Politics of Economic Reform in Central and Eastern Europe

PLSC 410 - Fall 2005

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Class meeting time:
Tuesday 9:30-11:20, ESC 110

Office hours:
Monday 3:00-5:00, or by appointment

Course Description

The unexpected collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989 ushered in a triple transition: political, economic and social. This course deals with the politics and dilemmas of creating a functioning market economy in the context of dramatic political and social change. In order to appreciate the formidable challenges that the newly democratic regimes were facing at the outset of the reform process, the course first analyzes the economic and political nature of the socialist system, its reform attempts, as well as the causes of its final collapse. The seminar then engages prominent interdisciplinary debates concerning optimal way of “building” capitalism, drawing on literatures from political science, economics and sociology. The debates considered pertain to privatization, restructuring, and the role of the state in the economy and in the transition process. While the readings devote much attention to the domestic politics of economic and state reform, the course also examines the central role that the European Union accession process plays in setting the reform agenda. The final part of the course analyzes the social consequences of economic reform and discusses the institutionalization of social space.

Course Requirements

1. Class Participation - 20%
2. Reader Responses - 35% – one page reflection on the readings (10 required), emailed by 3 p.m. the day before class
3. Country outline and 10 min. presentation in week 4 (group project) - 10%
4. Final Research Paper (15 p.) or take-home final exam (12 p.) - 35%

Readings

The following books can be purchased at the Yale bookstore (also on reserve at CCL):


The remaining readings are in the course packet, available for purchase at RIS at: www.yale.edu/ris/sub_docs/ocoursepkts.html (also on reserve at CCL).
Course Schedule

Week 1 (Sept. 6): Introduction to the Course

Week 2 (Sept. 13): Central Planning and Economics of Shortage


Week 3 (Sept. 20): Reform Attempts and Perestroika


Recommended (on reserve at CCL):


Week 4 (Sept. 27): Extrication from Communism

***Country presentations (10 min.) and outlines due***


Suggested country-specific readings (on reserve at CCL):


**Week 5 (Oct. 4): Initial Reforms: Neoliberalism and Its Critics**


**Week 6 (Oct. 11): Politics of Privatization**


**Week 7 (Oct. 18): Politics of Restructuring**

Irena Grosfeld and Gérard Roland. 1996. “Defensive and Strategic Restructuring in Central European Enterprises.” *Journal of Transforming Economies and Societies*. Nr. 3-4 (a copy will be e-mailed)


**Week 8 (Oct. 25): Reforming the State and Redefining its Role in the Economy**


Week 9 (Nov. 1): The Effects of European Union Accession


Recommended:

*Enlargement of the European Union Guide to the Negotiations Chapter by Chapter*

An overview of all the information available on the European Commission’s Enlargement website:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/overview.htm


Report on the results of the negotiations on the accession of Cyprus, Malta, Hungary, Poland, the Slovak Republic, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, the Czech Republic and Slovenia to the European Union prepared by the Commission’s departments
Week 10 (Nov. 8): Impact of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)


Week 11 (Nov. 15): Social Dimension of Transition


**Week 12 (Nov. 29): Civil Society and Social Dialogue**


Suggested Readings (on reserve at CCL):


***If you choose the research paper option, the papers are due by the end of the exam period, i.e., December 17th***