Political Science 133:
Politics of Central Asia in Comparative Perspective

Ebru Erdem
Office: 2223 Watkins
Office Hours: W 1-2:30 pm
eerdem@ucr.edu

Fall 2008-09
M, W 5:10-6:30 pm
2200 Spieth Hall (SPTH)

I. About the Course:
Central Asia is a region which has gained significance after September 11th, and it is important to understand the domestic politics of the countries in the region, as well as their role in international politics. This course will focus on the five former-Soviet republics in the region: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. It will give a historical background for the region, elaborate on the current issues and problems regarding the politics of the region, and discuss the role of these countries in international politics. The course also aims to provide a foundation on which students will be able to develop a better understanding of the roles of both Soviet legacy and Islam in society and politics.

The section on historical background summarizes the pre-Soviet history of the region, and focuses on the Soviet era transformation of politics and the societies. The current politics section will go over the post-independence political and economic challenges and developments, which include persistence of authoritarianism, prospects for democratization; economic development with and without oil revenues; and challenges to peace and security such as civil wars and radical Islamic movements.

This course presents Central Asian politics in a comparative perspective. Each week we will tackle a question that concerns Central Asia. In the first class of the week, we will discuss how this question has manifested itself in other regions of the world, or how scholars studying other regions have theorized about the question. In the second class of the week we will discuss the question in the context of Central Asia, both deepening our knowledge of Central Asia and understanding its similarities with and differences from other regions.

II. Requirements and Policies:
All students are expected to do the assigned readings before coming to class. About 150 pages are assigned for each week; I hope you’ll enjoy them as much as you learn from them.

Attendance to the lecture is expected but not required. Students will be responsible for knowing everything I say in class, including the announcements I make.

Weekly Reports: Each student will choose a “case country” from the region, and will develop an expertise on this country throughout the quarter, with the help of your assignments and final project. Starting the third week, you will write weekly reports,
which have two parts. The first part of the report will be on your reactions to the readings of that week (no credit for reactions to the readings of the “wrong” week). You will pick one of the readings assigned for the week and report your evaluation of the piece. I will post on ilearn/blackboard a guideline about what I expect in the reading reactions.

The second part of the weekly report will be a summary news report on your case country. You will follow the current developments in the country through different news sources, summarize them in your weekly assignment, and comment on them. Do not just copy and paste the news, tell me what you think that development means.

There is an exception to the weekly assignment (an additional section) for Weeks 8 and 9, check the weekly assignments for those weeks below for details.

**Midterm Exam:** We will have an in class midterm exam on November 12th, Wednesday. No make up exams, except for documented medical reasons.

**Final Paper:** There is no final exam. Instead of a final exam, you will submit a final project that you will develop throughout the quarter. It is due December 3rd, Wednesday. You will choose a question or puzzle regarding Central Asia, research what has been written about this question and come up with your own answer. Better final papers have an interesting question (a political puzzle), a thesis statement which answers this question and a case study/a comparative case study which provides supporting evidence; they are focused and convincingly argued. To encourage you to think about the final paper early enough, you will complete different steps during the quarter, these are listed in the Weekly Schedule below.

The composition of the final grade will be:

- Weekly assignments: 40%
- Midterm: 30%
- Final Paper: 30%

You do not get letter grades for individual assignments or exams. The number grades you get throughout the quarter will be used to calculate your final grade (according to the weights above). These final grades will be curved in order to determine the letter grade. The average final grade will correspond to a B- and any skews in the distribution will be adjusted for. Note that every point from every assignment or exam counts, a single point you lose from a weekly assignment may bump you down from an A- to a B+.

**Policies on Submissions and Late Submissions:**
Submit all of your written work on time, late submissions will be penalized. The weekly reports are due in class every Wednesday on and after the third week. The weekly assignments are going to be graded on a 10 point scale and 4 points will be deducted for every day it is late (that is; 1 point for every 6 hours). All written work is required to be hard copies, submitted in class. You have all responsibility for assignments submitted in other ways (i.e. email, mailbox, fax...); you have the sole responsibility for lost emails, corrupt attachments, unattached attachments, any technological malfunctions, etc. If you
email an assignment in time according to email timestamp, your assignment will not be considered late, however you are still required to submit a hard copy ASAP.

Safe assignment:
The weekly assignments and the final paper should be uploaded to safe assignment through ilearn. If your assignment is not uploaded within 24 hours of its due time, it will not be graded.

The submissions of the various steps of the final paper (topic, biblo., outline etc.) are due in class on the days indicated in the syllabus. Please bring a hard copy to class on the dates indicated in the weekly schedule below.

Academic Integrity at the University of California, Riverside
This official document is posted at class ilearn site. All students MUST read, understand and abide by the academic honesty principles laid out in this document, and violations will be punished –no toleration, no exceptions.

Required Books:
The four books below are required and are available in the Book Store and on reserve in Rivera library:


Other readings:
Many of the journal articles are available online at JSTOR, Proquest and similar online servers subscribed by University Libraries. The “course materials/readings” section on ilearn/blackboard has direct links to these articles, indicated with [ilearn] in the syllabus, you may print one copy for your personal use.

Some articles and books chapters are on the e-reserves (check the UCR library website), these are indicated with [e-reserves] in the syllabus. You can view, download or print the online copies from the library website for personal use. The password to access the e-reserve readings for this class is posted on ilearn.
III. Weekly Schedule and Assignments

Week 1 (Sep 29 and Oct 1): Nomads and Khanates: Central Asia Before the Soviet Union

*Background on the Scientific Method and Central Asia*


*Central Asia Under Tsarist Rule*


*Suggested Reading:*


Week 2 (Oct 5 and 8): Colonialism, Soviet Style?

*Colonialism in Comparative Perspective*

**Union or Empire?: Soviet Transformation in Central Asia**


**Assignment:** Submit your final paper topic, i.e. a refined research question.

**Suggested Reading:**


**Week 3 (Oct 13 and 15): Colonialism and the Soviet Period**

**Sink or Float?: Post-Colonial Experiences**


**Evaluating the Success of the Soviet policies**
Period” and Chapter 6 “Political Functionalism and National affirmation During the Soviet Era.”


**Assignment:** Submit a draft outline of the final paper. *Submit your first weekly report!!!*

**Suggested Reading:**


**Week 4: (Oct 20 and 22) State Building**

**States: Why Do States Exist? Why Do They Fail?**
S. Krasner. 1984. "Approaches to the State" *Comparative Politics* 16(2). [ilearn]


**Challenges in Post-Soviet State-Building in Central Asia**


**Suggested Reading:**


**Week 5 (Oct 27 and 29): Nation Building**

**Making a Nation**


**Building and Destroying Nations in Central Asia**

Assignment: Submit the bibliography and a detailed outline of the final paper.

Suggested reading:


Week 6 (Nov 3 and 5): Insurgency and Civil War

Divided We Fall?: Dynamics of Intra-State Conflict


**Challenges to State and Internal Security in Central Asia**


**Suggested Reading:**


**Week 7 (Nov 10 and 12): Midterm week**
Monday: Recap and Q&A for the midterm

*Wednesday, November 12th*: In class midterm exam

**Week 8 (Nov 17 and 19): Democratization and Its Central Asian Prospects**

**Democratic vs. Authoritarian Regimes, Islam and Democracy**


Bruce Parrot “Perspectives on Postcommunist Democratization” In Dawisha and Parrot (eds.), *Conflict, Cleavage, and Change in Central Asia and Caucasus* Chapter 1, pp. 1-40. [e-reserves]
\textbf{Is Central Asia Fertile for Democracy?}


\textbf{Assignment}: As a part of your weekly assignment’s case study section, research and list: dates of all presidential and parliamentary elections that took place in your case country, and their results.

\textbf{Optional}: If you submit a first draft of your final paper this week, it will be returned with comments.

\textbf{Suggested Reading}:


Adam Przeworski. Democracy and the Market


\textbf{Week 9 (Nov 24 and 26): Economic Development: A Resource Curse over Central Asia?}

\textbf{Pathways to Economic Development}


Prospects for Economic Success in Central Asia


Assignment: As a part of your weekly assignment’s case study section, research the basic economic indicators for your case country and report them in a table (the table will be posted on ilearn in advance)

Suggested reading:


Happy Thanksgiving!

Week 10 (Dec 1 and 3): Stability and International Security at the Heart of Asia


Assignment: Final papers due in class on Wednesday, December 3rd !!!
For comparative politics method problems are central. Actually, comparative politics got its name exactly by the method, not the subject. On this basis, many scholars deny for comparative political science your own subject and, accordingly, the specificity of his own theory, saying that comparative politics is the whole of political science that uses the comparative method. At the time, Emile Durkheim stressed that the comparative is all sociology. As a research method, the comparison makes the originality of the research, not only in technique, but in the result gain knowledge [1]. When compa... Comparative political science has largely ignored the marked cross-national variation in Green party electoral performance. This article uses a unique aggregate dataset of 347 parliamentary elections from 32 countries over the course of 45 years to test competing theories about the causes of Green party success. The study of different forms of modern capitalism has a central place in comparative political economy. Comparing institutional configurations across countries has led to the emergence of a plurality of typologies that describe the essential features of different welfare production regimes. Among the most prominent categorizations has been the dist