

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL SERVICE (SIS)
INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROGRAM (IPCR)
SIS 619-028 – Conflicts and Conflict Resolution in Russia and Eurasia
Fall 2017

Dr. Philip Gamaghelyan

Class: Tuesday 8.20pm-10.50pm

Email: gamaghel@american.edu Classroom: MCK 303

Office Hours: by appointment

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND DESCRIPTION

Since Vladimir Putin's return to presidency in 2012, Russia has been demonstrating an increasingly assertive behavior in the international arena, influencing especially the conflicts on its western and southern borders. This course considers the dynamics of violent conflicts in Russia and the region of Eurasia, focusing on the contexts of Ukraine, the North Caucasus (particularly Chechnya), the South Caucasus (Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, and Abkhazia), Moldova, and Tajikistan, as well as the existing and possible conflict resolution interventions

The objectives of the course are to compare and contrast the realpolitik explanations of conflict in the region with the basic human needs, identity, and post-modern explanations and respective conflict resolution approaches. The course will include an in-depth consideration of the Armenian-Azerbaijani, Georgian-South Ossetian, Georgian-Abkhazian, and Russian-Ukrainian relations, drawing on the lecturer's ongoing engagement in these contexts as a scholar-practitioner. The course will also cover the conflicts in Moldova and Tajikistan and Russia-West relations.

Further objectives of the course are to dispel many of the simplistic and primordialist explanations of these protracted conflicts (such as myths of "ancient hatred"), and to provide an in-depth historical context, as well as conceptual understanding of the dynamics in play.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE

All students must adhere to the Academic Integrity Code (<http://www.american.edu/provost/registrar/regulations/reg80.cfm>). As the code states, "By enrolling at American University and then each semester when registering for classes, students acknowledge their commitment to the Code. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their rights and their responsibilities. In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, examinations of whatever kind, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Students are responsible for learning the conventions of documentation and acknowledgment of sources. American University expects students to complete all examinations, tests, papers, creative projects, and assignments of any kind according to the highest ethical standards, as set forth either explicitly or implicitly in this Code or by the direction of instructors."

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES

If you experience difficulty in this course for any reason, please don't hesitate to consult with me. In addition to the resources of the department, a wide range of services is

available to support you in your efforts to meet the course requirements. **Academic Support Center** (x3360, MGC 243) offers study skills workshops, individual instruction, tutor referrals, and services for students with learning disabilities. Writing support is available in the ASC Writing Lab or in the Writing Center, Battelle 228. **Counseling Center** (x3500, MGC 214) offers counseling and consultations regarding personal concerns, self-help information, and connections to off-campus mental health resources. **Disability Support Services** (x3315, MGC 206) offers technical and practical support and assistance with accommodations for students with physical, medical, or psychological disabilities. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please notify me in a timely manner with a letter from the Academic Support Center or Disability Support Services so that we can make arrangements to address your needs.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

In the event of a declared pandemic (influenza or other communicable disease), American University will implement a plan for meeting the needs of all members of the university community. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction of the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence due to illness. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. In the event of a declared pandemic or other emergency, students should refer to the AU Web site (www.prepared.american.edu) and the AU information line at (202) 885-1100 for general university-wide information, as well as contact their faculty and/or respective dean's office for course and school/college-specific information.

REQUIRED READINGS

1. Suny, Ronald Grigor and Martin, Terry, Eds. (2002). *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*. Oxford University Press. ISBN-13: 978-019514423
2. *Russia, the Near Abroad, and the West: Lessons from the Moldova-Transdnistria Conflict*. Woodrow Wilson Center Press / Johns Hopkins University Press. 978-1421405650.
3. Thomas De Waal (2010). *The Caucasus: An Introduction*. 978-0195399776
4. Georgi Derlugian (2005). *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus: A World-System Biography*. University of Chicago Press. ISBN-13: 978-0226142838
5. Gerard Toal (2017). *Near Abroad. Putin, the West and the Contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus*. Oxford University Press. 978-0190253301
6. Serhii Plokhy (2017). *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine*. Basic Books. 978-0465094868.

Course Requirements

In addition to engaged reading and active class participation, the course includes a book presentation and three written assignments, a case study, a book review, and an Op-Ed, the latter two aimed at developing your ability to engage with the media. You will be asked to conduct an in-depth case study of one conflict in Russia or Eurasia, consider appropriate processes to contribute to the resolution of that conflict, and present that concisely in an Op-Ed piece. In addition, you will complete a book review and present

the book in the class. A list of possible books will be provided, but you can also choose your own. You will receive extra-credit for submitting the book review and the Op-Ed for publication in a major newspaper.

Class participation	Graded weekly	20%
Book review	Due Nov 7 & 14	20%
Book presentation	Due Nov 7 & 14	20%
Case study	Due Oct 31	20%
Case-study-based Op-Ed	Dec 4	20%
Extra credit for submitting the book review and/or the Op-Ed for publication		+5%

Further detail on each assignment will be discussed in the weeks preceding the assignment due dates.

Participation

Participation will be evaluated based both on your attendance and the quality of your regular contributions to our class discussions.

Book Review and Presentation

As during the course, we are able to cover only a small number of the key books on the subject of conflicts in Russia and Eurasia, two of the assignments include writing an academic review on an additional book and delivering a presentation in the class on that same book. A number of possible books to be reviewed are listed in the syllabus. You can also choose outside the suggested list.

The book review should be relatively short, no more than 1,000 words. Despite its length, the review should include, but does not have to be limited to, the following: a strong and enticing introduction; the key thesis of the book; some basic biographical information about the author(s) or editor(s); the summary of the content that includes the discussion of the author's conceptual and methodological approach, as well as the range of key arguments; strengths; weaknesses; conclusions. There will be an extra credit awarded to those of you who successfully submit the book review to a publication you identify.

Consider consulting some on-line resources on writing a book review prior to engaging in the exercise. Here are some suggested sources:

<http://libguides.usc.edu/c.php?g=235208&p=1560694>
http://www.colorado.edu/journals/cye/CYE_BookReviewGuidelines.htm

In addition to writing the book review, you are expected to share the learning with your classmates during the book presentation. We will have 30 minutes devoted to each book. Please consider spending no more than 20 minutes on the presentation to leave time for the discussion. The presentation will be graded based on two criteria: content (as related to conflicts and conflict resolution in Russia and Eurasia) and creativity/interactivity of the presentation and the follow-up discussion.

There are two possible due dates for the book review and the presentation, based on the topic you choose. This and other requirements for these assignments will be further discussed in class.

Case Study

Toward the end of the class, you will be asked to write an Op-Ed on a topic related to the conflicts or conflict resolution in one of the conflicts we discussed. While an Op-Ed itself is a relatively short product, it assumes an extensive knowledge of the subject by the author who is often an expert in the topic covered. The case-study assignment, therefore, will serve to prepare you for the writing of the Op-Ed. The Case Study can be focused on the analysis of the current dynamics of one of the conflicts in Russia or Eurasia. It can also be focused on the peace process of that conflict. The Case Study should include an introduction outlining your main thesis (1 page), a short literature review or description of recent developments based on secondary sources (2-3 pages), your original analysis (3-5 pages), recommendations when applicable (1 page), conclusions. The Case Study should demonstrate your extensive knowledge and understanding of the dynamics of the conflict you chose to cover.

The Case Study should be between 3,500- to 4,500-words-long, excluding the bibliography.

Op-Ed (informed by the Case Study)

Read a number of Op-Eds in at least two major international newspapers. Write your own Op-Ed on the topic of one conflict or conflict resolution process in Russia and Eurasia. Rely on your Case Study to support your case.

Consult on-line resources for writing a successful Op-Ed. Some examples include:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/14/opinion/op-ed-and-you.html>

<https://styleguide.duke.edu/toolkits/writing-media/how-to-write-an-op-ed-article/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/mar/14/how-to-pitch-article-guardian-opinion>

If your Op-Ed is especially timely (responding to a very current event) consider sending it to a newspaper or another media source immediately. If it is not very time-sensitive, you can wait for my feedback before submitting to a newspaper.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1. Aug. 29

Introductions: what to expect from this course

Readings:

Introduction to Suny, Ronald Grigor and Martin, Terry, Eds. (2002). *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*. Oxford University Press.

Week 2. Sept. 5

The Making of Russian and Eurasian Nations and their Interrelations: Soviet Nationalities Policy

Readings:

Suny, Ronald Grigor and Martin, Terry, Eds. (2002). *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*. Oxford University Press.

Part I (entirely), Part II (entirely), Part III (Northrop: Nationalizing Backwardness), Part IV (Brandenberger: It is Imperative to Advance Russian Nationalism).

Week 3. Sept. 12

The Conflicts in Ukraine

Readings:

Serhii Plokhy (2017). *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine*. Basic Books. (Skim Parts I, II, III. **Read parts IV and V**).

Andrii Portnov. 14 January 2016. How 'eastern Ukraine' was lost. In *Open Democracy*. Available at: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/andrii-portnov/how-eastern-ukraine-was-lost>

Olena Lennon (2015). Abandoned: The Kiev Government's Isolation of Eastern Ukrainians. In *National Interest*. Available at: <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/abandoned-the-kiev-governments-isolation-eastern-ukrainians-12929>

Week 4. Sept. 19

Conflicts in the South Caucasus

Thomas De Waal (2010). *The Caucasus: An Introduction*. Oxford University Press.

Week 5. Sept. 26

Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Resolution Attempts

Readings:

Ali Abasov and Haroutiun Khachatryan (2005). *The Karabakh Conflict. Variants of Settlement: Concepts and Reality*. Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. Available at: http://www.ca-c.org/dataeng/books/book-1/Abaso_Khachatryan.pdf

Anahit Shirinyan (2013). Assessing Russia's role in efforts to resolve the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict: From perception to reality. In *Caucasus Edition*. Available at: <http://caucasusedition.net/analysis/assessing-russias-role-in-efforts-to-resolve-the-nagorno-karabakh-conflict-from-perception-to-reality/>

Thomas De Waal (2016). *Prisoners of the Caucasus: Resolving the Karabakh Security Dilemma*. Carnegie Europe. <http://carnegieeurope.eu/2016/06/16/prisoners-of-caucasus-resolving-karabakh-security-dilemma-pub-63825>

Week 6 Oct. 3

Georgian-Abkhazian-South Ossetian Conflict

Readings:

Conciliation Resources report (1999):

- The roots of conflict: <http://www.c-r.org/accord-article/roots-conflict>
- Georgian perspectives: <http://www.c-r.org/accord-article/georgian-perspectives>
- The South Ossetian case: <http://www.c-r.org/accord-article/south-ossetia-case>
- An Abkhaz perspective: <http://www.c-r.org/accord-article/abkhaz-perspective>

International Crisis Group reports (download the full pdf files):

- Abkhazia: Deepening Dependence (Feb 2010). Available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/caucasus/georgia/abkhazia-deepening-dependence>
- South Ossetia: The Burden of Recognition (June 2010). Available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/caucasus/south-ossetia-burden-recognition>

Guest speaker: Dr. Susan Allen (Professor at George Mason University and facilitator of the Georgian-South Ossetian civic dialogue “Point of View”)

Week 7 Oct. 10

The Conflict in Transnistria (Moldova)

Readings:

William Hill (2012). *Russia, the Near Abroad, and the West: Lessons from the Moldova-Transdnistria Conflict*. Woodrow Wilson Center Press / Johns Hopkins University Press.

Guest speaker: Lyndon Allin (former political officer with the OSCE Mission to Moldova).

Week 8. Oct. 17

The Conflicts in the North Caucasus

Readings:

Georgi Derlugian (2005). *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus: A World-System Biography*.

Week 9. Oct. 24

The Conflicts in Eurasia in the Context of Russia – West Relations

Readings:

Gerard Toal (2017). *Near Abroad. Putin, the West and the Contest over Ukraine and the Caucasus*. Oxford University Press.

Guest speaker: Dr. Gerard Toal (Professor at Virginia Tech and the author of the “Near Abroad”)

Week 10. Oct. 31

In class: book presentations with focus on Russia

Prior to class: book reviews focused on Russia due via email

Books to consider:

Serhii Plokhy (2015). *The Last Empire: The Final Days of the Soviet Union*. Basic Books.

Srobe Talbott (2003). *The Russia Hand: A Memoir of Presidential Diplomacy*. Random House. 978-0812968460

Timothy Snyder (2012). *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin*. Basic Books. 978-0465031474

Fiona Hill and Clifford G. Gaddy (2015). *Mr. Putin: Operative in the Kremlin*. Brookings Institution Press. 978-0815726173

Arkady Ostrovsky (2017). *The Invention of Russia: The Rise of Putin and the Age of Fake News*. Penguin Books. 978-0399564178.

Case Study due: to be emailed to me at gamaghel@american.edu prior to the start time of the class (extensions can be considered upon request).

Week 11. Nov. 7

The Conflict in Tajikistan

Readings:

Politics of compromise. The Tajikistan peace process, Issue eds. Kamoludin Abdullaev and Catherine Barnes <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/tajikistan/contents.php>

Karina Korostelina The system of social identities in Tajikistan: Early warning and conflict prevention. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies, Volume 40, Issue 2, June 2007, Pages 223-238 (blackboard)*

Week 12. Nov. 14

In class: book presentations on conflicts and conflict resolution in Eurasia

Prior to class: book reviews on conflicts and conflict resolution in Eurasia due via email

Books to consider:

Anna Politkovskaya (2007 edition). Intro by Derlugian. *A Small Corner of Hell: Dispatches from Chechnya*. University of Chicago Press

Olivier Roy (2007). *The New Central Asia: Geopolitics and the Birth of Nations*, Revised Edition. NYU Press.

Thomas De Waal (2013). *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan Through Peace and War*, 10th Year Anniversary Edition, Revised and Updated. NYU Press.

Anna Ohanyan (2015). *Networked Regionalism as Conflict Management*. Stanford University Press.

Svante Cornell (2017). *The International Politics of the Armenian-Azerbaijani Conflict: The Original "Frozen Conflict" and European Security*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Nov. 21 – NO CLASS (Friday classes meet)

Week 13. Nov. 28

Conceptual Critique and Alternatives to Mainstream Approaches to Conflict Resolution in Eurasia

Rogers Brubaker (1998). Myths and Misconceptions in the Study of Nationalism. In *State of the Nation: Ernest Gellner and the Theory of Nationalism*. Ed. John Hall. Cambridge University Press. Available at: <https://works.bepress.com/wrb/13/>

Mgdalena Grono. International Crisis Group (Nov 2016). *Isolation of Post-Soviet Conflict Regions Narrows the Road to Peace*. Available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe->

[central-asia/caucasus/isolation-post-soviet-conflict-regions-narrows-road-peace](http://caucasusedition.net/analysis/transcending-borders-transnational-approaches-to-conflict-resolution/#_Toc466639919)

Transcending Borders: Transnational Approaches to Conflict Resolution (Nov 2016). By Victor Voronkov, Philip Gamaghelyan, Sevil Huseynova, Zhanna Krikorova. Available at: http://caucasusedition.net/analysis/transcending-borders-transnational-approaches-to-conflict-resolution/#_Toc466639919

Week 14. Dec. 5

Engaging the Media and Class Wrap Up Evaluation

In preparation to the class, read a number of Op-Eds in at least two selected major international papers. Consider these as potential selections: New York Times, Washington Post, The Guardian, and the Financial Times. Write your own Op-Ed on the topic of conflicts and conflict resolution in Russia and Eurasia. Rely on your case-study to support your case.

Email me your Op-Ed at gamaghel@american.edu by midnight on December 4 (the night before the class). If your Op-Ed is especially timely (responding to a very current event) consider sending it to a newspaper or another media source immediately. If it is not very time-sensitive, you can wait for my feedback before submitting to a newspaper.