

POU44172 — Russian Politics After Communism

Module Information	
Module Code	POU44172
Module Title	Russian Politics After Communism
Department	Political Science
Year Group	Senior Sophister
Module Personnel	Dr Noah Buckley (buckleno@tcd.ie)
Academic Year	2026–27
Credit Weighting	5 credits
Semester	Semester 2
Contact Hours	1.5 hours of seminar per week

Module Content	
Module Description	After over 70 years of Soviet communist rule, by the 1990s the Russian Federation found itself struggling with political disintegration, weak democracy, and the caustic legacies of an economy not built for capitalist markets. This module explores the evolution of Russian politics from the dynamic years of Gorbachev and Yeltsin to the extreme personalisation of power under Putin and the intrigues shaping Russian politics today. Topics include the collapse of the Soviet political and economic systems; Russia’s political institutions, including presidentialism and federalism; the persistent scourge of corruption; “petropolitics” and the politics of natural resources; political parties and elections; the opposition and the fight for democracy; and contemporary social movements. The module also examines Russia’s turn toward “neo-imperialism” — its interventions in Georgia (2008) and Ukraine (2014 and 2022) and its wider posture on the world stage. What are Putin’s motivations, and how can we expect Russia to act in the years to come?
Module Learning Aims	This module familiarises students with Russian domestic and international politics — the important events, figures, institutions, and dynamics — and situates the Russian case

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	within broader political science research on corruption, authoritarianism, and the politics of natural resources. Research is presented that places Russian and post-Soviet politics in a wider global perspective.
Learning Outcomes	On successful completion of this module, students will be able to: • Explain how the Russian political system has developed since the fall of communism in 1991 • Engage with academic research on Russian politics, authoritarianism, and political economy • Critically analyse major political developments in Russia and the post-Soviet space • Interpret current events using concepts from comparative politics and political economy • Connect Russia's domestic politics to its foreign policy and geopolitical posture, including the 2022 invasion of Ukraine
Indicative Reading / Resources	Recommended reading (full weekly readings provided via Blackboard): • Treisman, Daniel, ed. 2018. <i>The New Autocracy: Information, Politics, and Policy in Putin's Russia</i>. Brookings Institution Press. • Frye, Timothy. 2021. <i>Weak Strongman: The Limits of Power in Putin's Russia</i>. Princeton University Press. • Greene, Samuel A., and Graeme B. Robertson. 2019. <i>Putin v. the People: The Perilous Politics of a Divided Russia</i>. Yale University Press.

Assessment	
Assessment Components	Essay 40%; examination 60%.
Assessment Details	• One analytical essay of approximately 2,200 words, drawing on the academic literature, chosen from a set of topic options (40%). • One end-of-term examination in which students answer two of five questions (60%). • Essay topics, the generative-AI policy, and submission details are provided on the course website and Blackboard.



Additional Information	
Prerequisites	None
Co-requisites	None
Any other information	A detailed week-by-week schedule, readings, and lecture slides are provided on the course website and Blackboard.