

## PO5112 Russian and Post-Soviet Politics

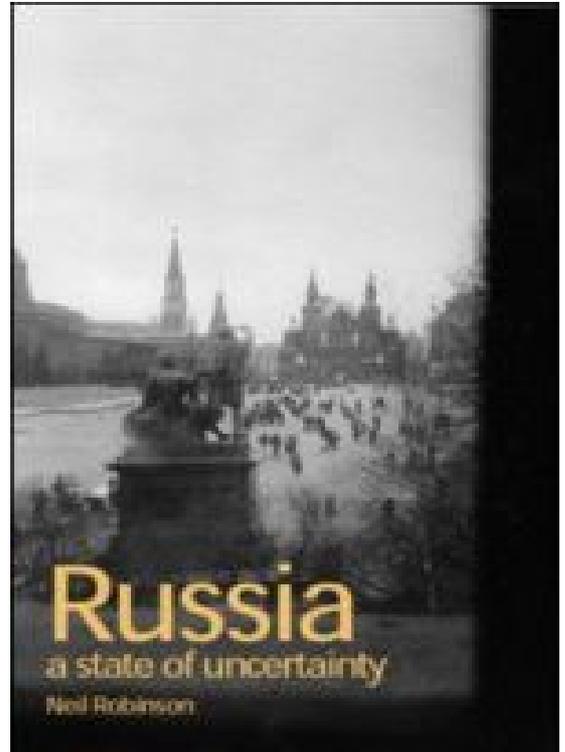
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### Aims and Objectives

The purpose of this course is to discover why the Soviet Union collapsed and to look at the key dilemmas confronting its successor states. This module looks at the states of the former Soviet Union, specifically Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and the states of Central Asia. All of these states emerged from the USSR at the start of the 1990s but have stalled economic and political transitions. We will examine how they come into being as states, the legacies of the USSR for them and their reform trajectories, the regimes that they have produced since the collapse of communism, the problems that they face and the pressures on their future development. Most of the course focuses on Russia as a paradigm for change against which the other states of the area can be compared in the last weeks of the course.

By the end of the course, all students should have an understanding of the fundamental principles and institutions that supported the Soviet system, and of the reasons for its collapse. They should be aware of the problems that post-Soviet states have faced, and continue to face, in exiting from the Soviet system, and have knowledge of the contemporary political system and policy in the post-Soviet space.

In addition to the knowledge gained by students about the USSR and the post-Soviet space, this course will help students to develop their analytical and research skills. Students will have to search out information on contemporary Russia and the post-Soviet Union and will learn how to locate information in the library and on the



WWW, will learn how to judge the merits of different information sources, will learn how to construct arguments from primary materials that they have and how to relate such materials to existing academic literatures. They will also have to learn how to interpret academic literature in changing circumstances, to relate it to developing politics and judge it against change.

### Contents

The Soviet system and its legacies; reform and the collapse of the USSR; post-communist reform choices; reform in Russia; the Russian state under Yeltsin; Putin and the politics of political retrenchment; Ukraine: to Orange revolution and back again; authoritarianism in Belarus; regime change in Central Asia; the post-Soviet space in comparative perspective.

### Core Readings

A weekly selection of readings are available on the SULIS site for this module.