

## Twentieth Century Russian Politics

### First year module

Lecturer: [Dr David White \(/schools/government-society/departments/political-science-international-studies/staff/profiles/white-david.aspx\)](/schools/government-society/departments/political-science-international-studies/staff/profiles/white-david.aspx)

From one of two superpowers, to fifteen separate states struggling for identity and survival - the rise and fall of the Soviet Union provides a unique case-study touching on many aspects of global political affairs in the twentieth century. Russia, a great power in flux, continues to chase domestic prosperity and external influence.

This module explores the developing political structure and culture of Russia and the USSR in the twentieth century. It is a double module with two parts. The central emphases of part one are the Communists' rise to power in 1917, the development of the Soviet state and its key political features, and the establishment of the USSR's superpower status. The second part of the module covers the government and ideology of the Soviet Union in its 'settled state' and identifies the reasons behind its collapse.

For much of this century the Soviet state was conceived by many as being on the cutting-edge of a new global political order. The course will examine the tensions between ideology and reality, between the maintenance of domestic and international power and the declared aim of creating a new and fairer society. It is a case-study of a failed attempt to build a socialist utopia.

**Twentieth-Century Russian Politics** provides essential groundwork for second and third year courses in Russian and East European studies. As a self-contained unit, it provides a thorough grounding in Russia's political development in the twentieth century, as well as a familiarity with basic political science concepts such as ideology and legitimacy. Teaching will be a mix of lectures and seminar work.

### Learning outcomes

On completion of this linked module the student will be able to:

- provide an understanding of the socio-political processes which led to the rise of the Soviet regime, its development in power, and its sudden demise
- enhance understanding of global politics in the twentieth century through an exploration of the political influence of the USSR and Russia
- develop skills of analysis through a basic introduction to Russian political culture and ideology
- provide a knowledge of the fundamentals of the political transition in Russia since the 1970s

### Assessment

- **Term One:** 1 essay x 2,000 word assessed work (50%)
- **Term Three:** 2 hour examination (50%)