

Topic VI. **Challenges of Transformation: Nationalism**
Required Reading: Textbook, Ch. 3

Topic VI. **Case Study: East Germany and Poland**
Required Reading: Textbook, Ch. 11

Topic VII. **Case Study: Czech Republic and Slovakia**
Required Reading: Textbook, Ch. 12

Topic VIII. **Case Study: Hungary and Romania**
Required Reading: Textbook, Chs. 13 & 16

Topic IX. **Case Study: The Yugoslav Republics**
Required Reading: Textbook, Ch. 18

Topic X. **Looking West: Joining the European Union**
Required Reading: Textbook, Ch. 9

Topic XI. **Regional Concerns and Contemporary Relations**
Required Reading: TBD

Topic XII. **International Threats: Russia & Others**
Required Reading: Textbook, Ch. 10

COURSE CALENDAR

DATE	CLASS TYPE	GRADED ITEM / NOTES
Jan 18	Syllabus / Course Outline Lecture	First Class Meeting
Jan 25	Lecture	-
Feb 1	Lecture	-
Feb 8	Lecture	-
Feb 15	Lecture	Quiz #1
Feb 22	Lecture	-
Mar 1	*no class*	Mardi Gras
Mar 8	Examination Period Lecture	Midterm Exam
Mar 15	*no class*	Spring Break
Mar 22	Lecture	-

Mar 29	Lecture	-
Apr 5	Lecture	-
Apr 12	Lecture	Quiz #2
Apr 19	Lecture	-
Apr 26	Lecture	-
May 3	Lecture	-
May 10 (Tue.)	Examination Period	**FINAL EXAM** **8:00pm – 10:00pm**