

DICTATORSHIPS IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION: TRANSITIONAL MISHAP OR INTENTIONAL DESIGN?

Date:	22-23 March 2013 (9:15-17:00)
Location:	PER B205
Credits:	1.5 ECTS
Instructor:	Christoph H. Stefes, Ph.D. Associate Professor, Department of Political Science (University of Colorado Denver) Visiting Research Fellow, Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung (2011-14) christoph.stefes@ucdenver.edu

Course Description:

Almost forgotten are the late 1980s and early 1990s. Those few years of worldwide excitement when most experts and lay persons thought that the collapse of the Soviet Union heralded the inevitable victory of democracy. However, today this optimism has almost completely dissipated. Sure, almost all post-communist countries that eventually became members of the European Union completed the path towards democracy (and even in some of those countries the future of democracy remains uncertain). Yet the situation in most post-Soviet successor states looks decidedly bleaker. Some of the successor states never engaged in a democratic transition. Others did but have never completed the path or they have reverted back to full authoritarian rule. And looking beyond the post-communist world, we find a very similar picture, with one of the world's most powerful countries, China, remaining a bulwark of non-democratic rule.

To explain the prevalence of authoritarian rule in the former Soviet Union (and beyond), we need to acquire a basic understanding of the political dynamics of non-democratic regimes. How do they emerge? How do they stabilize? And why do they crumble? In attempting to answer these questions, we will engage the current literature on authoritarian regimes. We will do so during the first day of our seminar. During the second day, we will apply these theoretical insights to the Soviet Union's successor states. We thereby largely ignore Russia and focus more on the Central Eurasian countries. We will also spend some time discussing the causes of the so-called Color Revolutions that swept away authoritarian regimes in Serbia, Ukraine, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan.

Expectations:

This is NOT a lecture. This is a seminar – there will be many discussions of the readings and students are expected to fully engage in them. To do so, students absolutely have to read the

assigned material (see below). Moreover, throughout the seminar I will ask students to break out into small study groups. I will ask these groups to prepare short presentations for the rest of the class. To do so, each group needs at least one computer with access to the internet. Finally, students are required to write a 4 to 5-page essay paper in which they analyze the political dynamics of one of the post-Soviet authoritarian regimes. We will discuss the details about the precise topic of this paper in class.

The seminar will be held in English. Although I am a native of Germany, I did most of my research and teaching in English. Students are encouraged to participate in class discussions and write their essay in English as well. However, I understand that not everyone feels comfortable communicating in English. The alternative language for this seminar is therefore German (unfortunately, my command of the French language is rather modest).

Grading:

Individual class participation:	15%
Group presentations:	15%
Essay:	70%

The essay is due on 08 April 2013. Please send it via e-mail to my e-mail address (christoph.stefes@ucdenver.edu). The essay should be about 4-5 pages long (including the list of references), 1.5-spaced, with standard margins, font size 12, and standard fonts. Please use Microsoft Word. If you do not use MS Word, please make sure that you save the paper as a PDF. When I grade the paper, I will apply a set of rubrics that make it easier for me to be more consistent in my grading and easier for students to know the expectations of the professor. (see below).

Readings (please read in the order they are listed here):

Schedler, Andreas. 2002. "The Menu of Manipulation" In: *Journal of Democracy* 13 (2): 36-50.

Geddes, Barbara. 1999. "What Do We Know about Democratization After 20 Years?" In: *Annual Review of Political Science* 2: 115-144 [start on p. 121].

Gandhi, Jennifer and Adam Przeworski. 2007. "Authoritarian Institutions and the Survival of Autocrats" In: *Comparative Political Studies* 40: 1279-1301.

De Mesquita, Bruce Bueno and Alastair Smith. "How Tyrants Endure" In: *New York Times* (June 9, 2011).

Gerschewski, Johannes, Wolfgang Merkel, Alexander Schmotz, Christoph H. Stefes, and Dag Tanneberg. 2013. "Warum überleben Diktaturen?" In: *Politische Vierteljahresschrift Sonderheft 47: Autokratien im Vergleich*. Forthcoming.

Levitsky, Steven and Lucan A. Way. 2010. **Competitive Authoritarianism. Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War**. New York: Cambridge University Press. [Chap. 2]

Stefes, Christoph H. and Amanda E. Wooden. 2009. "Tempting two fates: the theoretical foundations for understanding Central Eurasian transitions" In: Wooden and Stefes (eds.) **The Politics of Transition in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Enduring legacies and emerging challenges**. New York: Routledge, pp. 3-29.

Levitsky, Steven and Lucan A. Way. 2010. **Competitive Authoritarianism. Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War**. New York: Cambridge University Press. [Chap. 5]

Bunce, Valerie J. and Sharon L. Wolchik. 2010. "Defeating Dictators. Electoral Change and Stability in Competitive Authoritarian Regimes" In: *World Politics* 62 (1): 43–86.

Katz, Mark N. 2007. "Will there be revolution in Central Asia?" In: *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 40: 129-141.

Grading Rubrics:

	Outstanding (3) – Very Good (2.5)	Good (2)	Insufficient (1)	Unacceptable (0)
Empirical Research (x3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research question is clearly and prominently stated on first page • Answers to research question are empirically supported • Alternative answers are considered and discarded • Author consulted an impressive amount of academic sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research question is vaguely stated or, if clearly stated, not on first page • Most answers to research question are empirically supported • Alternative answers are not considered • Author consulted a good amount of mainly academic sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research question is opaque • Few claims are empirically supported • Alternative answers are not considered • Author consulted only few academic sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research question is completely missing • Claims are usually not supported by empirical evidence • Alternative answers are not considered • Author relied mainly on non-academic internet sites such as Wikipedia

<p>Theoretical Framework (x3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper is clearly situated in the theoretical debate relevant to the topic of the paper • Author shows a good understanding of the theoretical debate • Relevant theoretical work is cited • Author makes at least a modest contribution to the academic debate by showing contradictions, open questions, etc. in the debate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper is situated in the theoretical debate relevant to the topic of the paper • Author demonstrates some understanding of the theoretical debate • Relevant theoretical work is cited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper is vaguely situated in the theoretical debate • Author shows a limited understanding of the theoretical debate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper is not situated in any identifiable theoretical debate
<p>Writing & Organization (x3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper is well organized, includes introduction and conclusion (each about 10% of total paper) and additional sections in between • structure of paper is clear (e.g., good use of section headings) and compelling, moving the reader through the text easily • “one sentence-one thought” rule observed throughout essay • grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and vocabulary are correct and appropriate for an academic paper (one error/page) • exaggerations and expressions of personal feelings are kept at a minimum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper is organized, but sections are not always clearly discernible (intro, conclusion might be missing) • structure of paper is clear (e.g., good use of section headings) • “one sentence-one thought” rule is rarely violated • grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and vocabulary are mostly correct and appropriate for an academic paper (two errors/page) • exaggerations and expressions of personal feelings are infrequent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper is poorly organized, sections are difficult to identify; no intro and conclusion • structure of paper is unclear (e.g., no use of section headings) • “one sentence-one thought” rule is frequently violated, sentences are long and convoluted • grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and vocabulary are often inappropriate and/or incorrect (three errors/page) • exaggerations and expressions of personal feelings are frequent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper is poorly organized, no separate sections; no intro and conclusion • structure of paper is missing (e.g., no use of section headings) • almost all sentences are long and convoluted • grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and vocabulary are inappropriate and/or incorrect (more than three errors/page) • exaggerations and expressions of personal feelings are frequent • language is largely non-academic

Citation (x2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All sources are correctly and consistently cited following any accepted standard in the social sciences (e.g., APSA, APA, etc.) Direct quotes are marked as such Ideas of other authors are indicated as such (e.g., “As X argues, ...”) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sources are sometimes incorrectly and/or inconsistently cited Not all direct quotes are marked as such (up to 5% of paper is plagiarized) Others’ ideas are sometimes “stolen” - e.g., the author of an original thought or argument is rarely mentioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sources are often incorrectly and/or inconsistently cited Few direct quotes are marked as such (up to 10% of paper is plagiarized) Ideas are frequently “stolen” - thoughts of colleagues are sold as student’s original ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> citations are inconsistent and do not meet any academic standards entire sentences and paragraphs are plagiarized (up to 15% of paper – entire paper is given an automatic F if more than 15% of text is plagiarized)
Rules (x2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> essay fulfills the assignment (number of pages +/- 10%, formatting, etc.) and was turned in on time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> essay only partially fulfills assignment (e.g., paper is significantly longer or shorter) and/or was turned in a day late 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> essay only partially fulfills assignment (e.g., paper is significantly longer or shorter) and was turned in a day late 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> essay fails to fulfill assignment and/or was turned in more than a day late (albeit within 48 hours – after 48 hours: automatic F, unless documented emergency)

6 = 94-100%; 5.5 = 87-93%; 5 = 80-86%; 4.5 = 73-79%; 4 = 66-72%; < 4 = 59% and less.