GEOGRAPHY OF THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

REE 345 (meets with GRG 327)

Spring 2012

Instructor: Dr. Bella Bychkova Jordan
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Office hours: Monday 11:00-5:00
Office: Calhoun 3

Course description: This course is designed to give a deeper understanding of the Post-Soviet space, focusing on the major geographic factors that define this enormous Eurasian realm, including modern and historical cultural landscapes, economy and politics of the region, demography and health, religious cultures, environmental crises, contested territories, and the most recent geopolitical developments in the region.

Grading policy: students must take 3exams, each worth 33% of the total grade. Make-up exams will be allowed only in cases of medical emergency, with the written proof from the doctor's office. There will not be a final exam.

Required textbook: A Geography of Russia and Its Neighbors. 2011.By Mikhail S.Blinnikov. New York: The Guilford Press. Available at UT Co-Op.

Course schedule

Jan 17 **Introduction to the course: 10 Defining Features of Russia**

Aug 31 **Natural environment of the FSU** (D. Shaw)
Sep 2 **Expansion of the Russian and Soviet empires** (D.Trenin)

Sep 7 **Asymmetrical Federation** (Lynn & Bogorov; Hanson & Bradshaw)
Sep 9 **Agricultural Roots of the Russian revolution** (A. Wood)

Sep 14 **Traditional religious cultures in Russia** (J. Panhurst)
Sep 16 **MacMafia a la Russe** (M.Glenny)

Sep 21 **Major health and demographic issues in Russia** (M.Wines; M. Specter)
Sep 23 **Asiatic Russia: the Siberian curse?** (B. Jordan)

Sep 28 **The Tuvans ("Genghiz Blues")** (Anna Reid)
Sep 30 **Exam 1**

Oct 5 **'Near abroad': Russia and the former union republics** (D. Shaw)
Oct 7 **Baltic states: new EU and NATO members** (Valdes, A. et al.; M. Wines)

Oct 12 **Ukraine, Belarus' and Moldova** (D. Marples; M. Wines)
Oct 14 **The Caucasus: Shattered Region** (handout material)

Oct 19 **Georgia: Where Europe vanishes?** (R. Kaplan; "Legacy")
Oct 21 **Baku and Yerevan: is the settlement possible?** (*Economist*; Sadakhlo)

Oct 26 **The future of the Caspian region** (Dekmesian & Simonian)
Oct 28 **EXAM 2**

Nov 2 **Central Asia takes center stage** (C. Buckley)
Nov 4 **Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan** (*Economist*)

Nov 9 **Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan** ("At the Crossroads")
Nov 11 **Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia** (A. Rashid)

Nov 16 **Ecocide: the Aral Sea Crisis** (Ph. Micklin)
Nov 18 **Managing Kara Kum canal** (T. Hannan & S. O'Hara)

Nov 23 **The New Great Game? The geopolitical future of the region** (A. Rashid)
Nov 25 **THANKSGIVING - NO CLASS!**

Nov 30 **Epilogue and review for exam 3**
Dec 2 **EXAM 3**

Dec 9 Exams 3 back

THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE