

Fall 2007: History 377-01  
MW 2-3:15 MHRA 2207

**The HISTORY of RUSSIA to 1900**  
([www.uncg.edu/~jwjones/russia](http://www.uncg.edu/~jwjones/russia))

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**Course Description**

Russia today is one of the most influential countries in the world, and it has had a fascinating and difficult history. This course introduces students to the issues and debates raised in that history from its origins in roughly the 9<sup>th</sup> century until the eve of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We will examine Russia's history, as much as possible, through the eyes of those who lived it, trying thereby to acquire a fuller understanding of Russia today.

The course is divided into two sections: Early Russia to 1700; and Imperial Russia 1700-1900. Relying on primary sources, we will approach the subject material from several perspectives, including political, social, economic, and cultural, with a number of themes in mind: state and society; ideology/religion; family/gender; class; war and peace, and others as well.

**Course Goals and Objectives:**

- By the end of the class students will understand that history is not just the memorization of dates and facts, but rather the *interpretation* of the past
- Students will acquire a knowledge of the key terms, facts, and events in the history of Russia to 1900 and thereby gain an informed historical perspective
- Students will take from the class the skills to critically appraise varying historical arguments and to clearly express their own interpretations
- Students will experience “hands-on” work with primary source material throughout the course and will gain an understanding of how to read history through such sources
- Students will gain a clear understanding of the concept of historiography and the fact that not all historians working on the same issues share the same conclusions
- Students will develop analytical skills and the ability to apply principles and generalizations learned in this class to other problems and situations
- Students will develop the ability to synthesize and integrate information and ideas as well as to distinguish between fact and opinion
- Students will be encouraged to develop an openness to new ideas and, most importantly, the capacity to think critically

**Course Readings:**

Aleksandr Nikitenko, *Up From Serfdom: My Childhood and Youth in Russia, 1804-1824*

Ivan Turgenev, *Fathers & Sons*

Online material designated below

Optional: MacKenzie-Curran, *A History of Russia, the Soviet Union & Beyond*

**Course Web Page:** The course web page is at [www.uncg.edu/~jwjones/russia](http://www.uncg.edu/~jwjones/russia). The page has course readings, summaries of the notes, a timeline, and other features relevant to the course.

**Course Activities:**

Participation	25%	Midterm Exam	25%
Review Essay	25%	Final Exam	25%

**Participation:** The 25% class participation grade consists of worksheets and Reaction Pieces, 1-2 pages double-spaced. These are intended to be your reaction to or opinion of the assigned readings designated below, not a summary of the reading material.

**Exams:** There is a midterm exam and a final exam (each worth 25%) for the class. The in-class exams are comprised of Identifications and Short Answer Questions based on course material and readings. Each exam includes a Take Home Essay to be turned in on exam day; each essay, the topics for which are listed below, is worth 10% of the overall exam grade. The exams cover *only* the part of the course for which they are designated (Midterm: Early Russia-1700; Final: Imperial Russia 1700-1900), so they are not cumulative, except that the topics for the Final Exam Take Home Essay cover the entire course.

**Review Essay:** The Review Essay (worth 25%) requires you to define the issues and arguments involved in a topic of historiographical debate related to the course, i.e. the nature of early Slavic society and culture; the impact of the Mongols in Russian history; the role of Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, Catherine the Great, or some other ruler in Russian history; the rise of capitalism in Russia, etc. For the essay (double-spaced, 12-point font, 5-7 pages), you should summarize the opposing sides of an historical debate for a topic chosen ahead of time and approved by the instructor, identifying 3-5 major books or articles on that topic in a bibliography. **The essay is due Wednesday, November 28**, but can be turned in at any point of the semester after October 1; **be forewarned: we have a lot of reading toward the end of the semester, so you need to work on this assignment well before it is due.**

**Grading:** Grades are compiled on a point system (you can keep up with your grades on Blackboard). For example, if you make 80 on the midterm (12/15) + 87 on the midterm Take Home Essay (8.7/10) + (22/25) on participation + 85 on the Review Essay (21.3/25) + 84 on the final exam (12.6/15) + 90 on the final Take Home Essay (9/10) your final grade = **85.6** or **B**

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

Monday, August 20. Introduction: Images of Russia

- Reading for Wednesday, August 22: Why Study History Through Primary Sources?  
Wednesday, August 22. Early Settlements in Russia & Daily Life of the Early Slavs

**Part I: Early Russia to 1700**

- Reading for Monday, August 27: Excerpts from *The Russian Primary Chronicle*; **Worksheet 1** due in class  
Monday, August 27. The “Norman Theory”: Discussion of the Reading

- Reading for Wednesday, August 29: “A Woman of Words: Pagan Ol’ga in the Mirror of Germanic Europe” by Francis Butler; and A Chart of the Differences between Eastern Orthodoxy and Catholicism & Features of the Russian Orthodox Church  
Wednesday, August 29. Kievan Rus & the Christianization of Russia: Discussion of the Reading
- Reading for Wednesday, September 5: “An Arab Traveler to Kiev”; and “Russians Flip out over Flapjacks as Lent Nears”; Optional: “Lay of Igor’s Campaign”; Reaction Piece (1-2 pages) to the Arab Traveler reading due in class  
Wednesday, September 5. The Decline of Kiev: Discussion of the Readings
- Reading for Monday, September 10: Accounts of the Mongol Invasion of Russia; Reaction Piece (1-2 pages) due in class  
Monday, September 10. The Mongol Invasion & its Aftermath: Discussion of the Readings
- Reading for Wednesday, September 12: “The Mongol Impact on Russia” by George Vernadsky; Optional: “Russia in The Mongol Empire in Comparative Perspective” by Charles Halperin  
Wednesday, September 12. The Impact of the Mongols & the Rise of Novgorod
- Reading for Monday, September 17: *The Novgorod Chronicle*; **Worksheet 2** due in class  
Monday, September 17. The Decline & Fall of Novgorod: Discussion of the Reading  
Wednesday, September 19. The Rise of Muscovy
- Reading for Monday, September 24: “Ivan the Terrible as Renaissance Prince” by Michael Cherniavsky; “The Correspondence Between Tsar Ivan IV and Prince Andrei Kurbsky”; and “Ivan IV’s Rampage Against Novgorod”; Reaction Piece (1-2 pages) due in class  
Monday, September 24. Ivan IV (the “Terrible”): Discussion of the Readings
- Reading for Wednesday, September 26: Ivan IV’s *Oprichnina*  
Wednesday, September 26. The Latter Reign of Ivan IV & the Roots of the “Time of Troubles”
- Reading for Monday, October 1: “A German Merchant’s Account of Famine in Russia”  
Monday, October 1. The “Time of Troubles”: Discussion of the Readings
- Reading for Wednesday, October 3: “An English Account of the Bolotnikov Uprising”; and “Who was Tsar Dmitrii?” by Chester Dunning; **Worksheet 3** due in class  
Wednesday, October 3. The Reestablishment of Autocracy & the Origins of Serfdom
- Reading for Monday, October 8: Excerpt from The Law Code of 1649; Reaction Piece (1-2 pages) due in class  
Monday, October 8. The Origins of Serfdom (cont’d) & Religion in Russia
- Reading for Wednesday, October 10: Excerpts from *Avvakum’s Autobiography*; **Worksheet 4** due in class  
Wednesday, October 10. Religious Crisis & the Church Schism: Discussion of the Reading

**MIDTERM EXAM Take Home Essay Question (worth 100 points or 10% of your overall course grade) (12-point font, 3-5 pages double-spaced):**

Drawing on at least three sources from the course (which can include video material), defend one of these two statements:

1. The role of the Russian Church prior to the 17<sup>th</sup> century is often exaggerated by historians, perhaps because most of the sources they have to work with are from a religious perspective. In fact, religion did not greatly influence the lives of the vast majority of the Russian people, many of whom clung to pagan beliefs and superstitions along with (or instead of) a quasi-Christian faith, and some of whom actually resented the Church for adding to their economic difficulties, i.e. by requiring payment for weddings or funeral rites, etc.

OR

2. Almost as soon as the Eastern Orthodox faith took root in Russia it became a dominant force in shaping the political history of the state, as well as influencing the lives and culture of the country's inhabitants. Its role cannot be overestimated; the Russian Church is the one constant through the otherwise dramatically different eras of Kievan Rus, Novgorod, the Mongol yoke, and the rise of Muscovy right down to the establishment of the Russian Empire at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Wednesday, October 17. **MIDTERM EXAM: TAKE HOME ESSAY DUE IN CLASS**

**Part II: Imperial Russia 1700-1900**

Monday, October 22. Peter the Great: Childhood & Early Reign

- Reading for Wednesday, October 24: "The Artisan Tsar" by V. O. Kliuchevsky; and "Personal Observations and Recollections of Peter the Great"

Wednesday, October 24. Peter the Great (cont'd): Discussion of the Readings

- Reading for Monday, October 29: Views of Catherine the Great & Catherine the Great's Views; Optional: Excerpts from "Catherine the Great's Instructions"

Monday, October 29. Russia in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century

- Reading for Wednesday, October 31: "Bribery and Justice in the Provinces in the Reign of Catherine II" by Janet Hartley

Wednesday, October 31. Catherine II (the Great): Enlightened Despotism?

- Reading for Monday, November 5: "Petition from a Russian noblewoman to Empress Catherine II, 1768"; and Excerpts from Alexander Radishchev's "A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow"; Reaction Piece (1-2 pages) due in class

Monday, November 5. Catherine II & Alexander Radishchev: Discussion of the Readings

BEGIN READING: *Up From Serfdom*; Reaction Piece (1-2 pages) to the book due in class  
Monday, November 19

- Reading for Wednesday, November 7: Edicts from and Petitions to Emelian Pugachev
- Wednesday, November 7. The Pugachev Rebellion: Discussion of the Reading

- Reading for Monday, November 12: “The Monarch and the State in 18<sup>th</sup> Century Russia” (Review Essay) by Paul Bushkovitch; and “Letter to the Editor” by Aleksandr Kamenskii; Optional: “The Decembrists” & “Apology of a Madman”

Monday, November 12. Paul & Alexander I

Wednesday, November 14. Napoleon in Russia & the Decembrist Uprising of 1825

Monday, November 19. The “Iron Tsar” Nicholas I & Discussion of *Up From Serfdom*

BEGIN READING: *Fathers & Sons* by Ivan Turgenev; Reaction Piece (1-2 pages) to the book due in class Wednesday, December 5

- Reading for Monday, November 26: *Inspector General* by Nikolai Gogol & “Letter to Gogol”; Reaction Piece (1-2 pages) due in class

Monday, November 26. Russian Literature as Social Critique: Discussion of the Readings

Wednesday, November 28. Alexander II’s Great Reforms

- **REVIEW ESSAY DUE**

- Reading for Monday, December 3: “A Little Jewish Girl in the Russian *Pale*, 1890”

Monday, December 3. Opposition to Tsardom

Wednesday, December 5. 19<sup>th</sup> Century Russian Literature & Art: Discussion of *Fathers & Sons*

Monday, December 10. Russia on the Eve of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

**FINAL EXAM Take Home Essay Question (worth 100 points or 10% of your overall course grade) (12-point font, 3-5 pages double-spaced):**

**Choose one of the following questions:**

1. Drawing on no fewer than three different sources from the course (at least one of which must come from before the Midterm Exam), describe life for Russia’s peasant-serfs between roughly 1000 and 1900. What are some of the key factors shaping life for the peasant-serfs and how do they interact with the nobility? How do Russia’s peasant-serfs respond to their conditions in life, and how does their position change over time?

OR

2. Drawing on no fewer than three different sources from the course (at least one of which must come from before the Midterm Exam), describe life for Russian women between roughly 1000 and 1900. What are some of the key factors shaping gender relations (i.e. how do men and women interact)? How do Russian women react or respond to their conditions, and how, if at all, does their position change over time?

**FINAL EXAM: Monday, December 17 noon-3:00: TAKE HOME ESSAY DUE IN CLASS**