

ITP: **Russia 2006**

Faculty Advisor: **Steven Sawyer**

Research Group Members: **Kathleen Clark, Damon Miño, John Olson**

Paper Title: **Ethnicity, Immigration, and Discrimination in the Russian Federation: In the Shadow of the Soviet Legacy**

Abstract:

We explored the historical trajectory and current trends in ethnic tensions and immigration in the Russian Federation. Our conclusion is that Russia cannot meet the challenges of ethnic tension and undocumented immigration because it has failed to escape from the shadow of its Soviet legacy. Many countries face daunting trials raised by the specter of ethnic tensions and undocumented immigration. Russia's unique history, however, has created obstacles that conspire to defeat any initiative they have recently taken and cast serious doubt on any measures they may plan in the future. These obstacles are three-fold. First, Russia's burdensome history of Imperial and Soviet rule has encouraged the segregation of ethnic minorities and even fostered the seeds of ethnic conflict. Second, Russia's immigration challenges are unique in that they come on the heels of a cataclysmic economic reform, a unique de-population crisis, and an inability to assess undocumented immigration. Third, and finally, Russia is saddled with a Soviet-era reliance on bureaucracy, vague legislation, and selective enforcement of law that makes combating ethnic conflict impossible.