

Geography 329-001 Section # 06046
 Fall 2005
 Monday: noon MWF
 CB 204

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GEOGRAPHY OF THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

Texts

Denis Shaw. **Russia in the Modern World**. Boston: Blackwells. 2005.

Minton F. Goldman. **Russia, The Eurasian Republics, and Central/Eastern Europe**. Global Studies, 10th Edition. Guilford, CT: Duskin Publishers, 2005.

A large scale map of the Former Soviet Union: purchase from a local bookstore; the map should have major cities, transport networks, and physical features. Place this in a room that you visit many times daily, so you will become familiar with “what is where” in the FSU.

Course Description

The purposes of the class are threefold: (1) to familiarize you with major human, physical, and environmental geographies of the former Soviet Union, (2) to focus on key topics of salient interest important in understanding the contemporary FSU, for example, economic restructuring including privatization, environmental destruction, ethnic conflict, religion, health and disease, and geopolitical realignments, (3) to introduce you to important data sources and other resource materials about the region, (4) to provide opportunities for you to learn about studying in FSU, working there for yourself, a corporation, government or NGO, (5) to introduce you to current research topics and projects by geographers and others – this accomplished through an examination of the current contents of journals. Remember, this class focuses on contemporary Russia and Former Soviet Union. Former Eastern Europe is also not discussed in this class, as it is in our departmental offering on Europe (GEO 326). Note: you will need an email account as I will be sending messages to the class periodically and asking you to contact leading geographers with FSU interests.

Textual Materials

Professor Shaw is one of the major disciplinary figures with lifelong interests in the former Soviet Union. His specializations are historical, urban, and economic geography. The book you will be reading in its entirety is the best book in my mind; it has solid historical geography material, covers the major systematic subjects, e.g., industry, population, cities, etc., that are important in a 300 level class, and good sections on the Post-Soviet period. The Shaw text along with the Global Studies reader will provide you a strong foundation in historical and contemporary geography of the FSU. I will be assigning all chapters in Shaw and about two-thirds of the materials in Global Studies. There will be some chapters I will provide you from other books and also occasional short articles that I will be assigning as well. If you run across interesting articles from the Web or newspapers or maps, please bring them to my attention so we can share them with the class.

Schedule

Below are the class meetings and topics; specific chapters for reading will be announced in class. In the *Global Studies* reader, you will be reading pages 1-86 and articles, 1-12. You will also be provided photocopies of chapters from some other geography text. Note this volume contains very useful reference maps, websites, and data about FSU. Useful materials to study for examinations. **Please be sure you read the materials for the class period designated below and bring your texts to class.**

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|-------------|---|
| 24 August. | Registration and Introduction |
| 26 | Approaches To Studying FSU: Defining Russia (Europe, Asia, Eurasia) |
| 29 | Historical Geography: Creation of FSU and Russia |
| 31 | Historical Geography, cont.; Content Analysis Due |
| 2 September | Historical Geography cont; First Map Test |
| 5 | Labor Day (for those who work, don't work, and want to work) |
| 7 | Population and Ethnicity |
| 9 | Population and Ethnicity cont. |
| 12 | Population and Ethnicity cont. |
| 14 | Population and Ethnicity, |
| 16 | Physical Resource Base (climate, landforms, soils, vegetation, water). |
| 19 | Physical Resource Base cont. |
| 21 | Physical Resource Base cont. |
| 23 | Physical Resource Base cont. Two Journal Abstracts Due |
| 26 | Agriculture and Rural Society and Economy |
| 28 | Agriculture and Rural Society and Economy cont. |
| 30 | Agriculture and Rural Society and Economy, cont. |
| 3 October | Agriculture and Rural Society and Economy cont |
| 5 | Second Map Test |
| 7 | FALL BREAK: good time to reflect on personal & group geographies |
| 10 | Energy and Industrial Resources and Economies |
| 12 | FIRST MIDTERM. |
| 14 | Energy and Industrial Resources and Economies cont. |
| 17 | Service Economies and Society (trade, transportation, communication, tourism, Internet connections, etc.) |
| 19 | Services cont. |
| 21 | Services cont. |
| 24 | Services cont. |
| 26 | Urbanization and Cities |
| 28 | Cities cont. |
| 31 | Cities cont. |
| 2 Nov. | Cultural and Social Issues and Problems (housing, conflicts, education, gender, alcoholism, AIDS, gender, etc.) |
| 4 | Cultural and Social cont. |
| 7 | Cultural and Social cont. Third Map Test |
| 9 | Social Problems (health, education, AIDS, etc.) GS pp. 8-102 passim. |
| 11 | Social Problems cont. |
| 14 | Social Problems cont. |
| 16 | Politics (national and international.) |
| 18 | Politics cont. |
| 21 | SECOND MIDTERM. |
| 23 | Political cont. |
| 25 | THANKSGIVING VACATION (be mindful of those in the FSU) |
| 25-27 | Thanksgiving Vacation (be mindful of those in the FSU) |
| 28 | Conducting Research in the FSU |
| 30 | WWW group projects: due and reported on in class |
| 2 Dec. | Business Opportunities in the FSU Fourth Map Test |
| 5 | Studying and Traveling in the FSU |
| 7 | Service Learning Project Presentations |
| 9 | Service Learning Project Presentations cont. |

Final examination period: 16 Dec. 1 PM .

Assignments

All students are required to complete the following:

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|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Content analysis | 20 points |
| 2 midterm exams (60 each) | 120 points |
| 4 map tests | 100 points |
| 2 journal abstracts | 20 points |
| Group project using the WWW | 50 points |
| Service Learning Project | 50 points |
| Class contribution (maximum) | 40points |
| Final Exam | 100 points (if taken) |
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| | 500 points |

Assignments

All students are required to complete the following: (1) a short content analysis of the Shaw text, (2) four map quizzes, (3) two midterms, (4) an out-of-classroom service learning project (described below), (5) write two one-page abstracts of research articles from recent issues of *EURASIAN GEOGRAPHY AND ECONOMICS*, and (6) one small group (2-3 person project using the WWW. These assignments are described below. Grading will be done on a curve, that is, not 90 % A, 80% B, 70% C, etc.

Content Analysis

You are asked to examine each page in the Shaw textbook and state *ten* summary points about the chapters, maps, photos, and tables. For example: “There are X photos in the book and Y show people and of these only Z include photos of women.” Or: “There are X maps in the book, but only Y show photos related to environmental quality or environmental problems.” Some advice on executing this assignment: Thumb through every chapter several times and take some notes, then decided on the ten most important points. You will be judged on the specificity of your points, how well you articulate your case that these are important, and your organization and writing. This is due 31 August.

Map Quizzes

There will be map tests will be on place name information (cities, rivers, seas, but also important economic regions, concentrations of ethnic groups, and areas of conflict). You will be provided with information to study for these tests. The map tests are as follows:

- I. General: states, capitals, major cities (20 points)
- II. Physical features: rivers, seas, mountains, lakes, deserts, etc. (30 points)
- III. Economic (industrial, agricultural, mineral, resources, and population regions (30 points)
- IV. Other: major cities, ethnic concentrations, environmental (20 points)

Be sure to study the base maps and data in the Global Studies text.

Midterms.

The two midterms will include these types of questions: definitions (terms and concepts), short answer, map interpretation (taking a map fro a chapter in the text), and short essay. The first midterm will include materials covered up to that point, the second midterm covered after the first midterm. Each midterm will include some current events, so it is a good idea for you to have some idea of “what is happening where” in the FSU. I will provide you some study questions to use for the short essay portions of the midterms, not terms to study.

Note: I will be providing you on the last class day, 9 December, your pre-final exam grade. If you are satisfied with the grade, you will not have to take the final examination, which will be given 16 December at 1 PM. The final examination will include a comprehensive exam and include materials

covered throughout the term. If you show up for the final exam, you will have to take the exam. If you do not show up, your pre-final term grade will become your final term grade.

Reviews of Recent Research

You are required to prepare one page (each one page single spaced) summaries of two articles in *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, the leading international geography journal dealing with the FSU. Read articles only published since 2000. Your summaries should include; a complete and accurate citation, the author's purpose, data used, methods of analysis, major findings, and two good follow-up research projects you think are worth pursuing. . You may wish to include a map or table along with your summary. I ask that you also make photocopies of your reviews for other class members, so they will have the resource available for future reference. I will provide you journal issues, or you may access them electronically from J-STOR.

WWW Project

All students are required to complete a team (two or three other class members) research project using the WWW. The team will include students with varying backgrounds using the Web. You are to use the Web to identify resource materials that help you understand the topic. The text length of the narrative should not exceed 8 pages (double-spaced) and the paper should include a bibliography that lists the Web information (the http address) and also materials (maps, graphs, tables, etc.) extracted from various Web pages and using various search engines. You will be graded on the following criteria: organization, statement of research problem, data sources used, literature (I expect 6-8 WWW references), methodology (how you proceeded), major findings and analysis of findings, writing style, neatness and writing style. I expect some accompanying materials: tables, maps, photos, etc. Please obtain my permission before embarking on your project. Possible topics for the research papers are:

- Recent Russian voting patterns in the United Nations
- Recent voting patterns of states of the FSU: do they all vote alike?
- Images, iconographies, and identities of new Central Asian or Caucasus states
- Missionary activities (Americans, Muslims, Buddhists, etc.) in Former Soviet Union
- Environmental politics in Russia or a new state (or a case study)
- An Environmental Atlas of FSU (using data from the FSU Environmental Digest listserv)
- Mega-engineering projects in FSU: Virgin Lands, damming Siberian rivers, Bering Straits dam, etc
- Tourism and preservation issues: species protection, agriculture, poaching, etc.
- Adventure and Wilderness Tourism (in Siberia, Central Asian deserts, Volga River, Caucasus, Kamchatka, Tien Shan, etc.)
- Tourism investments and tourist traffic (where Russians travel? Who comes to FSU?)
- Re-naming and naming processes (streets, cities, landmarks)
- Regionalism issues in FSU; for example, Far East, Caucasus, etc
- Self-determination groups in the FSU (WWW pages), e.g., Chechnya, Dagestan, etc.
- Emerging Women's groups and organizations (social and political foci)
- Alcoholism among women, men, and youth
- Islamic influences in Russian education and society
- Ethnic "layering" in the Caucasus and Central Asia
- Language conflicts (official languages, broadcasting, publications, etc.)
- Privatization efforts in different countries (comparative approach)
- Marketing Western products (clothing, automobiles, cosmetics, computers, etc.) in FSU
- Chinese influences (markets, politics, etc) in FSU
- Voting patterns for major and minor parties in Moscow and St. Petersburg
- AIDS or drug trafficking issues in FSU
- Cold War Soviet cartography (propaganda maps, atlases, topics, missing cities)
- Maps of "the undesirable:" gulags (concentration camps), nuclear test sites, toxic dumps

- High tech investments (telecommunications, computers, etc linking cities and citizens)
- The Russian film industry
- New Russian athletic events and leagues (softball, football, horse racing, etc.)
- Mafia economies and cultures (old and new)
- Border disputes and conflicts
- Russia and Russians on the Internet (the status and promise)
- Environmental catastrophes (Aral Sea, Baltic Sea, nuclear reactors, plutonium thefts)
- Former “Closed Cities” in the FSU
- The Russian and Central Asian horse economies: history and futures
- Tourism and tourism investments in Russia, Central Asia, and Far East
- Constructing the TransSiberian Railroad (historical account)

Some ideas for research topics might come from articles you will be reading in *Eurasian Geography and Economics*. The groups will be formed early in the semester and I encourage them to meet with me early so I can assist you in finding materials on and off the Web.

Service Learning Project

For this assignment you are asked to visit some business, organization, or group in Lexington that has connections with the Former Soviet Union (Russia or new states, former republics) and prepare a report on the nature of those linkages. The project you may work on with one other student in class. The overall purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate the many linkages that individuals, businesses, and groups have with the Former Soviet Union. You will personally interview one or two persons in that group or organization and prepare a two page (single spaced) report on your findings. Here are some possibilities: the horse industry, banks, refugee sponsoring groups, legal firms providing assistance to individuals and groups, music groups, travel agencies, sales of KY products, universities and colleges with international programs (students and faculty) in agriculture, medicine, law, business and economics, etc.

You will need my permission before embarking on this project. Each group will also make a short report to the class the date these assignments are due. Please consider preparing and including some innovative map as part of your presentation; this will be in addition to your two page narrative.

Final Examination Session.

Note that the final exam session is scheduled for Friday 16 December at the regular class time and place. See note above for those who wish to take the exam. Note the exam will be a comprehensive one.

Hints on Doing Well in the Class

- Reading materials before coming to class
- Reading daily newspapers and watching tv news
- Reading WWW sites on current Russian and FSU developments
- Asking good questions in class; contributing positively to class
- Performing well on the two activities: tourism and semester-long project
- Maintaining a sustained interest in the class
- Doing well on all examinations
- Become very familiar with maps of the Former Soviet Union

Final note

I will be setting up a class list so I can communicate with you via email. Also I will provide you the addresses of others in the class. Please be sure you read it regularly, as I will be forwarding items and providing information on topics discussed or to be discussed.