

Central Eurasian Studies

Environmental Problems and Social Constraints in Northern and Central Eurasia

Catalog number CEUS-U 374/574

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General description: This course provides students, both undergraduate and graduate with an analysis of environmental and social conditions in the immense region of Northern and Central Eurasia. The region is undergoing profound restructuring after the collapse of the Soviet empire. New geopolitical situations and economies are emerging across the territory of the former USSR. This region has inherited from its soviet past numerous environmental problems, low life expectancy, and high morbidity and mortality rates.

After September 11, 2001 the NIS of Central Asia bordering Afghanistan, and Transcaucasus became an area of increased US national interests, as well as a staging ground for the war against terrorism. Political conditions and the richness of mineral resources define the Region's crucial role in global security and economic stability.

The course is divided into four units. In the first, *introductory unit*, the major features of the environmental and political situation in the region is presented. The second, *general part*, is dedicated to the analysis of mechanisms transforming the environment during the period of Soviet rule. The third, *regional part*, describes a variety of environmental and public health problems which emerged as a result of the soviet economic development. In *conclusion*, current trends in environmental and social situation in the Region are analyzed.

Resources: No single textbook for this course is available. *The course packet* consisting of chapters and articles from numerous sources on the topics discussed in class is available at TIS on 3rd Street. Students are also presented with thematic *videos* of short length which represent a significant component of the course. The concepts and content of videos may appear on exams.

Course requirements: It is essential that students complete the recommended readings before class and be prepared for a brief discussion (3-5 min) on topics provided in the course content. *One thematic presentation* (10-15 min) given in class is required of all students (graduate and undergraduate). By the end of introductory part of the course, all students must write an essay "Why are the Region and Subject of this Course of Interest to me?" and give a talk (5-10 min) in class. Students of both sections will receive *two take-home exams* (the midterm and the final) that cover rather equally the two parts of the course. There will be also *one map quiz* given to both sections. For this quiz a blank map consisting of about 20 names of geographic and social features will be distributed in class. Graduate students will also write *a research paper* on the topic provided.

Grading: Performance in this class will be evaluated separately for graduate and undergraduate sections and based on the following:

Assignment	Percent of the final grade	
	graduate students	undergraduate students
mid-term examination paper	30	35

final examination paper	30	40
essay <i>Why are the Region...</i>	5	5
map quiz	10	10
in-class presentation	10	5
research paper	10	-
Attendance	5	5
Total	100	100