

ТЕОРЕТИЧНИЙ АНАЛІЗ ФЕНОМЕНУ ПОМАРАНЧЕВОЇ РЕВОЛЮЦІЇ

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TEACHING TRANSITION IN TRANSITIONAL COUNTRIES: REPORT FROM KIEV

This publication is the report of professor who has developed a course «Transition in Comparative Perspective» for students of NaUKMA.

While entering a classroom to teach a group of bright young students is always a challenging and rewarding task, it was especially so for me when I offered my services to the Political Science Department at Kiev Mohyla Academy (UKMA) to teach a course I had developed entitled «Transition in Comparative Perspective». Home to some 2000 students, the Academy is one of the more progressive of Ukraine's institutions of higher learning. It was founded after Ukraine became independent in 1991, keeping the name and traditions of an institution that functioned from the 17th to the early 19th centuries. My students ranged from freshmen to seniors, and only two out of the 16 who registered for the course had studied in the U. S. (one was an American high school student of Ukrainian background; several freshmen, as well as one U. S. Peace Corps Volunteer audited the class). The course was conducted in English (the school is officially bilingual), and most of the readings were in English as well.

It was a natural outgrowth of my responsibilities as cultural affairs officer of the U. S. Embassy in Kiev to engage in this most intensive form of outreach. We help administer one of the largest programs of educational and cultural exchange that exists with any country in the world (with an annual budget of around \$25 million), and that includes students from the high school to the Ph. D. level. Our programs are closely related to larger U. S. objectives of promoting democratic development and reform in Ukraine - a country of 48 million people - in the same way as we try to further these goals in all the other countries in the region. I received my Ph. D. in political science from Columbia University in 1976, after writing about «Political Education Under Socialism: The Case of Czechoslovakia»). At that time, I had already embarked on my diplomatic, rather than

an academic career. To be sure, much water has passed under the bridge since then, but the issue of how a country uses its educational system to promote the formation of values in its rising generations has been a central one, not only in Communist dictatorships, but also in Western democracies. In the past, the educational system was a handmaiden of the Communist party, and was used to promote an idealized view of «socialism» as a social and political model. Through such programs as support for democratic civic education in states like Ukraine, the U. S. is trying to ensure that the educational system could promote the values that are crucial for building a democratic society.

Putting Together a Course

I had become interested in the subject of comparative transition during two years of service in China (1999-2001). As head of our Economic-Political Section at our Consulate General in Guangzhou, I was responsible for analyzing and reporting on the process of change in the south China region. Although political transformation in China has been slow, the southern provinces which we covered have been in the forefront of China's modernization and experimentation since the economic reforms launched by Deng Xiao Ping in 1978. While their country's leadership resisted going the «East European» way after 1989, the Chinese were also curious about the record of reform in Eastern Europe. At a seminar I attended in 2000 held in Haikou, Hainan island, officials from Poland and Hungary told Chinese academics how reform worked in practice in their countries, including the subversive notion that economic reform could not have been successful without prior political reform. It was a forgone conclusion that I would include a unit on China as part of the course.

Course Outline and Technique

After going through about 20 different syllabi available on line, I settled on the following sequence of themes for the course, to be included in 17 class sessions (80 minutes each, two double sessions per week):

- I. Theory.
 1. Introduction to Transformation and Transition.
 2. Nature of the socialist system; comparisons with capitalism.
 3. The Third Wave and theories of democracy.
 4. Transitology and its critics.
- II. Practical Questions.
 1. Ethnic issues.
 2. Democratic consolidation; path contingency.
 3. Institutions: bureaucracy, parties, elections; civil society.
 4. Communist parties after communism.
- III. Political Economy.
 1. Democracy and development; shock vs gradualism.
 2. Privatization, liberalization, and corruption.
- IV. Country Case Studies.
 1. Central and Eastern Europe.
 2. Russia.
 3. Ukraine.
 4. China.
- V. International Dimension.
 1. Role of international assistance and donor organizations.
 2. Transformation of the international system; new role for NATO.

The philosophy of the course was not simply to allow students to better understand how democracy does or does not evolve from authoritarian political structures, but also to encourage students to engage in critical thinking about these issues. From the first lesson, I tried to stress the idea of «science» in political science, and to get students accustomed to the idea of formulating hypotheses and assembling evidence to support them. While there will always be a debate as to the degree to which the social sciences can be qualified as sciences, my main thrust was to help students make informed judgments about the issues they were studying, as well as observing in their daily routine.

Each student was given a CD ROM at the beginning of the course, containing required and suggested readings. Some of these, however, were not available in electronic form, and photocopies were provided for each student (or, in the case of books or longer articles, a limited number of copies was made to be shared). I also established a website through the assistance of Ukraine Distance Learning <http://www.udl.org.ua/kma> that provided additional links to interesting websites or articles, or allowed students

to communicate their own views and opinions about the topics they were reading.

Students also received a copy of what may be the world's longest syllabus - 26 pages. This document included the usual information about the course objective and requirements, as well as readings and links. It was designed as much as a research resource as a syllabus, so it contained more works than students were expected to prepare each week (essential readings were marked with an asterisk). I included a synopsis of the content for articles, academic papers, or books which came with a summary, so that students could get the general idea of a work before they read it. This was one of many concessions made to the reality that they were taking a course in a language which was not their native tongue. In addition, a week before each lesson, I distributed one-page summaries for each of the next two lessons, containing core questions and issues on which the students should focus. Where I felt the material was more difficult or the students were not likely to have the time to read through a whole book chapter, I provided a summary myself. I was responsible for providing my own administrative support.

I tried other techniques to make it possible for them to learn under less than optimal conditions. In one case, I asked students to put together a combined book review from four reviews of Linz and Stepan's 1996 work on democratic transformation, since we did not have access to the book itself and even if we did, there would have been too much material for non-native English speakers to cover. Another way was to divide the class into teams each responsible for one subunit of a lesson. The teams were to work together and produce a combined group report for the rest of the class. Indeed, the choice of course material was largely dictated by the fact that there was no funding available for purchase of books, and thus, whatever we were able to read had to be available from the Internet. Actually, the Internet proved surprisingly resourceful; our Embassy purchased subscriptions to a number of data bases such as ebrary and questia.com (which provide full texts of books), and students also had access to periodicals through such services as EBSCO.

Outside speakers were another option, although our ability to use this resource was due to the fact that, located in Kiev, we had more access to such people than would have been the case elsewhere in the country. For the unit on Ukraine, I invited Vladimir Pigenko, a political science Ph. D. (Indiana University) who is today helping to manage the University's Parliamentary Development Program, which involves cooperation with Ukraine's Verkhovna Rada (parliament). One of Dr. Pigenko's works was part of the course readings on Ukraine.

While we were not able to invite Dr. Anders Eslund to visit our course (the Swedish-born economist is currently based at the Carnegie Endowment in Washington, D. C.), we did use the English language version of his most recent work, *Building Capitalism* (our Embassy is having the book translated into Ukrainian, and it will be available to Ukrainian readers this summer; Dr. Eslund has graciously agreed to allow full access to this version on our website). When Eslund lectured at the Economics Education and Research Consortium (EERC) - an English language Master's program located at the same university, several students took up my offer to raise their grades on their midterm (several had missed the point of what he was trying to say about economic reform) by producing a two-page summary of his remarks to his audience. A number of students later mentioned that these meetings with outside speakers were the best parts of the course. One idea they warmed to, but which in the end could not be carried out due to a temporary 11-hour time difference between Ukraine and California, was to do a digital video conference with Prof. Michael McFaul of Stanford University (Prof. McFaul's 2002 article in *World Politics* was one of their readings). However, doing such teleconferencing with professors (and their students) in the U. S. is a wonderful incentive for young Ukrainians, and will probably develop in the future as the use of this technology gets more widespread. UKMA itself expects to develop this capability in the near future.

These were not the only teaching devices. Having returned from a trip to the U. S. during the middle of the semester, I brought back dried fruits from California and chocolates for all, and then proceeded to use my present as an object lesson on corruption. Playing the poor underpaid bureaucrat, I asked whether they would be willing to part with their new largesse if I would provide them some «services». However, having experienced petty corruption as part of their daily lives, they needed little prompting to understand its significance. In trying to explain how the rule of law depends on the citizen as much as those who make the rules, I introduced the subject by noting that, when taking a taxi in Kiev and Lviv, when I fastened my seat belt, the only difference in the reaction of the driver was that in the latter city, he would tell me «Ni treba» (Not necessary in Ukrainian), and in the former, «Ne nado» (Not necessary in Russian). When comparing this culture with the almost automatic response of Americans of fastening their seat belts when they get into a car, some students thought that fear of fines was the motivating factor in the U. S., not grasping that for rule of law to work, voluntary compliance by the vast majority of citizens is the most important factor.

Student Feedback

As a sign of America's commitment to democracy in the classroom, I distributed an evaluation form asking students to rate the course, my work as an instructor, and their own work as students. The idea was to underscore the point that they are also responsible for their own learning, but also to understand the process and motivation for that learning. This was a novelty for students, who normally live for their own grades, not for the day they can grade their professors. Although Ukrainian universities traditionally use the lecture method of instruction, some professors at UKMA, especially those who have participated in educational exchange programs with the U. S. or other Western countries, have tried to introduce changes. Indeed, in this case, I tried to get the students involved in discussions as much as possible. The problem turned out that a few, who were comfortable in English, tended to dominate the discussion, whereas others, not so sure of their abilities, elected to listen more than speak.

Why did students register for this course? There is a certain novelty in a Ukrainian university in taking a course with a foreign instructor. Students can improve their English, and get access to materials or works by political scientists with whom they are unfamiliar. Most of my students had heard of Samuel Huntington and Zbigniew Brzezinski, and a few knew of Robert Dahl. But the great majority of current thinkers in democratic theory were completely virgin territory to them. Several wanted to learn American approaches to the study of their own society, and to understand how Ukraine's development fit into a larger context.

In general students were highly positive, noting that the course had raised a lot of issues faced by people in transitional countries, but presented «alternative perspectives». Some students were particularly pleased that many of the readings were also found on a syllabus for a course they will be taking next semester, so they were already familiar with much of the material. However some students lamented the amount of reading required and felt that the summaries provided were especially useful to them (probably the only portion of the readings they read!) in clarifying the meaning of these articles. Students were especially grateful to get most of their readings on a CD ROM, and commented that, even if they did not read everything for this course, they would use the readings as reference materials for future courses. However, several students who complained of their limited computer access felt that printed materials worked better for them than a CD ROM, even though they did not need Internet access to use it. On average, students admitted to having completed only

half of the assigned readings, citing pressure from as many as seven or eight other courses, as well as difficulty in understanding the material.

One reading that evoked the most emotional reaction from some students was a Russian-oriented view of the situation of the Russian diaspora in the former Soviet Union (Streltsova). The article, which depicted the Russians as victims, drew an indignant response from several students («that's just the way the Russians think about themselves»).

The use of the course website was a novelty for most of the students. It was intended to create a virtual community where they could not only gain access to course readings and announcements, but also to share ideas outside of the formal classroom setting. Unfortunately, very few availed themselves of this opportunity. A few never accessed the site, while many others accessed it only on occasion, and then only as passive consumers. As the use of the Internet spreads in Ukrainian classrooms, they will also grasp the opportunities it provides.

Characteristics of Student Learning:

For a number of students, learning seems to have been focused on remembering facts rather than being able to critically evaluate the materials they were reading. One young man, for instance, submitted a paper on U. S. and European aid to Ukraine (after his first paper was rejected for not conforming to the themes of the course). However, instead of presenting analysis of aid programs, including what they accomplished, their motivations, or limitations, he merely listed the attributes of those programs. Other students also showed difficulty in going beyond simply rephrasing what they had learned from a single author and putting that author's views in a critical context.

Plagiarism

No discussion of student-instructor interaction in a Ukrainian classroom would be complete without mentioning plagiarism. Not having been prepared for the phenomenon, and not wishing to play the role of taskmaster to my students, I initially left this issue unmentioned, and instead concentrated on explaining what is required in writing a research paper. As it turned out, about half the students presented papers that had been totally or partially plagiarized. One took the background portion of a project proposal for a

grant on corruption studies and presented it as part of her own paper on corruption, oblivious to the irony that her plagiarism was itself a form of corruption. When I uncovered these cases (in all but one instance it only took a few minutes of searching through [google.com](http://www.google.com)), I told the students what they had done and informed them that they would get no credit for a plagiarized term paper. I also presented (and handed out at the last class session) some «how to avoid plagiarism» materials from several leading U. S. universities. Reactions differed, from sarcasm («do you mean to say I, as an undergraduate, can't think up my own typologies of state behavior?») to denial («yes I know what is plagiarism, and this isn't it, since I used many sources») to incredulity («do you think I have time to start reading all these sources?») to defiance («I don't know how you do things in America, but this is what we call a *referat* - it's the way we were taught to write term papers») or educating me («what you wanted us to do is a «*kursova robota*» [term paper]; such a work is written only once a year and it presumes a full-fledged author's research... such a demand is too complicated at the moment»). In nearly every case, with a lot of patience and explanation about what I expected from them, and given the knowledge that they would otherwise fail the course, the students went back to work and produced papers which reflected more of their own work¹.

One problem is that students do not always understand the difference between plagiarism and honest academic research, and that they are ill equipped to carry out the latter. While I had tried to stress the importance of the scientific approach in any discipline they are studying, including the formulation of hypotheses and collection of data, putting this idea into practice seemed daunting for many of them. Even one young lady (her paper was completely honest), who had studied at an American high school and was the daughter of a respected social scientist, had trouble with the concept of measuring democratic attitudes. In her comparison of center-periphery relations, she simply used the fact that fewer people voted to keep the USSR in the 1991 referendum on that subject in the capital cities of Kiev (Ukraine) and Minsk (Belarus) than elsewhere in those countries, to conclude that citizens in those capitals were «more démocratique» than counterparts in other cities where a high percentage voted in favor of retaining the Soviet Union.

¹ Peddling or writing term papers has become a major enterprise in the former Soviet republics. Russian language sites offering term papers include (with 27,000 papers available) <http://www.ireferat.ru> (prices on this Russian site range from about \$12 for a simple *referai* to \$105 for a master's thesis), <http://www.referatik.com>; <http://www.ref.com.ua>; <http://aditec.ru/misc/referat> and <http://referet.ru/folder/75> (the latter is one specifically offering papers in political science and, like some sites, allows the reader to download files free of charge). The Ukrainian site <http://referats.kiev.ua> even offers potential authors a chance to see the themes proposed by customers who need someone to ghost-write their academic papers.

Plagiarism, in the view of some, reflects a lack of respect for intellectual property in general. As one Ukrainian Fulbright scholar recently argued, «...the reason for students' plagiarism in Ukraine is not the techno-overdose of the research process but the general atmosphere of indifference in society to the cases of plagiarism. There is no demand for public control over the use of intellectual production» (Homilko, 2002). An American who had taught at a provincial university also related his shock on finding his students regarded a test as the opportunity to do collaborative work with each other (Johns, 2001).

It is also a legacy of the Soviet past, where independent intellectual pursuits were discouraged, especially in the social sciences. Plagiarism is also a coping mechanism for some. Students at Ukrainian universities are overloaded, taking 30-35 hours of courses per week. More than one of my students asked not only how they could keep up with the reading, but also how they could have the time to write an original research paper when they had to handle seven or eight other courses at the same time. Also, several who were not confident in their own English ability felt the only way to produce acceptable writing in English was to simply reproduce what someone else had written. In some cases, students who originally wrote a plagiarized work in English submitted a revised paper in Ukrainian.

Language Capabilities

Our class was conducted entirely in English. Ukrainian students generally like the idea of using and improving their skills in English, and taking a course with an American instructor offers them the opportunity to do so without traveling to another country. When I repeated a mini version of this course at Taurida National University in Simferopol (Crimea), I first conducted it in Ukrainian (mixed with some Russian). However, some of the students asked whether I could use more English to help them improve their comprehension. I also used a limited number of Russian language sources, and while at Taurida found out that the «Mother of all transition articles», Dankwart Rustow's 1970 piece on the transition to democracy, had been translated into Russian.

When conducting a class in a foreign language, however, something gets lost in the translation, both literally and figuratively. Our professional literature is filled with concepts and jargon that will be sufficient challenge to an American undergraduate. How to explain them to a Ukrainian? Some words, like arbitrage may sound exactly like Ukrainian equivalents, but they have very different meanings. Others, such as rent-seeking or state capture, use words that students can grasp individually, but which elude them

when combined into new terms with their own meanings. For this reason, when distributing one-page study guides for their lessons the following week, I tried to identify vocabulary terms that I knew would be difficult for them or which would not be found in their dictionaries. Even so, there was a clear distribution of English abilities among the students. The best were two young women who had gone on one of our exchange programs to study in the U. S. for a year. They also participated actively in class discussions. Some of the others, however, were less confident of their abilities, or perhaps wowed over by their classmates, and chose to take a more passive role. In the evaluations I received at the end of the course, a number of students indicated that they would have liked to participate more, but they felt less than confident of their English. Indeed, one American professor from the University of Florida who visited the class commented afterwards that he was amazed at the openness and breadth of student participation in class discussions. But luckily, when I asked students to say whether they felt a cultural gap, besides the linguistic one, only one replied in the affirmative.

On the other hand, all students experienced difficulties in expressing themselves on paper. Large blocks of some students' essays simply had no meaning even though they were written in English. One young man used «sélection» when he meant «élection», so his vocabulary mistakes made his thoughts difficult to follow. One senior asked during her final exam whether she could write the answers in Ukrainian, yet she submitted a paper in perfect English the following week, not thinking that I would notice the reason for her sudden «improvement». When I called her to account, she apologized, but asked to redraft her paper in Ukrainian, with which she was much more comfortable. Even at UKMA, where bilingualism is a source of pride, students' writing skills in English are still only in the developmental stage. In this case, I felt my most useful contribution would be to show them how their thoughts could be expressed in proper English, leaving their corrected papers as a model, but without trying to grade them on their English abilities. (Indeed, one of the proposals recently received by the Civic Education Program [see Links below] is for a course in academic writing in English, which will give students practice in writing critiques, research proposals, papers, and essays.)

Student Input

One of the questions I asked students to answer on their course evaluation form was their own level of input into the course. Many admitted that they had read only a fraction of the readings on their list for each lesson, and some skipped or were late to classes

on an almost regular basis. Realizing that my course was one of many that the students had to contend with, I tried to avoid iron rules of discipline. However, very few students actually handed in their course assignments on a regular basis - they were required to write a one page summary of their readings for each lesson, to show they had read and analyzed them. At the end of the course, a number of students asked whether I would still accept these summaries from several months earlier if it would «raise their grade». I explained that the purpose of the assignment was to help them be prepared for class discussions, and that long after the fact, such writing had lost most of its meaning. How does one cope in such a situation? While my purpose was never to «dumb down» their lessons, I found it necessary to provide outline summaries of some of their readings, understanding that most of the students were not going to find the time to do all the readings themselves.

UKMA, as is typically the case in Ukraine, has a benevolent policy toward student success. A student who receives a poor score on a test is entitled to ask to take it a second time (Prof. Johns, in his article, write that in his university, it was three times). Most of the students waited until the last day of class to hand in their papers. One young lady, who had not attended class for over a month, sent me an e-mail version of her paper a week after the class was over, and it was plagiarized. Another student who was absent for half the semester without explanation showed up in the Political Science Department a week after classes ended. Told that she was about to fail because she had not submitted a research paper, she suddenly became energized and arranged to have her final grade delayed until her paper was completed. When it was, it did not include a single footnote. It is quite clear that the University does not want students to fail, and gives them more opportunities than Americans are afforded at U. S. universities to make up or improve their work. «Can she do some additional work to bring up her grade?» was the question I heard several times. All this being said, there were other students who were very diligent in their studies and work, and did their utmost under difficult circumstances to fulfill their requirements. One student who had studied in the U. S. even produced a surprise: a paper complete with her own regression analysis of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and its relationship to democracy.

Diplomat as Teacher

Coming from the world of diplomacy, I had some admitted disadvantages. I had not been in a classroom in the role of teacher for almost a decade, and my previous experience involved individual lectures rather

than setting up and managing a whole course. To teach a course adequately, one must be up to date on the literature in the field, and most especially with the literature assigned to students to read. Thus, I spent several months before actually stepping into the classroom simply assembling and reading materials and acquainting myself with how others had organized similar courses in the past.

On the other hand, a diplomat does have some advantages. My craft in trade has been political reporting and analysis for nearly 30 years, even if my readers have been in Washington and in embassies in the regions where I have served, rather than an academic audience. Some of my previous assignments have given me a first hand experience of the events and processes, which were the subject of this course. In using the example of Slovakia, for instance, I could draw on my personal relationship with that country's leadership, including its president, prime minister, and foreign minister. In discussing China, I could relate my own first-hand knowledge regarding pervasive corruption or a lack of rule of law, as well as the issue of how Chinese academicians deal with the question of reform in their country. I was also able to relate my on-the-ground experiences with the peace process in Bosnia.

The Larger Context

Political scientists in Ukraine are now engaged in the process of defining their discipline and making it relevant to their own professional needs, as well as to the needs of their own country. Those with Western experience often refer to themselves as «politychni naukovtsi», the direct translation of political scientists, whereas they pin the older, somewhat derisive label of «politologi» (translated as «politologists») on their colleagues who began their careers in the departments of scientific communism of various universities before 1991 and since then tried to reinvent themselves as political scientists. Political science today in Ukraine in some ways recalls my first exposure to the discipline at Columbia University in the late 1960's, when the Department of Public Law and Government had not yet undergone its metamorphosis, and quantitative data analysis was only just being introduced. At UKMA, political science is still heavily oriented to such fields as political theory or philosophy. There are no courses on methodology, which would help students understand how research is carried out on current topics of interest. Many of the readings I assigned to students were themselves research papers given by American political scientists at the most recent meetings of the APSA. While most of the students were unprepared to go into the rigors of multiple regression analysis,

I felt that at least a general acquaintance with how scientific studies are carried out in the field today was essential to their education. At a recent meeting of political scientists held at UKMA, the need to establish a more scientific basis (including quantitative analysis) for political research was widely recognized.

In recognizing the importance of political science (as well as economics) for the future direction of reform and democratization in Ukraine, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U. S. Department of State is about to launch a cooperative effort under its Citizen Exchange Program. As part of this project, we will be helping political scientists and economists in Ukraine to build strong professional associations linked to each other, to counterparts in the U. S., and in other European countries. This will include establishing a website (which will use some of the ideas which have been so successful at apsa.net) to enable sharing of syllabi, course materials, and information for professional development. Indeed, one of the major complaints we often hear from people in these disciplines is that they are unaware of the work their colleagues are doing in the same field in another part of the same country. The program will include a component in the U. S., where Ukrainian academicians will be able to meet and consult with American counterparts on building their own institutions.

Conclusion

While I cannot say what, if any, effect my interlude in the academic world will have on my students, I can state that there are few ways in which one can get so directly involved in influencing the development of a transitional country as Ukraine as by direct contact with students in the classroom. The learning experience is certainly mutual, as one cannot try to influence any country's development without feedback from its people. Ukraine, despite its faults, or the shortcomings of its academic system, does have an enormous potential in its students and its universities. The urge to innovate and improve is especially strong in those who have received their graduate education abroad and bring new concepts to the classroom, especially regarding academic responsibility and better student-teacher interaction. As Professor Johns put it: «American teachers are guests in Ukraine. We can suggest changes, encourage improvements, and discuss the standards of academic behavior in our own colleges. Not arrogantly, but with sensitivity and conviction that we really want this country to have world-class universities»). If Ukrainian students learn skills of debate and inquiry as part of their training, then the result will be only positive both for themselves and for their country.

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П. Хекер

ВИКЛАДАННЯ ТРАНЗИТОЛОГІЇ У ПЕРЕХІДНИХ КРАЇНАХ: ЗВІТ ІЗ КИЄВА

Публікація є звітом професора зі США, який розробив курс для студентів НаУКМА. Автор наводить структуру курсу та вказує відповідні методи викладання, а також описує переваги та недоліки роботи зі студентами.