

## Jepson School of Leadership Studies

Course ID: LDST 390-04

### Nostalgia for Lost Empires: How Populist Narratives Threaten Regional Stability

Fall 2023

TUESDAY AND THURSDAY 10:30 – 11:45 Jepson 107

Instructor: Ambassador (ret.) Anthony F. Godfrey

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Office Hours: TBD

#### COURSE CONTENT AND ISSUES TO BE EXAMINED:

Populism serves as a powerful motivating factor to win support for political movements both here in the United States and around the world. Political leaders have called on followers to rally behind them to restore their homeland's former glory, whether real or imagined, sometimes with shocking results. In most cases, democratic values and citizens' rights are early victims to authoritarian leaders who gained their positions by vowing to regain their homeland's rightful leadership place or to regain territory lost through wars or revolution. Once in power, leaders' choices in their dealings with neighbors and with international political and economic organizations can be limited both by mistrust of their neighbors and partners (who were paying attention to campaign promises) or by their loyal voters, who expect leaders to deliver on promises despite the potential cost.

This course will examine the origins and uses of this political tool, but will focus mainly on its use in Eurasia after the second World War and the lasting effects populist narratives have had in creating conflict, preventing development of good neighborly relations. Turkey's President Erdogan has used populist themes to persuade supporters that Turkey should return to a position of dominance in the region and to shape how Islam is perceived throughout the world. Serbia's President Vucic, who served Slobodan Milosevic as a young politician, now vows to never acknowledge Kosovo's independence and his supporters seek to extend Belgrade's influence across borders in the region, "wherever there are Serbs," particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina and NATO Ally Montenegro, creating instability and uncertainty as they do so. Armenia's inability to push back on dreams of a return to historic "Greater Armenia" fostered largely by its Diaspora abroad, prevented leaders from taking practical positions at the bargaining table with Azerbaijan and led to disastrous losses (for Armenia) in its most recent conflict with a resurgent Azerbaijan. Hungary's populist leader makes no effort to conceal his desire to reassert Budapest's historical dominance in its region as he uses EU rules requiring full consensus of members to make policy. The rise of the "MAGA" movement in the United States is a clear example of political leaders vowing to restore greatness, but it also had profound effects on America's ability to use its influence to advance goals of sustaining peace and stability abroad; it even limited our ability to advance counter-terrorism goals by undermining key partnerships.

Finally, Putin's drive to restore Russia to the level of power and influence of the USSR has produced disastrous results not just in Ukraine, but across the territory of the former Soviet Union and for the global economy. Leaders in Putin's regime are now locked into a war where it must deliver on its promise or – potentially – fall if they fail, with unpredictable and potentially disastrous results for international security.

## INSTRUCTOR

The instructor is not an academic, but a retired U.S. Ambassador, who recently concluded a 41-year career in government including twelve overseas assignments. Writing assignments are not intended to prepare students for a career as social scientists, but rather as professionals capable of expressing complex ideas in clear and concise terms.

## FORMAT

The format will be seminar in style. Classroom time will be set aside for small group discussion of key issues. Students will work in small groups twice to examine cases of their own choosing (in consultation with the instructor), and then present it to the class, focusing on themes of how campaign rhetoric limited policy options and affected security in the region. In addition to the two assignment books, students will be required to read articles identified by the instructor posted on the class Blackboard page.

## REQUIREMENTS:

- Class Participation and attendance (10%) – Students are expected to attend class and participate in class discussions which address assigned readings and issues pertinent to the scheduled class period. Completion of assigned readings prior to the scheduled class is assumed.
- Quizzes (20%) – There will be five short quizzes to assess student understanding of assigned readings and material presented during seminar sessions.
- Presentation and Discussion Leadership (20% total; 10% each) – After the second week of class, the instructor will pair students into groups of two. Each group will choose a state and a period in its history where populist political rhetoric was influential changing policy direction and affected its relations with neighbors or its region. Students will explain the findings of their research to the class in an oral presentation and will help lead a discussion of the topic, including through developing discussion questions. After the midterm, the instructor will change group members and students will research another state and period)
- Two Short Writing Exercises (20% total; 10% each) – An important component of this course is learning the writing style most effective in leadership. Twice this semester you will be asked to submit a 3-page double-spaced memo without footnotes or references on a specific issue.
- Final Examination (30%) – there will be one comprehensive final exam to evaluate your grasp of material covered during the semester. The format of the exam will be essay questions, and the details will be announced during the course of the semester.

## UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

Staff members from the resources below are available to students for consultations regarding the points delineated below. If you experience difficulties in this course, do not hesitate to consult with me. There are also other resources that can support you in your efforts to meet course requirements.

**Academic Skills Center** (<http://asc.richmond.edu>, 289-8626 or 289-8956): Assists students in assessing their academic strengths and weaknesses; honing their academic skills through teaching effective test preparation, critical reading and thinking, information conceptualization, concentration, and related techniques; working on specific subject areas (e.g., calculus, chemistry, accounting, etc.); and encouraging campus and community involvement. Hours at the Center are: Sunday through Wednesday 3:00-9:00 p.m. and Thursday 3:00-7:00 p.m. On-call tutors are also available.

**Boatwright Library Research Librarians** (<http://library.richmond.edu/help/ask/> or 289-8876): Research librarians assist students with identifying and locating resources for class assignments, research papers and other course projects. Librarians also provide research support for students and can respond to questions about evaluating and citing sources. Students can email, text or IM or schedule a personal research appointment to meet with a librarian in his/her office on the first floor Research and Collaborative Study area.

**Career Services** (<http://careerservices.richmond.edu/> or 289-8547): Can assist you in exploring your interests and abilities, choosing a major or course of study, connecting with internships and jobs, and investigating graduate and professional school options. We encourage you to schedule an appointment with a career advisor early in your time at UR.

**Counseling and Psychological Services** (<https://urwell.richmond.edu/well-being-center/caps.html> or 289-8119): Assists currently enrolled, full-time, degree-seeking students in improving their mental health and well-being, and in handling challenges that may impede their growth and development. Services include brief consultations, short-term counseling and psychotherapy, skills-building classes, crisis intervention, psychiatric consultation, and related services.

**Disability Services** (<https://disability.richmond.edu/apply-for-accommodations/index.html> or 289.8032): The Office of Disability Services works to ensure that qualified students with a disability (whether incoming or current) are provided with reasonable accommodations that enable that student to participate fully in activities, programs, services and benefits provided to all students. Please let your professors know as soon as possible if you have an accommodation that requires academic coordination and planning.

**Speech Center** (<http://speech.richmond.edu> or 289-6409): Assists with preparation and practice in the pursuit of excellence in public expression. Recording, playback, coaching, and critique sessions offered by teams of student consultants trained to assist in developing ideas, arranging key points for more effective organization, improving style and delivery, and handling multimedia aids for individual and group presentations.

**Writing Center** (<http://writing.richmond.edu> or 289-8263): Assists writers at all levels of experience, across all majors. Students can schedule appointments with trained writing consultants who offer friendly critiques of written work.

**Awarding of Credit**—To be successful in this course, a student should expect to devote 10-14 hours each week, including class time and time spent on course-related activities.

[registrar.richmond.edu/services/policies/academic-credit.html](http://registrar.richmond.edu/services/policies/academic-credit.html)

**Disability Accommodations**—Students with a Disability Accommodation Notice should contact their instructors as early in the semester as possible to discuss arrangements for completing course assignments and exams. <https://disability.richmond.edu>

**Honor Code**—The University’s Honor Code prohibits the use of any unauthorized assistance. For this course, the use of text-generating artificial intelligence tools (such as but not limited to ChatGPT) is considered unauthorized assistance and using it in connection with any assignment that you submit to me will be considered an Honor Code violation. This includes the use of generative AI for any stage of the work from conception to conclusion.

The Jepson School supports the provisions of the Honor System. The shortened version of the honor pledge is: “I pledge that I have neither received nor given unauthorized assistance during the completion of this work.” <https://studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/student-handbook/honor/index.html>

**Religious Observance**—Students should notify their instructors within the first two weeks of classes if they will need accommodations for religious observance. [registrar.richmond.edu/planning/religiousobs.html](https://registrar.richmond.edu/planning/religiousobs.html)

**Addressing Microaggressions on Campus**—Microaggressions are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership. Recent research has found that, when professors do not address microaggressions in class, microaggressions foster alienation of marginalized groups. Furthermore, both students and faculty that are exposed to microaggressions more often are more likely to have depressive symptoms and negative affect (a negative view of the world). A comfortable and productive environment where meaningful learning happens can be collectively created through actions, words, or environmental cues that promote the inclusion and success of marginalized members, recognizing their embodied identity, validating their realities, resisting sexism, ableism, and racism. The University of Richmond is committed to building an inclusive community. To this end, the Student Center for Equity and Inclusion (SCEI) was created in 2021 and offers ongoing support and assistance for a diverse student body. With this in mind, as a community member at the University of Richmond, I pledge to address microaggressions in the classroom by holding myself, other students, and faculty accountable for what is said and being receptive to criticism when perpetuating these slights, snubs, or insults.

## **REQUIRED BOOKS:**

- Serhii Plokhy, *Lost Kingdom: The Quest for Empire and the Making of the Russian Nation* (Basic Books, NY, 2017)
- Cas Mudde and Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser; *Populism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press 2017)