

Russian Electoral Reform

WWS 401e

Tuesdays 7:30 – 10:00 PM , Robinson 12

Joshua A. Tucker

Following the March, 2000 election of Russian president Vladimir Putin, the subject of electoral reform has once again been raised in Russia. How long should the President be allowed to remain in office? How should the Duma (the Russian parliament) be elected? Should local governors continue to be elected by the people, or should they be appointed by the president? While these questions all seem to be focussed on small details, when taken together they speak to large issues such as the future of the Russian political party system, relations between the center and local governments, and even the fate of Russian democracy itself.

While many Russian politicians have advocated minor electoral reforms, our task force has been charged with providing a completely new blue print for elections in Russia. As objective outsiders, it is hoped that we can move beyond particular interests and design an electoral system that will correctly balance the needs of all Russians. We will make recommendations for the types of presidential, parliamentary, and local elections that should take place in the country. We will also make suggestions for how these elections should be funded, how campaigns should be regulated, what the legal basis of electoral laws should be, and the timing of election cycles. In addition, we will tackle the larger question of how these electoral reforms should be related to the type of government and party system that we hope to see emerge in Russia in the future.

Task force members will jointly produce a general report proposing our suggestions for Russian electoral reform to President Putin. In addition, each member of the task force will be charged with writing an in-depth report on one of the issues mentioned above. Task force members are not required to have any background knowledge about either Russia or electoral institutions.

Joshua A. Tucker is an Assistant Professor in the Woodrow Wilson School and the Department of Politics. He is writing a book tentatively entitled "It's the Economy, Comrade! Economic Conditions and Election Results in Post-Communist Countries." His recent field work has taken him to election campaigns in Russia, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic.

Readings

The following books have been placed on order at the U-Store. All additional readings can be found in a reading pack that is available at the WWS Business Office.

David Remnick, *Resurrection: The Struggle for a New Russia*, (1998, Vintage Books)

Stephen White, *Russia's New Politics* (2000, Cambridge University Press)

Gary Cox, *Making Votes Count* (1997, Cambridge University Press)

Matthew Shugart, *Presidents and Assemblies* (1997, Cambridge University Press)

Optional: John Kaufield, *Access 2000 for Windows for Dummies* (1999, IGD Books)

Requirements

All juniors will be required to complete a 20-25 final paper (50% of grade) and a 1-2 page briefing paper (10%). Participants will also give an oral presentations of their work (15%) and will be expected to participate in classroom discussions and the crafting of the final report (15%). In addition, all participants will help to build a data base of the electoral experiences of other former Soviet republics and Eastern Europe countries (10%).

Weekly Schedule

Week #1: September 19: Introduction

Goals: Outline the course, responsibilities, requirements, and options for final paper topics.

Readings:

David Remnick, *Resurrection: The Struggle for a New Russia*

Week #2: September 26: Post-Communist Russia

Goals: Give participants a basic introduction to the pressing questions of post-communist Russia

Assignments Given: Final paper topics

Readings:

Stephen White, *Russia's New Politics: The Management of a Post-Communist Society*, esp. Ch1,2,3,4,8

Steven Holmes, "What Russia Teaches us Now: How Weak States Threaten Freedom," *The American Prospect*, 33 (July-August 1997), 30-39.

Week #3: October 3: Governing Institutions: Presidents and Parliaments

Goals: Understand difference between Presidential and Parliamentary systems, plus relationship of electoral rules to that distinction

Readings:

Matthew Soberg Shugart and John M. Carey, *Presidents and Assemblies*, esp. Ch.1, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13;

Lijphart, Arend, ed., *Parliamentary vs. Presidential Government* :Intro (1-31) Linz (118-127, 212-216) Duverger (142-149)

Direct Presidential Elections: a World Summary, *Electoral Studies*, Vol.16 (1997), No.4, p.441-455

Week #4: October 10: Electoral Institutions and Rules

Goals: Learn the definition of different types of electoral rules. Get a sense of basic arguments about electoral rules and political outcomes.

Assignments Given: Final Report Topics Selected

Readings:

Gary Cox: *Making Votes Count*, esp. Ch. 1, 2, 3, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15.

Duverger, Maurice “Duverger’s Law: Thirty Years Later” **in** Arend Lijphart and Bernard Grofman, eds. *Choosing an Electoral System: Issues and Alternatives*. 1986. New York: Praeger

Lijphart, Arend, “Political Consequences of Electoral Laws, 1945-1985” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 84, No. 2, p.481-496

Week #5: October 17: Federalism

Guest Expert: Professor Kathryn Stoner-Weiss

Readings:

White, Pravda, and Gitelman, eds. *Developments in Russian Politics 4*: “Federalism and Regionalism” by Kathryn Stoner-Weiss, p. 229-250

Stoner-Weiss, Kathryn, “The Limited Reach of Russia’s Party System” *Manuscript*

Riker, William, *Federalism: Origin, Operation, Significance*, Ch. 2, 6

Week #6: October 24: Designing a data base.

Goals: Discuss importance of evidence and decide what information should be included in data base.

Assignments Given: Countries for data base.

Readings:

Gaines, Brian J., "Where to Count Parties", *Electoral Studies*, Vol. 16 (1997), No. 1, pp.49-58

Moraski, Bryon and Gerhard Loewenburg, "The Effect of Legal Thresholds on the Revival of Former Communist Parties in East-Central Europe", *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 61 (1999), No.1, pp.151-70

Fall Break (October 30 – November 3):

Week #7: November 7th: Library Skills

Assignment Due: FIRST DRAFT of final paper and 1-2 page briefing paper. Must be handed in to Professor Tucker at the START of class.

Meet at Public and International Affairs Library, Wallace Hall. Instruction will be given in various resources of the library

Week #8: November 14: Individual Presentations I

In class: Oral presentations for first half of participants. 15 minutes oral presentation on topic followed by 20-30 minute discussion by the group.

Goal: Presenters should lay out the basic argument they hope to make in their final presentation. Participants should critique presenters and raise issues about how the different projects interact.

Week #9: November 21: Individual Presentations II

Same as previous week for second half of class

Week #10: November 28: Complete Database

Assignment Due: Participants should arrive with all data needed for data base.

Goals: First half of class will be spent on ten minute oral reports on findings by all participants. Second half will be spent getting data into database and learning how to use it.

SC: Must arrive with completed database ready for data entry.

Week #11: December 5: Work on Final Report

Goal: All decisions on **content** of final report must be completed by end of session.

Assignment Due: By Friday, December 5th at 12:00 noon, all participants must email a two-page write up of their section of the final report to the Senior Commissioner.

Week #12: December 12: Work on Final Report

Assignment Due: Senior commissioner arrives with written draft of final report (plus any minority appendices).

Goal: By the end of the meeting, the exact **written version** of the report must be agreed by the participants.

Note: This meeting should be very brief and will be accompanied by dinner.

December 15th: Final 1-2 page briefing paper due for all participants.

January 8^h: Final Reports Due.

20-25 pages (Maximum is strictly observed – I will stop reading after pg. 25)

12pt Times New Roman Font

1.5 inch margins

1 inch border on top and bottom

Text Double Spaced

Footnotes single spaced at bottom of page in 10pt. Times New Roman font.

Sometime During Reading Period: Presentation of report. Location to be announced.