

Russian Politics since 1991



Are we doomed? Is the future – tyranny, corruption, and war? Is the nature of great power competition fatal for democracy, the rule of law, and liberalism? And why Vladimir Putin, a mediocre mid-level secret police agent from the backwaters of the Cold War, came to symbolize the urgency of these questions in the early 2020s?

These are just some of the questions we will cover in the Russian Politics class. Our discussion will be organized around a select few turning points that determined the trajectory of the Russian journey and its global consequences, with an eye also on how social science informed – and learnt from – these developments. In the process, we will learn a lot about Russia, even more about how democracies and autocracies work and fail, and, simultaneously, will unlearn many myths that continue to surround all these subjects, starting with the claim that Putin was inevitable and is irreplaceable.

Come to learn which lessons Putin took from oligarchs who engineered his rise to power, which from Stalin, and which from his former comrades-in-arms at the KGB foreign intelligence directorate. Stay to discover how Russians live aside from Putin and what are the prospects of bottom-up democratization.

Professor Sanovich
Mondays 6:20-8:20pm
RSSN-GA 1001-001
INTRL-GA 1731-006

(Course open to advanced undergraduates with permission from the professor)