Neil Melvin  
The Politics of Contemporary Central Asia  (PIED3550)  
Syllabus for the course offered in Spring 2001  
University of Leeds  
Institute for Politics and International Studies  

[NOTE: In the CASWW printing of this syllabus, the references to library locations and call numbers at the University of Leeds have been omitted for the sake of conciseness.]
The Politics of Contemporary Central Asia (PIED3550)  
(20 Credits)

Taught by: Dr. Neil Melvin

Office: ESS 13.01.  
Telephone: 0113-233-4401  
E-mail: n.j.melvin@leeds.ac.uk  
Fax: 0113-233-4400

Office Hours: 12 - 2pm Thursday or by appointment.

Aims of Course: With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Central Asia has once again emerged as an important economic, political and cultural region in its own right. Located in a key geo-strategic position between Russia, China, Iran and Turkey and with extensive natural resources (notably oil and gas), in the last decade political developments in and around Central Asia have become particularly important. The main purpose of this course will be to introduce students to the key domestic and regional issues affecting the peoples of the area. The main topics covered in the course concern the historical legacy of the Russian and Soviet regimes, the broad effect of modernisation on the region, the politics and economics of nation and state building in the transition period, the role of traditional forms of politics, the rise of political Islam, and the prospects for democratisation in Central Asia.

Teaching Arrangements: 11 one-hour lectures and 11 one-hour seminars.  
Lecture 11 – 12 am and seminar 12 - 1pm on Tuesdays in Michael Sadler LG15  
You should attend lectures and one seminar group. Your module leader will assign you to a seminar group. If you do not know which seminar group you are in you should ask the module leader.

Attendance:

You are required to attend all seminars. Failure to attend at least two thirds of seminars without medical evidence or another acceptable excuse will result in exclusion from this module. Although there is no penalty for failure to attend lectures, you should note that they are intended to provide you with the basic concepts and definitions of each subject studied.
Seminar presentations:

Presentations should last around 10 minutes, and be given in the style of a talk - they should not be read word-for-word from a prepared text. Presenters should address the specific seminar question, rather than simply offering summaries of items for the reading list. Presenters are encouraged to prepare handouts and visual aids (including overheads) to accompany their presentations.

Students who are not presenting will be asked to provide their feedback on the quality of the presentation as a means of introducing and discussing the principal issues.

Assessment Arrangements: For completion of the module students will be required to undertake two assessments:

i) A two hour unseen written examination (50% of the final grade). The final examination paper will consist of up to twelve questions. Students will be required to answer two questions. The examination time will be published at a later date. Please let the Institute know (☎ 0113 233 4382) if you are ill and cannot attend the examination. You will need to produce a doctor's note if you miss the examination due to ill health. You should be aware that examinations may be scheduled for a Saturday. If you cannot take an examination on a Saturday for religious reasons, you must register this point with the Examinations Office.

ii) An essay of 3,000 words (50% of the final grade). The essay should be typed, using double spacing, a 12-point font (preferably Times Roman) and a single side of A4 paper only. The essay should be accompanied by a coversheet with the title of the essay, the student’s number and a word count printed on it. **You may not answer a question in the examination that covers the same area as your assessed essay question.** The essay to be submitted to room 13.24, Economic and Social Studies Building before 5pm on the first day of the exam period. Word limits will be strictly enforced (students may be asked to produce disks in case of doubt about the length of the work). The list of assessed questions is attached to the back of this reading list.

The examination time will be published at a later date. Please let the Institute know (☎ 0113 233 4382) if you are ill and cannot attend the examination. You will need to produce a doctor's note if you miss the examination due to ill health. You should be aware that examinations may be scheduled for a Saturday. If you cannot take an examination on a Saturday for religious reasons, you must register this point with the Examinations Office.

Submitting Essays:

The following points are very important:

- Please note that it is not possible to hand in work before the published deadline.
- The office will be open from 9 - 5 on the first day of the examination period only.
- You are required to complete an academic integrity form. It is desirable from your point of view to obtain a receipt for work handed in.
- If you submit your work late without a good reason for the delay [see below], then you will lose 5 marks per working day. You should state the reason for lateness on the appropriate form.
- If you are handing in your work after the deadline, you should note that the "normal" office opening hours are 9.30 - 12.30 and 1.30 - 3.30. Failure to note this point may result in the loss of further marks because you have not been able to register your work.

**Obtaining an Extension:**

Extensions of time can only be given with approval of the Director of Teaching and Learning, and requests should be submitted to the Institute Coordinator in the office - neither the office nor your tutor can give permission. You will only be given an extension where there are medical or severe personal problems that can account for the delay. The penalty for lateness is fixed at 5 marks per working day. If you deliver work late you must state the reason for lateness on the appropriate form from the departmental office and attach any relevant medical evidence.

At the first meeting, each student will also be allocated a seminar topic to be presented in the course of the module. In addition, every student will be required to provide a book review (200 words) by Tuesday 31st October 2000. A list of books for review will be distributed at the beginning of the course.

**Unsatisfactory Performance/Plagiarism:**

There are procedures and penalties relating to unsatisfactory performance in a module, and strict regulations concerning plagiarism (presenting the work of other authors as your own), laid out in the Institute and University Handbooks. You are strongly advised to read this information.

**Reading List:**

Each week’s reading is divided into two sections; ‘**Required Reading**’ and ‘*Recommended Reading*’. Every student is required to read at least two items from the ‘Required Reading’ each week. Further guidance is provided in form of a distinction between books and articles. Within these categories, the student is guided to the most appropriate reading:

** = Highly recommended reading.
* = Recommended reading.

**Course Book:**


**General Reading:**


** Source Materials on Contemporary Events:**

Sources may be found in: *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts; the Current Digest of the Post-soviet Press;* and the journal *Transitions*. Students may also use on-line resources including RFE-RL Daily Report and other sources that can be located through the WWW.

The best gateway for internet resources is the URL: [http://www.icarp.org/](http://www.icarp.org/)

You should also subscribe to the daily information service provided by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty:

How To Subscribe
Send an email to newline-request@list.rferl.org with the word subscribe as the subject of the message.
How To Unsubscribe
Send an email to newline-request@list.rferl.org with the word unsubscribe as the subject of the message.

Journals:

Students should also consult the following journals for recent articles about the region:

Central Asian Survey
Europe Asia Studies
Foreign Affairs
Journal of Democracy
Transitions

Structure of the Module:

The module is divided into three sections. In part one students are introduced to the main themes of the module. The second part of the module is designed to provide students with a broad knowledge of the history of the Russian and Soviet regimes in Central Asia, and with an understanding of the processes that produced the collapse of the Eurasian imperial system and the emergence of the independent states of Central Asia. In part three students are introduced to the core themes of the module.

Section One: Introduction
Week One – Approaching the study of Central Asia

Section Two: The Colonial Era in Central Asia
Week Two – Russian colonisation of Central Asia
Week Three – The Soviet colonial regime in Central Asia
Week Four – Central Asia and the Collapse of the Soviet Order

Section Three: Independence and State-Building
Week Five – Islam I
Week Six – Islam II
Week Seven – Modern and traditional forms of politics in Central Asia
Week Eight – Ethnicity and nationalism I
Week Nine – Ethnicity and nationalism II
Week Ten – The political economy of change in post-independence Central Asia
Week Eleven – Regimes, elites and political development
Reading List

Week One: 3 October 2000

1st Hour - Introductions, overview of course and organisation of class
2nd Hour - Lecture: Approaching the study of Central Asia

Required Reading:


Recommended Reading:


Part One: The Colonial Era in Central Asia

Week Two: 10 October 2000

Lecture: Russian colonisation of Central Asia.
Seminar:

a) What were the principle aims of Russia’s conquest of Central Asia?

b) In which ways did the Russian approach to the colonisation of Central Asia shape the patterns of territorial administration that developed within the region?

Issues: Great Power competition, economic development, demographic pressures, weak Central Asian regimes, local resistance, colonial administration.

Required Reading:


Recommended Reading:


**Week Three: 17 October 2000**

**Lecture:** The Soviet colonial regime in Central Asia

**Seminar:**

a) Soviet Asia was always more Asian than Soviet. Discuss

b) The benefits of Soviet colonisation in Central Asia significantly outweighed the costs. Discuss.

**Issues:** Continuation of Islam and local tradition, 'transformation' of Communist institutions to fit Central Asia, urbanisation, education, industrial development, position of women versus loss of traditions and religion, exploitation, environmental degradation, famine and the Terror.

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**

**Books:**


**Articles:**


**Week Four: 24 October 2000**

**Lecture:** Central Asia and the Collapse of the Soviet Order

**Seminar:**

a) What does the lack of a powerful independence movement in the region during the perestroika period indicate about Central Asian attitudes to the Soviet system?

b) How did the elites of Central Asia react to Gorbachev’s agenda of reform?

**Issues:** Gorbachev, Afghanistan, nationalist and Islamic movements, local political elites and reform, environmental opposition.

**Required reading:**


**Recommended reading:**

**Books:**


**Articles:**


* Olcott, Martha Brill, "Perestroyka in Kazakhstan", *Problems of Communism* (July-August 1990), pp. 65-


**Part Two:**

**Independence and State-building**

**Week Five: 31 October 2000**
Lecture: Challenges to the creation of new states in Central Asia - Islam

General to Lecture:


Hyman, Anthony, Political Change in Post-Soviet Central Asia (RIIA: 1994).

** Kulchik, Yurii, 'Central Asia After the Empire: Ethnic Groups, Communities, and Problems', in Roald Z. Sagdeev, and Susan Eisenhower, eds., Central Asia: Conflict, Revolution, and Change (Chevy Chase, Maryland: CPSS Press, 1995), pp. 91-114

* Olcott, Martha Brill, "Central Asia's Post-Empire Politics", Orbis, No. 32 (Spring 1992), pp. 253-68.

Islam I:

Seminar:

a) What role did Islam play in Soviet Central Asia?

b) Why did Islam experience a revival during the Gorbachev years?

Issues: Organisation of Islam, Islam and women, policies to eradicate Islam, relationship between political and religious authorities.

Required reading:


**Recommended reading:**

**Books:**


**Articles:**

Critchlow, James, "Islam in Soviet Central Asia: Renaissance or Revolution?" *Religion in Communist Lands*, 18 (3) (Autumn 1990), pp. 196-211.

**Week Six: 7 November 2000**

**Islam II:**

**Seminar:**

a) Does Islam pose a political threat to the regimes of Central Asia?
b) How has political Islam affected the politics of Tajikistan since independence?

**Issues:** Radical versus secular Islam. Political uses of religion.

**Required reading:**


**Recommended reading:**

**Books:**


**Articles:**


**Tajikistan:**


**Week Seven: 14 November 2000**

**Lecture**: Modern and traditional forms of politics in Central Asia

**Seminar**:

a) To what extent is politics in Kazakhstan the product of struggles between tribes and clans?

b) What role did regionalism play in the collapse of the state in Tajikistan?

**Issues**: The influence of traditional forms of politics - family, clan, tribe, and regionalism. Consequences - corruption, elites, nepotism, state collapse

**Required reading**:


**Recommended reading**:

**Books**:


**Articles**:


Kazakhstan:


Cummings, Sally, *Centre-Periphery Relations in Kazakhstan* (RIIA: April 2000).


Tajikistan:


** Ethnicity and Nationalism I:**

  **Lecture:** The development of ethnicity, nations and nationalism in Central Asia

  **Seminar:**
a) To what extent did ethnic nations provide the basis for the creation of separate republics in Central Asia?

b) Did Soviet nationality policies in Central Asia achieve their goals?

**Issues:** Sources of ethnic and national identity in Central Asia. Soviet attempts to create nations. Impact of Modernization. Language policy.

**Required reading:**


**Recommended reading:**

**Books:**


Rakowska-Harmstone, T., Russia and Nationalism in Central Asia: the Case of Tadzhikistan (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1970).


Articles:


Week Nine: 28 November 2000

Ethnicity and Nationalism II:

Lecture: Independence and nationalism

Seminar:

Why has nationalism become a central element of the new political regimes of Central Asia?

a) Kazakhstan
b) Uzbekistan

Required reading:


Ro'i, Yaacov, "Islamic Influence on Nationalism in Soviet Central Asia", *Problems of Communism* (July-August 1990), pp. 49-64.


Recommended reading:

Books:


Articles:


Rywkin, Michael, "Post-USSR Political Developments in former Soviet Central Asia", *Nationalities Papers (Special Issue)*, 20 (2), (Fall 1992), pp. 97-103.

Kazakhstan:


**Uzbekistan:**


Carlisle, Donald S., "Uzbekistan and the Uzbeks*, *Problems of Communism* (September-October 1991), pp. 23-44.


* Hanks, Reuel, "The Islamic Factor in Nationalism and Nation-Building in Uzbekistan: Causative Agent or Inhibitor?", *Nationalities Papers*, 22 (2), (Fall 1994), pp. 309-23.


Kangas, Roger D., Uzbekistan in the Twentieth Century: Political Development and the Evolution of Power (St. Martin's Press, 1995). ON ORDER


** Melvin, Neil J., Uzbekistan: Transition to Authoritarianism on the Silk Road (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic, 2000), chaps. 1, 2 and Conclusion.


** Week Ten: 5 December 2000

Lecture: The political economy of change in post-independence Central Asia

Seminar: Society and economy:

a) Are socio-economic developments the greatest challenge to stability in Central Asia?
b) Why have the states of Central Asia pursued different policies economic development?

Issues: Environment, Social (Demographic and Gender), Drugs, Economic (Marketization and Agriculture).

Required reading:


Fridman, Leonid, "Economic Crisis as a Factor of Building up Socio-political and Ethnonational Tensions in the Countries of Central Asia and Transcaucasia", in Central Asia and Transcaucasia: Ethnicity and Conflict, Vitaly V. Naumkin, (ed.), (Greenwood, 1994), pp. 31-68.


**Recommended reading:**

**Books:**


Articles:


*Week Eleven: 12 December 2000*

**Lecture**: Regimes, elites and political development.

**Seminar**: What are the sources of authoritarian politics in Central Asia?

a) The Kyrgyz Republic  
b) Turkmenistan


**Required reading**:


http://freedomhouse.org/nit98/ (Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan) and also http://freedomhouse.org/worst98/ (Turkmenistan).


Matveeva, Anna ‘Democratization, legitimacy and political change in Central Asia’ International Affairs, 75 (1), (January 1999), pp. 23-44.


**Recommended reading:**

**Books:**


Lubin, Nancy, Central Asians Take Stock: Reform, Corruption, and Identity (United States Institute of Peace, February 1995).


**Articles:**


Rieff, David, 'From Khan to Tsar to Comrade to Khan', *Transitions*, 4 (1), (June 1997).

** Scott, M., "Presidentialism, Multipartyism, and Democracy: The Difficult Combination"
Comparative Political Studies (26 July 1993).


The Kyrgyz Republic:


Turkmenistan:


