

Russian-Turkish Rivalry over the Balkan and Caucasus Areas

(JTM 317)

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Annotation

Contemporary Russia-Turkey relations are marred by rivalry and occasional rapprochements in their traditional areas of influence of the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East, and Central Asia. Focusing on the former two areas, more particularly those of the Western Balkans and the South Caucasus – where their rivalry appears more intensive – this course considers the historical relations between the two states and examines their exercise of ‘hard’, ‘soft’ and ‘sharp power’ in their foreign policies with the individual states of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia as well as Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia. Drawing on a multi-disciplinary scholarship that deals with questions of ‘neo-imperialism’, geo-economics, geopolitics, and cultural and historical relations on this rivalry and cooperation, the course aims at understanding the rationales (realism, constructivism) and the driving forces (security and national economic interests) behind their rivalry. This course also offers a great opportunity for students to compare and go deeper in their analysis of the modes of cooperation and tensions in each of these countries vis-à-vis Russia and Turkey.

A. COURSE DESIGN

1. Introduction
2. Ottoman-Russian Relations, 1500 -1918
3. Twentieth Century Soviet-Turkish Relations/Post-Cold War Russian Turkish Cooperation and Rivalry
4. ‘Hard’, ‘Soft’, & ‘Sharp/Smart Power’ in Foreign Policy
5. Turkey in the Western Balkans & South Caucasus: ‘Neo-Ottomanism’ & Decline of Its Soft Power
6. Russia in the Western Balkans & in the South Caucasus: ‘Meddling’ & ‘Destabilising’ & Controlling the ‘Near Abroad’
7. Rivalry in Albania & Kosovo
8. Rivalry in Montenegro & Northern Macedonia
9. Rivalry in Bosnia-Herzegovina & Serbia
10. Rivalry in Azerbaijan
11. Rivalry in Armenia & Georgia
12. Workshop

B. READING ASSIGNMENT

1. Introduction

- Syllabus

2. Ottoman-Russian Relations, 1500 -1918

- Brisku, Adrian, 'Ottoman-Russian Relations', *Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of Asian History* (2019), DOI: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190277727.013.288

3. Twentieth Century Soviet-Turkish Relations/Post-Cold War Russian Turkish Cooperation and Rivalry

- Bechev, Dimitar, 'The Russian-Turkish Marriage of Convenience', in *Rival Power: Russia in Southeast Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 139-178
- Sekcin, Kostem, 'Different Paths to Regional Hegemony: National Identity Contestation and Foreign Economic Strategy in Russia and Turkey', *Review of International Political Economy* 25(5) (2018), 726-751.

4. 'Hard', 'Soft' & 'Sharp/Smart Power' in Foreign Policy

- Chitty, Naren, 'Soft Power, Civic Virtue, and World Politics', in *Routledge Handbook of Soft Power*, Naren Chitty et al (eds), (London: Routledge, 2017), 9-31
- Wilson, Earnst J., 'Hard Power, Soft Power, Smart Power,' *Public Diplomacy in a Changing World*, (2008), 110-124
- Walker, Christopher, 'What Is Sharp Power,' *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 29, no 3. (2018), 9-23

5. Turkey in WB & SC: 'Neo-Ottomanism' & Decline of Its Soft Power

- Taglia, Stefano, 'Ottomanism Then and Now: Historical and Contemporary Meanings: An Introduction', *Die Welt Des Islams* 56 (2016), 279-289.
- Aydintasbas, Asli, 'From Myth to Reality: How to Understand Turkey's Role in the Western Balkans', *European Council in Foreign Relations*, 13 March 2019.
- Balci, Bayram & Thomas Liles, 'What Remains from Turkish Soft Power in the Caucasus', *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, 24 April 2019.

6. Russia WB & SC: 'Meddling' & 'Destabilising' Controlling the 'Near Abroad'

- Stornski, Paul, Himes, Annie, 'Russia's Game in the Balkans', *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 6 January 2019.
- MacFarlane, S. N., 'Russia in the Caucasus', in *Routledge Handbook of the Caucasus*, G. M. Yemelianova & L. Broers, eds, (Routledge, 2020), 305-316

7. Rivalry in Albania & Kosovo

- Llazi, Ramadan, 'The (Geo)Politics of Democracy in Kosovo', *RSC Southeastern Europe*, March 2025.

- Beshku, Klodiana, 'The (Geo)Politics of Democracy in Albania', *RSC Southeastern Europe*, March 2025.

8. Rivalry in Montenegro & North Macedonia

- Nemec, Jiri, 'The (Geo)Politics of Democracy in Montenegro', *RSC Southeastern Europe*, March 2025.
- Kacarska, Simonida, 'The (Geo)Politics of Democracy in North Macedonia', *RSC Southeastern Europe*, March 2025.

9. Rivalry in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia

- Kapidzic, Damir & Muamer Hirkic, 'The (Geo)Politics of Democracy in Bosnia-Herzegovina', *RSC Southeastern Europe*, March 2025.
- Ejodus, Filip, 'The (Geo)Politics of Democracy in Serbia', *RSC Southeastern Europe*, March 2025.

10. Rivalry in Azerbaijan

- Aliyev, Fuad, 'Islam and Turkey's Soft Power in Azerbaijan: the Gülen Movement', in *Religion and Soft Power in the South Caucasus*, A. Jadicke (ed), (London: Routledge, 2019), 128-148.
- Gulijev, Farid, 'Azerbaijani-Russian Relations: Transactional Diplomacy in Action', *Russian Analytical Digest* nr. 173. (2021)

11. Rivalry in Armenia & Georgia

- Arthur V. Atanesyan, et al, 'Balancing between Russia and the West: the hard security choice of Armenia, European', *European Security* (2023), 1-23
- Meister, Stefan, 'Shifting Geopolitical Realities in the South Caucasus', Stockholm Centre for East European Studies, Nov. 2021, 1-16
- Brisku, Adrian, 'Empires of Conquest and Civilisation in Georgian Political and Intellectual Discourse Since the Late Nineteenth Century', *Intersection. EEJSP* 2(2), (2016), 34-51.
- Ter-Matevosyan, Vahram, 'Turkish Soft Power Politics in Georgia', in *Religion and Soft Power in the South Caucasus*, A. Jadicke (ed), (London: Routledge, 2019), 21-41

12. Workshop

C. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- 1) Attendance is mandatory, as the course is designed as a seminar that requires substantial student participation.
- 2) A PowerPoint presentation (maximum 4 slides, including images & sources used) on a theme agreed with the lectures is required.
- 3) In week 12, using a 'workshop' format, students present & get feedback from the lecturer and course mates on their first draft of their final paper.

- 4) Three weeks after the course concludes, a final paper of approximately 2,500 words should be uploaded to Moodle.
- 5) Active class participation – 10%, presentation – 30%, final paper outline (for the workshop) – 20%, final paper – 40%.

D. COURSE EVALUATION

A - "výborně - A" - "excellent - A"

B - "výborně - B" - "excellent - B"

C - "velmi dobře - C" - "very good - C"

D - "velmi dobře - D" - "very good - D"

E - "dobře - E" - "good - E"

F - "neprospěl/a - F" - "fail - F"

Last Updated

4 Jan. 26