This seminar will compare the processes of political and economic reform in Russia and China, both of which are undergoing major transformations from a communist to a market-oriented system. They face similar tasks and dilemmas, but have undertaken very different strategies and experienced very different outcomes. Questions we will consider in the seminar include: why did Russia adopt a radical, comprehensive economic reform program while China adopted an incremental one? What were the consequences of each strategy for economic growth, social welfare, political rights and accountability, and long-term development? What are the prospects for the eventual emergence of democracy in Russia and China?

The seminar will review some of the literature on these questions, explicitly comparing Russia and China on each topic.

One book is assigned for purchase: Minxin Pei, China's Trapped Transition: The Limits of Developmental Autocracy (Harvard University Press, 2006)

The rest of the readings will be available through the library's Direct Reserves or Blackboard.

Particulars:

There will be a mid-term exam and a final exam, each worth about 30% of the final grade. Each will be a take-home exam. In addition, each member of the seminar will write a research paper (see last page of syllabus for details). The research paper will be weighted about 35%. The quality of participation in seminar discussion will also be taken into account in determining the final grade.

Prerequisite: Political Science 120 or equivalent plus upper division courses in comparative politics and/or political economy.

Outline of topics and readings:

August 25. Introduction to the course

August 30. Economic Transition in Russia and China: End of the Old Order


Sept. 1:

Solnick, Steven L., "The Breakdown of Hierarchies in the Soviet Union and China: A

Sept. 6: The politics of economic reform
Minxin Pei, *China's Trapped Transition*, ch. 1, "Why Transitions Get Trapped: A Theoretical Framework"

Sept. 8:

Sept. 13: Reform strategies

Sept. 15:

Sept. 20: Political liberalization and consolidation
Pei, ch. 2, "Democratizing China?"

Sept. 22:

Sept. 27: Establishing property rights

Sept. 29:
Pei, ch. 3, "Rent Protection and Dissipation: The Dark Side of Gradualism"

Oct. 4: Fiscal decentralization

Oct. 6:
Pei, ch. 4, "Transforming the State: From Developmental to Predatory"

Oct. 13: Midterm review  
Oct. 18: Midterm exam

Oct. 20: Social welfare  

Oct. 25: The rising middle class  

Oct. 27: Defending legal rights  
Gallagher, Mary E., "'Hope for Protection and Hopeless Choices": Labor Legal Aid in the PRC. *Grassroots Political Reform in Contemporary China*. Elizabeth J. Perry and Merle Goldman, Eds. (Cambridge, MA; London, Harvard University Press 2007), 196-227;  

Nov. 1: Mobilizing labor  

Nov 3: Toward the rule of law?  

Nov 8. Assessing state capacity: China  
Nov 10: Assessing state capacity: Russia


Nov 15. Civil society and the state


Nov 17.


Nov 22. Toward democracy in China?


Nov 29. Toward democracy in Russia?


Dec 1. Prospects for democracy


Dmitrii Medvedev, "Forward, Russia!"


Dec. 6: Final exam review
On the research paper for “Democracy and Market Reform in Russia and China”

The paper should be approximately 20 pages long. The paper should analyze a question concerning the relationship between political and economic reform in Russia and China. For instance, you may wish to analyze the effect of the economic reforms on poverty or environmental problems in Russia and China, or the reasons that the two countries have experienced such different economic growth performance. You may wish to compare the role of interest groups or the media in articulating demands in the two countries, or the use of the courts to defend rights. Whatever the topic, it should approach the question analytically and comparatively. That is, you should try to explain the differences between Russia and China in how or why something works the way it does. You should develop an argument for your thesis based on empirical evidence and analytical reasoning. Relate your research to the relevant scholarly literature and identify the ways in which your conclusions support or contradict other researchers’ findings.

Please come see me early in the semester to discuss your topic, and be sure to get started on the paper early. There are four required steps in the process.

First, you must clear your choice of a topic with me by submitting a paragraph describing the research question on or before October 4.

Second, you must turn in an outline of the paper, together with a list of sources, on or before October 27.

Third, you must turn in a rough draft of your paper on or before November 17.

Finally, the final version of the paper itself is due on the last day of class, December 6.

The outline and list of sources, rough draft, and final draft will all be graded. The total assignment itself is worth 35% of the final grade. This is broken down as follows: 10% of the final grade will be based on the outline and list of sources; 10% will be based on the rough draft; and 15% will be based on the final draft.