Russian History Since 1900
(www.uncg.edu/~jwjones/russia)

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Office Hours: M 2-3:00; W 9-10:00; Th 9:45-10:45 and by appointment

Course Description
This introductory course, which is cross-listed with International and Global Studies, examines Russian and Soviet history in the 20th century in two parts: Part I, “From Traditional Russia to the Civil War,” looks at traditional Russian society and culture; developments in the late 19th century; the upheaval in Russian society from the late tsarist period through World War I; the revolutions of 1917; and the civil war. Part II, “From the Rise of Joseph Stalin to post-Soviet Russia,” emphasizes the impact of the Stalin Revolution, the purges, and WWII; the reformist course of de-Stalinization pursued by Khrushchev; neo-Stalinism under Brezhnev; Gorbachev’s dramatic reforms in the 1980s; the collapse of the USSR and post-Soviet Russia. The course explores several themes: Russia’s relationship with the West; revolution and the role of the individual in history; the role of gender and class in Russian and Soviet society; and the role of ideology and socialism in theory and practice.

Student Learning Outcomes:
Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to …
- Use a historical approach to analyze and contextualize primary and secondary sources representing divergent perspectives.
- Use evidence to interpret the past coherently, orally and/or in writing.
- Comprehend that history is not the memorization of dates and facts, but rather the interpretation of the past.
- Analyze historical duration, succession, and change in terms of human agency and larger systems or structures in a wide variety of places and periods.
- Analyze the key terms, facts, and events in modern Russian/Soviet history and thereby exhibit an informed historical perspective.
- Critically appraise varying historical arguments and clearly express their own interpretations.
- Learn how to critically read and distinguish between different types of historical sources and to “read between the lines” of differing points of view.
- Analyze primary sources and gain insight on how to interpret history through such sources.

Readings
- Reserve and online material identified below

Film: All students are required to see “Prisoner of the Mountains,” which is available on Bb.
Course Activities:
Participation: 30%  
Midterm Exam: 25% (15% in-class; 10% Take Home Essay)
Review Essay: 20%  
Final Exam: 25% (15% in-class; 10% Take Home Essay)

Participation: The 30% class participation grade consists of Worksheets, Online Discussions, and Reaction Pieces (1-2 pages, double-spaced) to the readings designated below. These are intended to be your reaction to or opinion of the readings, not a summary. You can keep up with your participation grade on Blackboard.

Review Essay: The Review Essay (worth 20%) requires you to define the issues and arguments involved in a topic of historiographical debate related to the course (see the list of possible topics below). For the essay you should summarize the opposing sides of a 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 November 14, but can be turned in at any point of the semester after October 24. Essays should be double-spaced, 12-pt. font, 8-10 pages (undergrads)/12-15 pages (graduate students) in length.

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. In addition, 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: Late Imperial Period-Civil War; Final: Rise of Stalin-Contemporary Russia), so they are not cumulative.

Grading: Grades are compiled on a point system. For example, if you make an 80 on the Midterm Exam (12/15) + 88 on the Midterm Take Home Essay (8.8/10) + an 85 on the Final Exam (12.8/15) + 93 on the Final Take Home Essay (9.3/10) + 85 on your Written Assignment (17/20) + 90 on Participation (27/30), your final grade = 86.9 or 87 B+

CLASS SCHEDULE
Tuesday, August 20. Introduction
BEGIN READING: And Quiet Flows the Don, Parts I & II (“Peace” & “War”); Worksheet 1 due in class September 12

Part I: From Traditional Russia to the Civil War
Thursday, August 22. Traditional Russian Society
- Reading for August 27: “Prisoner of the Caucasus” by Lev Tolstoy; Online Discussion 1: reply to the prompt on Blackboard by 8:00AM Tuesday, August 27
  Tuesday, August 27. Russia in the Caucasus: Discussion of the Reading
- Reading for August 29: excerpts from “What is to be Done?” by V. I. Lenin; Online Discussion 2: reply to the prompt on Blackboard by 8:00AM Thursday, August 29
  Thursday, August 29. The Origins of Russian Marxism & Lenin’s “What is to be done?”
- Reading for September 3: “October Manifesto”
  Tuesday, September 3. The Russian Revolution of 1905
- Optional Reading: “1905 Pogroms in Russia” by Mazelev
Thursday, September 5. The 1905 Revolution (cont’d): Battleship Potemkin
  • Optional Reading: “‘Potemkin’ Restored to Uncensored Glory”

Tuesday, September 10: Between the Revolutions: Russia in Transition
  • Optional Reading: “The Story of an Assassination” by Marie Sukloff

Thursday, September 12. Calm Before the Storm: Discussion of And Quiet Flows the Don

READING: And Quiet Flows the Don, Parts III & IV (“Revolution” & “Civil War”); Worksheet 2 due September 26

Tuesday, September 17. 1917: Revolutionary Turmoil in Russia

Thursday, September 19. Revolutionary Turmoil in Russia (cont’d)
  • Reading for September 24: “Declaration of the Rights of the Toiling and Exploited Peoples”; excerpts from “The Proletarian Revolution and The Renegade Kautsky” by V. I. Lenin; and “Theses on Communist Morality in the Sphere of Marital Relations” by Alexandra Kollontai; **Reaction Piece 1 due in class

Tuesday, September 24. The Bolsheviks Come to Power

Thursday, September 26. The Cossacks & the Civil War: Discussion of And Quiet Flows the Don

Tuesday, October 1. MIDTERM EXAM: TAKE HOME ESSAY DUE IN CLASS

MIDTERM EXAM Take Home Essay Question (worth 10% of the overall course grade) (12-point font, 3-5 pages double-spaced): Drawing on at least two sources from the course, respond to this question: In your opinion, was the collapse of the Russian autocracy and the Bolshevik rise to power inevitable or, without the strains of World War I, could Russia have gradually evolved into a Constitutional Monarchy or parliamentary democracy?

Part II: From the Rise of Joseph Stalin to post-Soviet Russia
BEGIN READING: Ivan’s War; **Reaction Piece 2 due October 24

Thursday, October 3. Stalin as a Historical Personality & the Struggle for Power
  • Optional Reading: “Stalin, Man of the Borderlands” by Alfred Rieber

Tuesday, October 8. The Struggle for Power (cont’d) & the Stalin Revolution
  • Reading for October 10: “Should This Pulitzer be Pulled?” by Douglas McCollam; Online Discussion 3: reply to the prompt on Blackboard by 8:00AM Thursday, October 10

Thursday, October 10. The Stalin Revolution (cont’d)

Thursday, October 17. The Stalinist Terror
  • Reading for October 22: Stalin as Time’s “Man of the Year” 1939 & 1942

Tuesday, October 22. “And Tomorrow there was War”: Discussion of the Reading

Thursday October 24. WWII in the USSR: Discussion of Ivan’s War
  • Optional Reading: excerpt from Through the Burning Steppe
BEGIN READING: Soviet Baby Boomers; **Reaction Piece 5** due November 21

Tuesday, October 29. Russia After the War

- Reading for October 31: excerpts from the 1947 speeches of Andrei Zhdanov and President Harry Truman; **Worksheet 3** due in class

Thursday, October 31. Origins of the Cold War: Discussion of the Reading

- Reading for November 5: Excerpt from Khrushchev’s 1956 Secret Speech
- Optional Reading: Khrushchev as Time’s “Man of the Year” 1957; excerpts from One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovitch by Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Not By Bread Alone by Vladimir Dudintsev

- Reading for November 7: “Fiasco in Riazan Oblast” from Khrushchev: The Years in Power by Roy & Zhores Medvedev; and “Bloody Saturday: Novocherkassk, 1962”; **Reaction Piece 3** due in class

Thursday, November 7. Crisis in the Early 1960s

Tuesday, November 12. The Brezhnev Era: Stability, Neo-Stalinism, & Stagnation

Thursday, November 14. The Gorbachev Phenomenon: Perestroika & Glasnost; **REVIEW ESSAY DUE IN CLASS**
- Optional Reading: “Gorbachev: From High Hopes to the Bitter End” by Theodore von Laue; and Gorbachev as Time’s “Man of the Year” 1987 and 1989
- **FILM**: view “Prisoner of the Mountains” on Bb for an in-class discussion on November 19; **Reaction Piece 4** due in class

Tuesday, November 19. The Collapse of the USSR & Post-Soviet Russia; Discussion of “Prisoners of the Mountains”

Thursday, November 21. Russia Today: Discussion of Soviet Baby Boomers
- Optional Reading: “Whither Human Rights in Russia?”: Statement of Ludmilla Alexeyeva, Chair, Moscow Helsinki Group

Tuesday, November 26. **FINAL EXAM: TAKE HOME ESSAY DUE IN CLASS**

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<th>FINAL EXAM Take Home Essay Question (worth 10% of the overall course grade) (12-point font, 3-5 pages double-spaced): Choose one of the following questions:</th>
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<td>1. <strong>Drawing on at least three sources from the course, respond to this question:</strong> In your opinion, what were the main factors in the collapse of the Soviet Union? (Note: begin with the early Stalin era to address this question).</td>
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<td>2. <strong>Drawing on at least three sources from the course agree with one of these two statements:</strong> a. The Soviet Union under Stalin and his successors was clearly a totalitarian society. or</td>
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<td>b. The term “totalitarian” does not adequately describe the Soviet Union under Stalin or his successors because it conceals more than it reveals.</td>
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List of Possible Topics for the Review Essay:

- Traditional Russian culture and society
- The Late Imperial Period
- Tsarist Nationalities Policy
- Sport and entertainment in late imperial Russia
- The 1905 Revolution and/or Period Between the Revolutions
- World War I in Russia
- The 1917 Revolution(s)/Revolutionary Period
- The Soviet Civil War
- The NEP period/1920s in the Soviet Union
- A Comparison of Different Biographies of Lenin/Stalin/Trotsky/Bukharin/Gorbachev, etc.
- The Collectivization of Agriculture
- The “Stalin Revolution”
- The Debate over the Ukrainian Famine (1932-33)
- Labor and Industrial Production in the Stalinist/Soviet Period
- The Debate over the Assassination of Sergei Kirov (1934)
- The Origins and Causes of the purges of the late 1930s
- Religion in Russia/the Soviet Union
- Art/Literature/Film in the Soviet period
- Propaganda/Iconography/the Stalin Cult
- Sport and entertainment in the USSR
- National Policy during the Stalinist/Soviet Period
- The Role or Position of Women in Russia/the Soviet Union
- Anti-Semitism in Russia/the USSR
- The Soviet Educational System
- The Leningrad Blockade
- World War II in the Soviet Union
- Postwar Reconstruction
- The Origins of the Cold War
- The “Thaw”/Khrushchev Period
- The Soviet Space Program
- The Gorbachev Reforms
- The Soviet-Afghan War
- Russia Since the Collapse of the USSR

Note: these are just a few suggestions of the types of topics that might be doable for the Review Essay; by no means is this list intended to be exhaustive and students are welcome to come up with their own possible topics (or variations of those listed above).