Introduction

The course concentrates on Eurasia – the vast space stretching from Central Europe to the Pacific frequently connoted with post-Soviet space. We will deal with the topics related to and on the cross section of International Relations, Comparative Politics, Political Economy, and Public Policy in this area. First, we will review the politico-economic systems established in Eurasia and theoretical approaches applied to analyze them. Second, we will elaborate the role of external (USA, EU) and regional (Russia, China) actors, their strategies of influence and interaction with local actors and domestic context in developing politico-economic systems in Eurasia. Third, we will study Eurasian regionalism, i.e., initiatives of regional integration (e.g., Eurasian Union, Shanghai Cooperation Organization) and connectivity (One Belt, One Road) promoted in the area. We will trace the interactions of external factors, regional processes and domestic context in selected sectors (e.g., security, energy). Further topics of students’ interest will be incorporated.

This is a course designed to explore core developments across Eurasia and review the major research approaches that explain them. Despite a to certain extents similar Soviet past, Eurasia today represents a patchwork of the politico-economic systems, ranging from defective democracies to closed authoritarian regimes. How to explain this diversity? What are the causes and consequences? What is “normal” and what is special about Eurasia as a region and the political and economic systems of Eurasian countries? We will concentrate on the influences and interactions of legacies, resource endowment, reform trajectories as well as regional and external structural conditions and actors in the development of the political and economic systems in Eurasia.
The course is directed to the students who either would like to do in-depth analysis with Eurasia in a focus or are looking for Eurasian cases for within-/inter-/cross- etc. regional comparison.
No prior knowledge is assumed.

**Course requirements and assessment**

- Active class participation (15%)
- Team presentation (20%)
- Literature (book) review (30%)
- Research paper, 3000 words (35%)

*Active class participation* is expected and graded. Students are expected to be present at all seminars and come prepared. If you are unable to attend class, you should notify me via e-mail prior to the session. To do well on this part of the grade I recommend you the following strategy: participate regularly, make informed (by the mandatory readings at least!) contributions, focus on the main points and argumentation lines of the readings, formulate your statements clearly and support them with explanatory argumentation, respond to others in discussions, pose own new questions and demonstrate critical engagement.

Students are asked to make a *joint presentation* (in small teams) on one of the (sub-)topics in sessions 3-11. In the presentation students should review the main research streams dealing with the selected (sub-)topic, critically engage with their main arguments, and conclude with the evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses. The presentation should concentrate thereby on regional analyses focusing on Eurasia but also embed these analyses into a broader comparative research. The presentation should be no longer than 20 minutes and will be followed by a 10-min Q&A. The slides should be send to the professor by Thursday 12:00 in the week the presentation is due. The preparations for the presentations should go beyond the mandatory readings.

Each student is expected to *review a book* on the topic of his/her interest in Eurasia. Students are free to choose the books but your choice needs to be approved by the professor. Students can choose books that are on the same topic as their presentation. Edited volumes and books older than 5 years should be chosen based on well-argued reasons. The review should be no more than 1000 words long (references not included). The review will be due in the last week of the winter semester; the precise deadline will be communicated in due time.

The final *research paper* should contain the explanatory (causality-centered) research design that is tested empirically, including the cases from Eurasia. The selection of empirical cases should be methodologically justified. Students can probe the ideas for a large (MA, PhD) project in this paper. It should be no more than 3000 words long (references not included). Details on
the requirements for a research paper will be introduced in the first session of the first week. The paper will be due around mid-April; the precise deadline will be communicated in due time.

Please note that for all assessments, late submission, and violation of the word or time limit will result in a lower grade. Plagiarism is not acceptable and will be punished according to the departmental rules.

Auditing of the course is possible upon the approval of the professor. Active class participation is expected. No presentation and no written assignments are required.

**Approach to teaching and learning**

The main goal of the course is to provide you the understanding of the political, economic and social developments in Eurasia. Such knowledge cannot be gained from memorization of the facts about Eurasia but constructed from critically thinking. Critical thinking needs to be actively exercised.

Hence, the course will build on the techniques of collaborative and peer-to-peer learning. In other words, students will learn from and with each other. Our sessions will include brainstorming exercises, team presentations, group work and discussions. Also, the course integrates simulations and role playing in order to let students experience real-life political processes in Eurasia. Techniques of scenario development will be probed as well.

The professor will overtake the functions of a coach and a moderator by generating discussion topics, raising questions, and developing collaborative exercises. She will make short inputs to the sessions. However, no lecturing should be expected.

To sum up, in this course student will learn by doing, not pure listening.

**Learning outcomes**

At the end of the course the student should:

- Possess significant factual knowledge of key empirical developments in Eurasia;
- Be familiar with the core theoretical approaches applied to explain these developments;
- Understand foreign policy approaches of the Western actors (foci: EU and USA), Russia and China in Eurasia and identify its virtues and shortcomings in the regional-/country-context;
- Gain a deeper knowledge of how policies are made in different politico-economic systems;
- Be experienced in the conceptual and methodological techniques of studying and comparing areas;
- Skilled in research design applied to an area and/or comparing a political phenomenon across world regions or across time;
• Be able to participate in controversial discussions, synthesize different arguments and facts to arrive at your own summarize and present their own arguments, critically assess previous research, and elaborate their own research design.

Reading material

All the mandatory course material is available in electronic form through https://ceulearning.ceu.edu/. The syllabus also contains further readings.
PART I: INTRODUCTION

Week 1 [11.01.2019] – Introduction to Eurasia and the course: region, current topics, and organizational issues
The first session introduces students to the Eurasian region by providing the overview of different approaches to construct Eurasia as a (geo-)political, economic, social etc. area. Also, the course requirements will be explained and all organizational issues will be clarified.

Mandatory readings:


Further readings:


Week 2 [18.01.2019] – Approaching the politico-economic systems in Eurasia
In week 2 we will review the main approaches to analyze the development of the politico-economic systems in Eurasia. We will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches and apply them to the selected countries in Eurasia. In preparation for this session, each student will be asked to collect information on the development of the politico-economic system in the Eurasian country of his/her interest.

Mandatory readings:


Further readings on the selected country-cases:


Wayne, Merry E., “The Politics of Central Asia: National in Form, Soviet in Content”, Ch. 2 in In the Tracks of Tamerlane: Central Asia’s Path to the 21st Century.

PART II: EXTERNAL INFLUENCES AND LOCAL RE-/ACTIONS

In weeks 3-7 we will deal with external influences in post-Soviet Eurasia, with a focus on the relationships between different sets of inter- and re-/actions: between Russia and other post-Soviet states; between Russia and external actors; between China, other post-Soviet states and external actors; and Russia and. We will explore the dynamics of these interactions and discuss the rationale behind them. Also we will deal with the consequences of these interactions for the politico-economic systems in Eurasia.

Week 3 [25.01.2019] – Russia and its ‘Near Abroad’

Mandatory readings:


Further readings:


**Week 4 [01.02.2019] – Russia and the West**

*Mandatory readings:*


*Further readings:*


Nalbandov, R. (2016). Not by bread alone: Russian foreign policy under Putin. Lincoln, NE.


Week 5 [08.02.2019] – Western actors in Eurasia. EU integration beyond membership

Mandatory readings:


Further readings:


**Week 6 [15.02.2019] – Reactions: Foreign policies of Eurasian countries (except Russia)**

*Mandatory readings:*


*Further readings:*


**Week 7 [22.02.2019] – China**

**Mandatory readings:**


**Further readings:**


Goldstein, Avery “China’s Real and Present Danger”, Foreign Affairs (September 2013/October 2013).


PART III. Regional trends and interaction processes
In weeks 8-11 we will analyze regional integration project driven by different external and regional actors. We will explore regional cooperation across different dimensions, looking for the countries’ motivation to join these initiatives and domestic effects of Eurasian regionalism.

Week 8 [01.03.2019] – Regional Integration. Political and economic dimensions.

Mandatory readings:


Further readings:


**Week 9 [08.03.2019]* – Security Cooperation and Conflicts**

*No session on 08.03.2019, the make-up session in week 10 or 11*

**Mandatory readings:**


**Further readings:**


**Week 10 [15.03.2019*] – Energy**

*No session on 15.03 due to the national holiday! The topic will be discussed on 22.03.2019*

**Mandatory readings:**


**Further readings:**

Balmaceda, Margarita The Politics of Energy Dependency: Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania between Domestic Oligarchs and Russian Pressure (University of Toronto Press, 2013), Chs. 4 – 5, pp. 93 – 207.


**Week 11 [22.03.2019] – Further topics of students’ interest**

*Mandatory readings:*

*Further readings:*

**Week 12 [29.03.2019] – Wrap-up. What’s next for Eurasia? – Scenarios development.**
The course will conclude with a forward-looking assignment of developing several scenarios for Eurasian countries and the region. Students will be introduced to the techniques of scenario building.