

## **COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT**

**NOTE:** ANY CHANGES TO A CSD MUST GO THROUGH ALL OF THE RELEVANT APPROVAL PROCESSES, INCLUDING LTPC.

**Academic School/Department:** Communications, Arts and Social Sciences

**Programme:** Political Science

**FHEQ Level:** 5

**Course Title:** Russian Politics and History

**Course Code:** PLT 5420

**Course Leader:** Professor Alex Seago

**Student Engagement Hours:** 120

Lectures: 22.5

Seminar / Tutorials: 22.5

Independent / Guided Learning : 75

**Semester:** FALL and/or SPRING and/or SUMMER

**Credits:**  
12 UK CATS credits  
6 ECTS credits  
3 US credits

**Course Description:**

This course focuses on the political evolution of the world's first Communist state - its birth, development, collapse and recent transformation. The course will introduce students to the major developments in Russian politics and history over the last century, from the revolution of 1905 to the First and Second World Wars, to the Cold War, the rise and fall of the Soviet Union and to its successor.

**Pre-requisites:** PLT 3100 or PLT 3105 or HST 3100 or HST 3105 or DEV 4100

**Aims and Objectives:**

The course will introduce students to the major developments of Russian politics and history over the last century, from the revolution of 1905 to the First and Second World Wars, to the Cold War and the rise and fall of the Soviet Union. It will examine the nature of soviet totalitarian society and its strengths and weaknesses provide comparisons between the reasons for the collapse of the Tsarist society and that of the Soviet Union. And finally, look at the recent processes of transformation in Russia.

**Programme Outcomes:**

At the end of this course, the students will have achieved the following programme outcomes.

5A(ii); 5B(i); 5B(ii); 5C(i); 5C(ii); 5C(iii); 5D(ii)

A detailed list of the programme outcomes are found in the Programme Specification.  
This is located at the Departmental/Schools page of the portal.

**Learning Outcomes:**

At the end of this course, the students will have achieved the following learning outcomes.

- Demonstrates a detailed understanding of theories of economic and political development as they were applied in the Soviet Union and Russia
- Demonstrates a detailed understanding of political institutions, practices and systems in the Soviet Union and Russia, and their transformations
- Demonstrates a critical and theoretical engagement with core problems and issues in regard to the politics, economics, and foreign policies of the Soviet Union and Russia
- Completes assigned work with a degree of autonomy, clarity, technical competence, capacity for self-evaluation and critical thinking appropriate for a 5000-level course

**Indicative Content:**

- Collapse of Imperial Russia/Birth of the Soviet Union
- Russia and the Soviet Union in International Relations
- Economic and political systems in the Soviet Union
- The Soviet transformation, 1985-1991
- The fall of communism and the rebirth of Russia
- Political institutions and processes in the post-Soviet Russia
- The evolution of foreign policy in modern Russia

**Assessment:**

This course conforms to the Richmond University Standard Assessment Norms approved at Academic Council on June 28, 2012..

**Teaching Methodology:**

This course will be taught through a combination of lectures and seminar-type activities, including group work, sub-group activities, classroom discussion, and the showing of documentaries. The general approach to classes is informal, and discussion is viewed as an essential part of an interactive and participatory learning program. Audio-visual aids, study materials and electronic learning resources will be used as appropriate.

Lectures provide a framework for the course, and are designed to ensure students have an overview of main issues and concerns on a particular topic, receive clarification on the major points of debate understand the broad dimensions of core problems, and are aware of relevant literature in the specific area of concern. It is essential that lectures are supplemented with assigned readings; together, the readings and the lectures are designed to provide guidance for seminar discussion.

Seminar classes are based on the principle of active and student-directed learning, and are designed to be **Safe, Enjoyable, Managed, Inclusive, Necessary, Academic, Respectful & Stimulating**. The seminars provide an opportunity for discussion of contentious issues,

addressing questions and exploring academic debates in more depth, group and sub-group discussion. They are encouraged to share their opinions freely, but must also maintain respect for the opinions of others. It is expected that students will participate regularly in discussions in a creative, competent and critical way, as the formulation of their own thoughts and clarification of their assumptions, often in contradiction to other students' thoughts and assumptions, form a crucial part of the learning process. Students are expected to come to seminar classes prepared.

## Bibliography:

- Kenez, P. (2006). *A History of the Soviet Union from the Beginning to the End*, (2nd. ed.), Cambridge
  - Sakwa, R. (2008) *Russian Politics and Society*, (4<sup>th</sup>. ed.), Routledge
  - John M. Thompson (1995). *A Vision Unfulfilled: Russia and the Soviet Union in the Twentieth Century*, Houghton Mifflin
  - Lowe, N (2002). *Mastering twentieth-century Russian History*, Palgrave Macmillan

## Change Log for this CSD: