

POL 361
POLITICAL SYSTEMS OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE
Dr. W. J. Lukaszewski **Spring 2008**

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Halford Mackinder, one of the most prominent British authorities on geopolitics, wrote that whoever controls Eastern Europe, controls the Eurasian heartland, and he who controls the Eurasian heartland controls the world. For this reason, CEE has been one of the most contested regions in the world. For us in this course, therefore, the study of CEE will be important not only because it concerns a very important piece of world's real estate, but also because the systemic transformations which have been taking place there have global relevance.

In 1989, Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) changed the world. In that one year and in that central region, the events of 1989 brought about the collapse of the Soviet Bloc and led to the disintegration of the Soviet Union. That, in turn, transformed the world from one divided between the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, to the current one dominated by the lone superpower, the United States. The popular revolutions of 1989 in CEE overthrew their totalitarian communist systems and initiated the process of transition to democracy and market economy. That process, which has since then spread to other parts of the world, is still going on. The lessons learned in systems transformation by the Central and Eastern Europeans since 1989 are being examined, refined, improved and applied by other societies striving to achieve democracy and market economy.

In this course, we will study Central and Eastern Europe by examining several critically important phases of development through which it has gone in recent decades. Specifically, of particular interest to us will be CEE's fortunes during the interwar period (1919-1939), its traumatic experiences in World War II, its domination by communism between 1945 and 1989, the overthrow of its communist systems in 1989 (the 1989 Revolutions), the CEE countries' uneven transitions to democracy and market economy, and their eventual accession to NATO and the European Union. Taken together, these areas of inquiry will give us a comprehensive understanding of what we conventionally call Central and Eastern Europe.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Rothschild, Joseph and Nancy Meriwether Wingfield, *Return to Diversity: A Political History of East Central Europe*, 2007

White, Stephen, (ed.), *Developments in Central and East European Politics*, 2007

In order to update their knowledge about the region, students will be assigned additional readings from the current press.

Course Objectives:

Students will

1. Acquire substantive knowledge of the central and eastern European area
2. Develop the intellectual tools necessary for in depth study of comparative government
3. Acquire independent research and analysis skills

ORGANIZATION OF THE COURSE

1. *Examination Policy*

Your final grade will be based on:

- (a) three examinations
- (b) research (details to be explained in class)
- (c) class participation

2. *Consultations*

Students are welcome, in fact they are encouraged, to consult with me on any aspect of this course but especially if they encounter academic difficulties (my office is located in AB1, Room 319; Telephone ext. 4-4042); my office hours are 1:00 – 2:00 p.m., TU, TH or by appointment.

3. *Attendance Policy*

Absences from class lectures are strongly discouraged; however, for *emergency* purposes, each student will be permitted four absences (cuts) from class; each additional cut will lower the student's grade by one-third of a letter grade.

4. *Academic Honesty*

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic work both in and out of the classroom.

5. *Classroom Rules of Conduct*

(a) Students are expected to behave themselves in classroom in a way which promotes their own learning, does not interfere with the lecture in progress, and does not disturb other students in the classroom.

(b) Cell phones, pagers, and other electronic equipment will not be permitted in class during examinations.

(c) Students will be excused from attending this class, including examinations, for the observance of religious holidays, including travel for that purpose. (Religious holiday is defined as "a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Texas Code...)

(d) Students wishing to record lectures in this class for their own study purposes may do so, providing they inform the instructor in advance.

(e) Students may not bring visitors to the class without prior approval of the instructor.

COURSE OUTLINE

Introduction	Jan. 17
1. What and where is CEE? White, Ch. 1	Jan. 22, 24
2. The Interwar Period Rothschild, Ch. 1	Jan. 29, 31
3. World War II and the Communist Takeover R: 2, 3	Feb. 5, 7, 12
4. Under the Communist Lid R: 4, 5	Feb. 14, 19, 21
5. The End and the Beginning R: 6, 7, 8; W: 2	Feb. 26, 28, Mar 4
MIDTERM EXAMINATION	Mar. 6
6. The Challenges of Post-Communism W: 4, 15	Mar. 18, 20, 25
7. Central Europe: The Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland W: 3	Mar. 27, Apr. 1
8. The East Europeans W: 6	Apr. 3, 8
9. Constitutional Politics W: 14	Apr. 10, 15
10. CEE and the EU W: 7	Apr. 17, 22, 24
11. The Quality of Post-Communist Democracy W: 16	Apr. 29, May 1, 6
12. Review	May 8
FINAL EXAMINATIONS	May 12-15