GOVT 731—Eurasian Politics
George Mason University

August 27 - December 19, 2012
Tuesdays, 7:20 – 10:00 pm, Krug Hall, Rm. 209

Professor Eric McGlinchey
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Phone: 703.993.2960

Office Hours: M,R, 1:00-2:30pm
**Please schedule appointments through http://tungle.me/ericmcglinchey**

Office: Robinson Hall A 219

Course Description:

This course draws on social science readings so as to develop a comprehensive understanding of modern Eurasia. Lying at the intersection of the Middle East, China and Russia, Eurasia is home to great cultural and resource wealth as well as to some of the 21st century's most pressing challenges. From the oil boomtowns of Kazakhstan to the opium poppy fields of Afghanistan, the economics, politics, and conflicts of Eurasia are critical to regional and often global stability and development. This course will examine topics such as: the effects of Chinese and Russian/Soviet historical legacies in contemporary Eurasia; past and present processes of ethnic conflict, political protest and social mobilization; and the evolution of diverse forms of Islam throughout the region.

Course Objectives:

- By the close of this course, students will be able to identify challenges confronting populations in Afghanistan, northwest China and the post Soviet Central Asian states of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan
- Critically evaluate US and international policy toward Eurasian political development
- Add to the academic study and policy analysis of Eurasian regime change

Course Readings:

1. Books—the below two books are available for purchase at the University Bookstore. All other readings are available through Blackboard.

2. Current Events—Understanding current events is central to our study of comparative politics. I encourage you to read at least one Eurasia-related news source.
Course Requirements:

1. This is a participant-driven, discussion-based seminar. The grading scale below reflects the importance of participants’ contributions to seminar discussion. Absences from class, both physically and mentally, will be reflected in the grade for seminar participation.

2. Students are expected to have completed the assigned readings prior to class and to be prepared for seminar discussion. Students will be well served to arrive for seminar with extensive notes and prepared questions for the week’s readings.

3. Students will complete one research paper prospectus of 1,000 words.

4. Students will complete one final research paper of a minimum of 5,000 words.

5. All students are required to write two précis of a minimum of 1500 words each.
   - Précis should critically analyze and synthesize the week’s readings.
   - Précis should contextualize the week’s readings within the broader comparative politics literature.
   - Précis should pay particular attention to:
     i. The authors’ central puzzle—what are the questions, outcomes or puzzles (the dependent variables) the authors are directly or indirectly addressing?
     ii. What variables do the authors identify as the cause (the independent variables) behind the outcome(s) under investigation?
     iii. What empirical evidence do the authors provide to support their arguments?
     iv. How do the articles/books relate to the literature more broadly?
     v. What are potential shortcomings of the authors’ arguments?
   - Précis are to be submitted through the Blackboard SafeAssign link (rather than by email) by 12 noon, the day of our scheduled seminar meeting. Blackboard timestamps submissions. Late précis will be penalized one letter grade.

6. Each student will deliver two conference style 10-minute presentations. These presentations will coincide with the two weeks students write précis. Presentations should address the five précis points above and should conclude with three questions for further discussion. Grades will reflect presentation content and delivery.

**Paper extensions will be given only if students have proper documentation. In place of an email, please see me in person during office hours to discuss missed/late work.**

**This syllabus may change as the semester progresses.**

Honor Code:

Most of the written work for this class will be submitted electronically through Blackboard. Essays may be processed through on-line databases so as to access the originality of work.

The George Mason University Honor Code states: “Cheating and attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing of academic work and related materials constitute Honor Code violations. To maintain an academic community according to these standards, students and faculty members must report all alleged violations to the Honor Committee.” Students are encouraged to read the full Honor Code in the 2012-13 University Catalog* and to remain vigilant against any violation of the Code in their own work. Any cases of academic dishonesty in this course will be pursued according to the guidelines detailed in the University Catalog.

*http://catalog.gmu.edu/
**Special Needs:**

Please address any special needs or special accommodations with me at the beginning of the semester or as soon as you become aware of your needs. Those seeking accommodations based on disabilities should contact the Disability Resource Center (703) 993-2474, or the Equity Office (703) 993-8730.

**Enrollment:**

Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in this class. Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadlines published in the Schedule of Classes, http://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/2012Fall.html.

**Grading:**

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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Two Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two Précis</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper Prospectus</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminar Discussion</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>150</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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**Grading Scale:**

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<td>A</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>450-459</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
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**Class Schedule**

**Week 1 (August 28): Course Introduction**

- Course Introduction
- McGlinchey working paper on Central Asian Political Futures.

**Week 2 (September 4): Central Asia in Historical Perspective**

Week 3 (September 11): Soviet Central Asia

Week 4 (September 18): The Post-Soviet Transitions Paradigm

Week 5 (September 25): Research Paper Workshop
- Paper prospectus due
- Prospectus Roundtables

Week 6 (October 2): Kyrgyzstan

Week 7 (October 16): Kazakhstan

Week 8 (October 23): Uzbekistan
**Week 9 (October 30): Tajikistan**


**Week 10 (November 6): Turkmenistan**


**Week 11 (November 13): Mongolia**


**Week 12 (November 20): China & Central Asia**


**Week 13 (November 27): Afghanistan**

  - Stephen Biddle, “Running Out of Time for Afghan Governance Reform.”
Week 14 (December 4): A New Great Game?

- Research paper discussions (coffee shop discussion format).