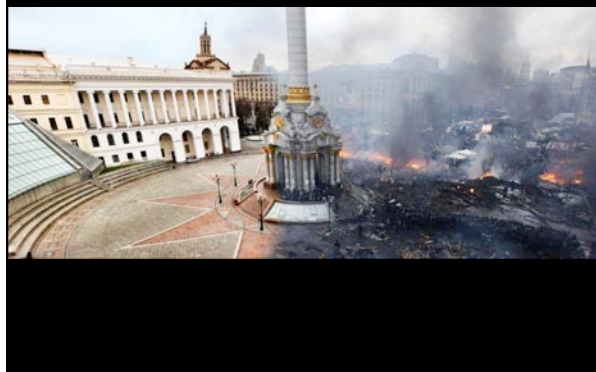


Russia and Central Asian Politics
October 9, 2017



Announcements

- Instructions for the first writing assignment are on the course web site.
- Roles will be assigned this week.
 - The Ukrainian government
 - The Eastern Ukrainian separatists
 - The Russia government
 - The EU
 - The US government



Meet Ashley Horvat (BA '10)
2017 Alumni Achievement Award Recipient
Political Science/Environment and Sustainability
Friday, October 13 at 12 p.m.
Political Science Library, 3301 FRD

Ashley will share how her WMU education prepared her to become a leader in the electric vehicle industry, as well as her perspective on the future of the automobile.
Questions and Answers to follow!
Lunch provided.



Western Michigan University

This week: Ukraine

- Critical thinking guidelines for understanding *any* such conflict:
 1. It *cannot* be understood without context: historical, demographic, economic, cultural.
 2. Conflict is usually an internal matter before it is an external matter. Geopolitics often comes *second*.
 3. There is more than one side to *any* conflict.

This week: Ukraine

- Critical thinking guidelines for understanding *any* such conflict:
 4. *Rarely* can a conflict be understood simply as good vs. evil.
 5. Never *uncritically* adopt the government narrative on what's going on.
 - The narrative of *any* government.
 - Or *anyone else's* narrative.
 - Even *mine*.

Five Actors in Current Crisis:

- The Ukrainian government.
 - Eastern Ukrainian (pro-Russian) separatists.
 - The Russian government.
 - The EU.
 - The US government.
- Each has been highly biased and is regularly guilty of misrepresenting events.



Ukrainian History

- The roots of modern Russia started 1500 years ago – in Kievan Rus' (centered in Kiev)
- Never a modern nation-state before 1992.
- Parts of Ukrainian territory have at times been part of the Russian empire, Poland, Lithuania, Germany, the Ottoman Empire, and the USSR.



Ukrainian Features

- Close ties to Russia:
 - Linguistically similar.
 - Long association.
 - Orthodoxy important in Ukraine.
- Highly industrialized in the Soviet period.
- Fine arable land, part of the Soviet Union's "breadbasket."

Ukraine: A Country Divided

- Eastern Ukraine.
 - Highly Russified.
 - Identity very Russian.
 - Orthodoxy dominant.

Ukraine: A Country Divided

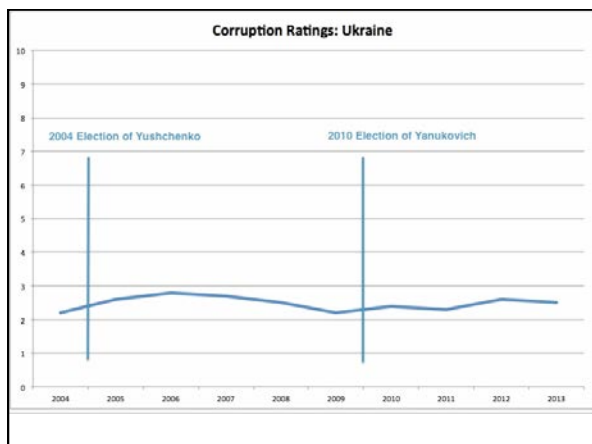
- Western Ukraine.
 - Ukrainian language dominant.
 - Uniate Church dominant.
 - More multi-ethnic (Ukrainians, Russians, Poles, Hungarians, and some minority Carpathian ethnic groups).
 - Heart of Ukrainian national identity.

Post-Independence Travails

- Democratic instability.
 - Regular elections.
 - Not fully free and fair until 2004 Orange Revolution.
 - Free and fair since then.
 - Lack of stable party system (as in Russia).

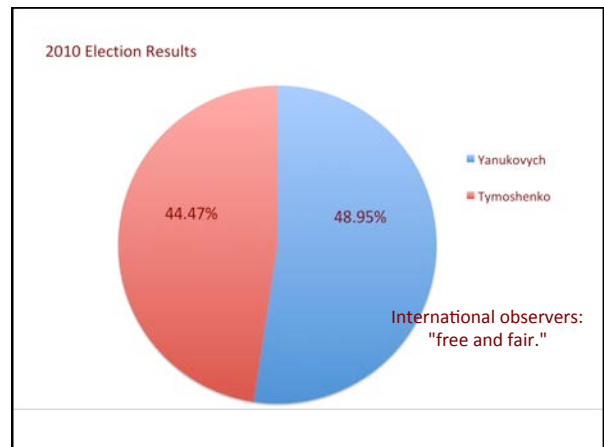
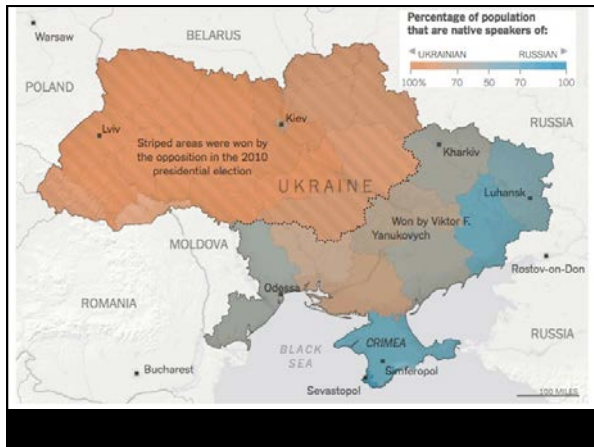
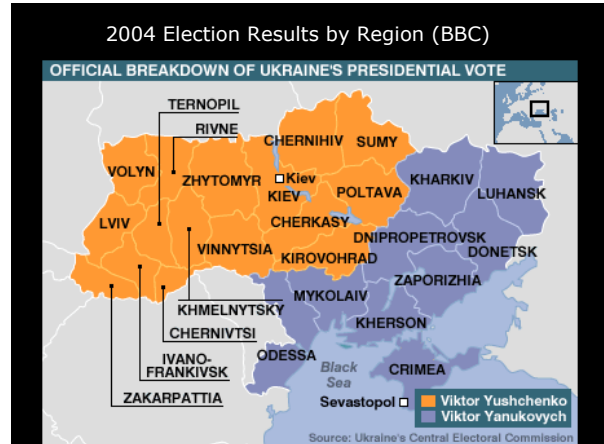
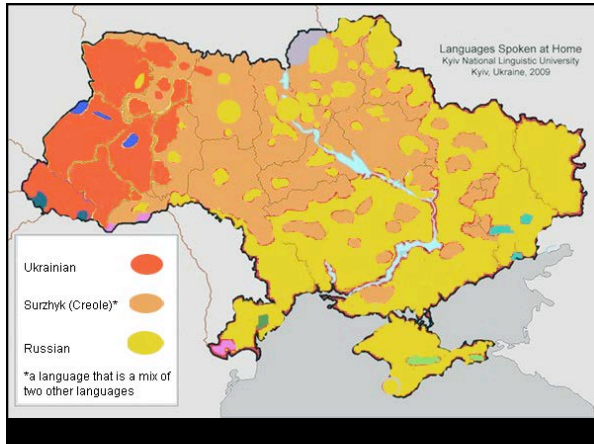
Post-Independence Travails

- High levels of corruption.
 - "Crony capitalism" as in Russia.
 - Danger of "state capture."
 - Extensive petty corruption in the form of bribes.



Post-Independence Travails

- Uneven and incomplete economic reform.
 - 1999 output less than 40% of the 1991 level.
 - Decade-long recession.
 - 60% of economy privatized by early 2000s.



Events of 2014...

Maidan Square (Kiev) before violence.



Maidan Square after violence.



2014 Timeline

- Nov 21, 2013: protests start in Maidan after EU deal rejected.
- December-February: protests, riots and crackdowns.
- Feb 18-19: snipers kill several dozen protestors and police.
 - What snipers? From what side?

2014 Timeline

- Feb 21:
 - Compromise deal announced (brokered by Poland, France and Germany).
 - Paramilitary groups storm presidential residence that night.
 - Yanukovich flees.
- Feb 22-3: new government formed.
- May 25: presidential election.

2014 Timeline

- Note: discourses differ.
 - Were the events of Feb 21 a victory by "freedom fighters"?
 - Or was it a coup?

