

## Discussion Questions – The Road to Unfreedom

1. How does Snyder define the politics of inevitability and the politics of eternity? What are the features and pitfalls of each? What does it mean for the state and the individual to believe in either of these?
2. Why was it important for Putin to promote a philosophy that supported inequality and getting rid of the middle class? How does he do this?
3. Does the politics of inevitability allow for a principle of succession better than the politics of eternity or is something else going on with Russia's succession issue? How long do you think Russia can maintain its current political structure?
4. What is meant by 'managed democracy' in this book and how close do you think we are to what he describes?
5. Snyder argues that "human sexuality is an inexhaustible raw material for the manufacture of anxiety." Why do you think this is the case? Do you see it in our politics?
6. How does Ukraine fit as a tool of Putin's politics of eternity? How much do you agree that this is what is going on? What might Snyder be leaving out?
7. What do you think of Snyder's point that Europeans never had a successful period of independent nation-states? Why does he argue that the integration of the EU is so important? Do you agree?
8. What happens when one moves from a politics of "doing" to one of "being"?
9. What is meant by schizofascism in the book? Why was it Russia's response to the novelty of the Ukrainian protestors?
10. What is the system of 'implausible deniability' and how does it support the politics of eternity? Why did it create problems for Western newsrooms?
11. Snyder argues that Russia's aim in supporting various leaders and policies in Europe was a sort of 'strategic relativism.' How much do you agree that this could be what is going on?
12. What was your impression of Trump's connections to Russia and their involvement in his election?
13. What did you think of the point in the book about the erasing of the line between public and private in the lives of politicians and the impact that this has on democracy?
14. The argument is made that "the interactivity of the internet creates an impression of mental effort while impeding reflection" and that receiving news from social media sources reinforces a sort of unfreedom of the mind. What do you make of this?

15. Near the end of the book, Snyder makes a point about the meaning of politics shifting from policies and reform to being about daily spectacle that serves to provide a cycle of euphoria, depression, and outrage. This turns the experience of politics into an addictive behaviour. Have you seen this to be true in our society?
16. What do you understand to be the path out of the politics of inevitability or eternity? What can individuals do or support? Does this answer give you hope?
17. How much did this book help you to understand the current war in Ukraine?