

PO3B2-15 Russia in World Politics

22/23

Department

Politics & International Studies

Level

Undergraduate Level 3

Module leader

Maria Koinova

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

Do you want to learn about the role of Russia in world politics? Do you want to understand the historical evolution of its contemporary domestic and international politics? Do you want to apply theories on international relations, international security, and comparative politics on the study of Russia in the post-communist world and globally? This module will be for you if you want to find the answers to these and other questions. We study Russia during the First and Second World wars, zoom closely into the Soviet era and the three decades after the collapse of communism, marked by political liberalisation and increasing drive towards authoritarianism. The module further analyses Russia's relationships with the EU, US, NATO, and China among other BRIC countries, as well as its nuclear and energy politics, military or soft interventionism in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Middle East. We also analyse the international politics of migration, citizenship and transnational diaspora politics associated with the notion of the "Russian world." The module concludes with a discussion on the recent war in Ukraine, and its implications for the international political order.

Module aims

1. Study the role of Russia in world politics from historical and contemporary perspectives; thereby help understanding some of the roots of contemporary policies, as well as long-term political continuity and change.

2. Assist students to integrate knowledge on international relations, international security, and comparative politics with the study of Russia and its place among post-communist countries and in the global political order.
3. Expose students to a variety of topics: the Russian revolution, Russia and the two World Wars, the Soviet Union during the Cold War, political transition to democratisation and backsliding to authoritarianism, nuclear and energy politics, kin-state and military interventionism, international relations with great powers, de facto states, international organisations, and BRIC countries.
4. Develop skills such as the research and interpretation of political science and international relations literature related to Russia in world politics; analysis and systematic comparison of empirical material; preparation and presentation of results in a collaborative manner; and deepening of writing skills through individual assignments.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

The module starts by looking at Russia during the age of growing nationalisms of the 19th century, and how the collapse of empires and the Russian revolution shaped alliance-politics and Russia's participation in the First and Second World Wars. We further study the Soviet Union, where Russia occupied a central stage among other Soviet republics, participated in a nuclear arms race, exerted strong influence over other communist countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and supported Marxist movements in the then-called Third World. We look further into the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, the secessionism of Chechnya, Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and the role of Russia in these conflicts, as well as its failed attempts at democratisation during the Yeltsin era (1990s). We look then into the rise of Putin in power in the early 21st century, and the turn of the country towards authoritarianism. The core part of this module focuses on contemporary international relations themes: Russia's relationship with the US, NATO and the EU; its oil and gas geopolitics; soft and military interventionism in Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Caucasus, Middle East and Central Asia; the concept of the "Russian World" in transnational diaspora engagement; and Russia's relationships with BRIC countries. The module concludes with a discussion on the 2022 war in Ukraine and beyond.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- 1. Learn and critically assess a variety of approaches and debates about Russia's domestic and international politics.
- 2. Acquire understanding of the complexity of historical legacies shaping current policies, as well as the power of choice to change these in policy-making.
- 3. Become aware of contextual specifics of Russia as they relate to state identity, political culture, authority, leadership, institutions, opposition, post-communism, transnationalism, interventionism, regional power dynamics, and a changing global order.
- 4. Develop sophistication in the articulation of ideas through writing.

Indicative reading list

- Bechev, Dimitar. 2017. *Rival Power. Russia in Southeast Europe*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Dawisha, Karen, 2015. *Putin's Kleptocracy: Who Owns Russia?* New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Fitzpatrick, Sheila. 2001. *The Russian Revolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gorenburg, Dmitry. 2003. *Minority Ethnic Mobilization in the Russian Federation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hale, Henry and Timothy Colton. 2017. "Who Defects? Unpacking a Defection Cascade from Russia's Dominant Party 2008-2012," *American Political Science Review* 111(2): 322 – 337.
- Johnson, Juliet. 2016. *Priests of Prosperity*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Popova, Maria. 2014. *Politicized Justice in Emerging Democracies: A Study of Courts in Russia and Ukraine*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shevel, Oxana. 2012. "The Politics of Citizenship Policy in Post-Soviet Russia," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 28(1): 111-147.
- Snyder, Timothy. 2010. *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin*. New York: Basic Books.
- Talseth, Lars-Christian. 2018. *The Politics of Power: EU-Russia Energy Relations in the 21st Century*. London: Palgrave.
- Youngs, Richard. 2017. *Europe's Eastern Crisis: The Geopolitics of Asymmetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Research element

The summative essay would require research based on literature from this module, and potentially additional material.

Interdisciplinary

The module bridges international relations, international security and comparative politics.

International

The module is exclusively focused on Russia and its role in Europe, the Balkans, Caucasus, Middle East, Central Asia, considers relationships with the US and NATO, other BRIC countries and international organizations.

Subject specific skills

1. Analyse political processes concerning Russia's role in world politics.
2. Apply international relations, international security and comparative politics theories to the area studies of Russia in the post-communist space and in global politics.
3. Analyse both historical and contemporary political processes and develop ability to trace continuity and change.
4. Differentiate arguments related to how Russia approaches a variety of states, non-state actors and international organisations, and engages in geopolitics.

5. Acquire empirical knowledge on Russia per se, but also on Russia's relationship with neighbouring regions in Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East, as well as BRIC countries, including China.

Transferable skills

The module provides students with opportunities to acquire or develop the following key skills:

- Written communication skills
 - Oral communication skills
 - Problem-solving skills
 - Skills in the use of information technology
 - Skills of interpretation and the critical analysis of primary and secondary sources
 - Awareness and sensitivity to diversity (in terms of people, cultures) and the ability to understand unfamiliar ideas and ways of thinking
 - Ability to digest, retain and apply complex information and ideas
 - Ability to conduct research and reference their work appropriately
 - Time management skills and the ability to meet deadlines.
 - The ability to reflect critically on the extent and limitations of how and what they have learned, discovered and understood.
 - Collaborative skills
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Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Seminars	9 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Other activity	10 hours (7%)
Private study	50 hours (33%)
Assessment	72 hours (48%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

Preparation for seminars, research and writing for the 1000-word timed essay, preparation for a group presentation and collaboration with others.

Other activity description

Preparation for the 1000-word timed essay.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You must pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Timed essay	20%	27 hours	Yes (extension)
This is a take-home timed essay. Pre-defined questions will cover material from weeks 1-5. One needs to answer 1 question out of a choice of 5. Max 1000 words.			
Summative essay	80%	45 hours	Yes (extension)
Summative essays will be based on pre-defined questions covering topics from weeks 6-10.			

Feedback on assessment

Through forms online.

Availability

Courses

This module is Core optional for:

- Year 4 of UHIA-VM14 Undergraduate History and Politics (with Year Abroad and a term in Venice)
- Year 3 of UHIA-VM13 Undergraduate History and Politics (with a term in Venice)

This module is Optional for:

- Year 3 of UPOA-M100 Undergraduate Politics
- Year 4 of UPOA-M101 Undergraduate Politics (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 4 of UPOA-M168 Undergraduate Politics and International Studies with Chinese
- Year 3 of UPOA-M169 Undergraduate Politics and International Studies with Chinese (3 year)
- Year 4 of UPOA-M165 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and Italian
- Year 4 of UPOA-M167 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and Quantitative Methods (with Intercalated Year)

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 3 of UPOA-M16A Undergraduate Politics and International Studies
- Year 4 of UPOA-M16B Undergraduate Politics and International Studies (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 3 of UPOA-ML13 Undergraduate Politics and Sociology
- Year 4 of UPOA-ML14 Undergraduate Politics and Sociology (with Intercalated year)
- Year 4 of UPOA-M163 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and French
- Year 4 of UPOA-M164 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and German
- Year 4 of UPOA-M166 Undergraduate Politics, International Studies and Hispanic Studies

This module is Option list D for:

- Year 3 of UHIA-VM11 Undergraduate History and Politics
- Year 4 of UHIA-VM12 Undergraduate History and Politics (with Year Abroad)