

Spring 2005
History 378

Russia Since 1900

(www.uncg.edu/~jwjones/russia)

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Office Hours: M 2:00-3:00; T 11:00-12:00; R 1:00-2:00

Course Description

More than ten years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia is still in the midst of a very difficult transition period. This introductory course to Russian and Soviet history puts the current crisis in a broader context by examining Russian and Soviet history in the 20th century. The course is divided into two parts: Part I takes us “From Traditional Russia to the Stalinist Terror,” focusing on the dramatic upheaval in Russian society from the late tsarist period through World War I, the revolutions of 1917, the civil war that followed, the New Economic Policy of the 1920s, Stalin’s “revolution from above,” and the impact of the purges and their legacy. Part II deals with the period “From World War II to post-Soviet Russia,” emphasizing the impact of World War II, postwar reconstruction, the rise of the Cold War, the reformist course of de-Stalinization pursued by Khrushchev, neo-Stalinism and the Brezhnev years, the dramatic reforms of the late 1980s carried out by Gorbachev, the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia’s difficult transition in the 1990s, and the wars in Chechnya. The course will explore several underlying themes of modern Russian and Soviet history: the role of and Russia’s relationship with the West; revolution and the role of individuals in history; the role of gender and class in Russian and Soviet society; and the role of ideology and socialism in theory and practice.

Course Goals

There are several specific goals to achieve for the course:

- gaining an understanding that the study of history is not just the memorization of dates and facts but rather the interpretation of the past;
- obtaining the skills to critically appraise varying historical arguments and formulate our own interpretations;
- learning how to critically read and distinguish between different types of historical sources—to “read between the lines” of differing points of view and perspectives;
- adding to our knowledge of recent history and seeing it—as much as possible—through the eyes of those who lived it.

Readings:

- *And Quiet Flows the Don*, Mikhail Sholokhov;
- *Journey Into the Whirlwind*, Eugenia Ginzburg;
- *The Thaw Generation: Coming of Age in the Post-Stalin Era*, Ludmilla Alexeyeva;
- Reserve and online material identified below;
- Optional Text: MacKenzie/Curran, *Russia & the USSR in the Twentieth Century*.

Films: We will see four films that are an important part of the course. The showings are set for Wednesdays at 5:15 in Jarrell Hall (Jackson Library) on the dates designated below. I will put the films on reserve at the Teaching & Learning Center (McNutt Building) for those who cannot

make the out-of-class showings (some are also available at local video stores). The titles are: “Burnt by the Sun;” “Thief;” “Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears;” and “Prisoner of the Mountains.”

Course Web Page: The course web page, which includes readings, class notes, maps, links to Internet Resources, and other features, is at www.uncg.edu/~jwjones/russia

Assignments:

Participation	25 %
Written Assignment	25 %
Midterm Exam	25 %
Final Exam	25 %

Participation: Your 25% class participation grade will consist of in-class quizzes, Worksheets, and Reaction Pieces (1-2 pages, double-spaced) to the assigned readings designated below. These are intended to be your reaction to or opinion of the readings, not a summary. The total sum of these assignments is 50 points, which will be divided by two for the final participation grade. Students who miss in-class quizzes can only make them up with a legitimate reason. Inform me beforehand if you know you have to miss an announced quiz and we will schedule a make-up. You can keep up with your participation grade on the chart at the end of the syllabus.

Written Assignment: Students have a choice of several paper topics or a book/film review for this assignment (worth 25%). All papers should be 3-5 pages, double-spaced. You can turn your paper in at any time over the course of the semester since the topics correspond to different issues dealt with in the course. However, **the final due date by which all papers must be turned in is Thursday, April 21.** See the Topics & Guidelines to the Written Assignment for the choice of topics and further information.

Exams: There is one midterm exam (worth 25%) and a final exam (worth 25%). Each of the exams covers *only* the part of the course for which they are designated, so they are *not cumulative*. Both exams will also include Take Home Essay Questions (each worth 10% of the overall course grade) to be turned in on the day of the exam.

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 (21.3/25) + 90 on Participation (22.5/25), your final grade = **86.7** or **87 B+**

CLASS SCHEDULE

Tuesday, January 11. Introduction: Themes in Russia History & Traditional Russia

- Optional Reading: “The Russian God: Vodka Celebrates its 500th Anniversary” by Victor Erofejev in *The New Yorker*

BEGIN READING: *And Quiet Flows the Don*, Parts I & II (“Peace” & “War”);
Worksheet 1 due in class Tuesday, February 1

Part I: From Traditional Russia to the Stalinist Terror

- Reading for January 13: “Prisoner of the Caucasus” by Lev Tolstoy

Thursday, January 13. Russia in the Caucasus: Discussion of the Reading

- Reading for January 18: “A Little Jewish Girl in the Russian *Pale*, 1890”

Tuesday, January 18. The Final Decades of the 19th Century & the Origins of Russian Marxism

- Reading for January 20: excerpts from “What is to be Done?” by V. I. Lenin

Thursday, January 20. Origins of Russian Marxism (cont’d) & Lenin’s “What is to be done?”

- Reading for January 25: “October Manifesto” & “1905 Pogroms in Russia” by Mazelev

Tuesday, January 25. The Russian Revolution of 1905

- Reading for January 27: “The Story of an Assassination” by Marie Sukloff; “*Krylov vs. Krylova*: ‘Sexual Incapacity’ and Divorce in Tsarist Russia” by Gregory L. Freeze; and “An Epidemic of Possession in a Moscow Rural Parish in 1909” by Christine D. Worobec; **Reaction Piece to these readings due in class

Thursday, January 27. The 1905 Revolution (cont’d) & Russian in Transition

Tuesday, February 1. Calm Before the Storm: Discussion of *Quiet Flows the Don*, Parts I & II

BEGIN READING: *And Quiet Flows the Don*, Parts III & IV (“Revolution” & “Civil War”); **Worksheet 2** due Thursday, February 17

Thursday, February 3. Russia in World War I & the February Revolution

- Optional Reading: “Nicholas in Hell” by Elizabeth Jones Hemenway
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Tuesday, February 8. The Revolution Deepens: March-November 1917

- Optional Reading: “Rasputin and the Empress Alexandra” by Bernard Pares; “Lenin Gambled Wildly and Won” by Robert V. Daniels; and “The Bolshevik Party Led the Masses” by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union
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- Reading for February 10: “Declaration of the Rights of the Toiling and Exploited Peoples”; and “Anti-Soviet *Svodki* from the Civil War: Surveillance as a Shared Feature of Russian Political Culture” by Peter Holquist

Thursday, February 10. The Bolshevik Revolution & the Civil War

- Reading for February 15: 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** due in class

Tuesday, February 15. The Russian Civil War & the Consolidation of Soviet Power

Thursday, February 17. The Cossacks & the Civil War: Discussion of *And Quiet Flows the Don*

BEGIN READING: *Journey Into the Whirlwind* by Eugenia Ginzburg; ****Reaction Piece** due Thursday, March 3

Tuesday, February 22. The New Economic Policy & Stalin’s Rise to Power

- Reading for February 24: “Stalinism as Revolution from Above” by Robert Tucker

Thursday, February 24. The Stalin Revolution & Stalin as a Historical Personality

- Optional Reading: “Stalin, Man of the Borderlands” by Alfred Rieber
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- Reading for March 1: “Should This Pulitzer be Pulled?” by Douglas McCollam

Tuesday, March 1. The Stalinist Terror of the 1930s

Wednesday, March 2: “Burnt by the Sun” at 5:15 in Jarrell Hall

- Reading for March 3: “Fear and Belief in the USSR’s ‘Great Terror’” by R. W. Thurston; also, listen to the NPR Series on the course web page “Forgetting History’s Lessons: Russians Combat Public Apathy to Soviet-era Horrors,” Parts 1-3

Thursday, March 3. Terror: Discussion of *Journey into the Whirlwind* & “Burnt by the Sun”

- Optional Reading: “What is Terror?” by Robert Conquest & Thurston’s “Reply”
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Tuesday, March 15. **MIDTERM EXAM**

Part II: From World War II to post-Soviet Russia

- Reading for March 17: Stalin as *Time*’s “Man of the Year” 1939 & 1942

Thursday, March 17. “And Tomorrow there was War”: Discussion of the Reading

- Reading for March 22: excerpt from *Through the Burning Steppe*

Tuesday, March 22. WWII in the USSR: Discussion of the Reading

Wednesday, March 23: “Thief” at 5:15 in Jarrell Hall

Thursday, March 24. WWII in the USSR (cont’d)

- Reading for March 29: excerpts from *A Revolution of Their Own: Voices of Women in Soviet History*; **Reaction Piece due in class

Tuesday, March 29. Russia After the War: Discussion of the Reading & “Thief”

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

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

- Reading for April 5: Khrushchev as *Time*’s “Man of the Year” 1957

Tuesday, April 5. Khrushchev & de-Stalinization: the “Thaw”

- Optional Reading: excerpts from *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovitch* by Alexander Solzhenitsyn and *Not By Bread Alone* by Vladimir Dudintsev
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- Reading for April 7: “Fiasco in Riazan Oblast” from *Khrushchev: The Years in Power* by Roy Medvedev & Zhores Medvedev; and “Bloody Saturday: Novocheerkassk, 1962”; **Reaction Piece due in class

Thursday, April 7. Crisis in the Early 1960s & the Rise of Brezhnev

BEGIN READING *The Thaw Generation*; **Reaction Piece due Thursday, April 21

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

Wednesday, April 13: “Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears” at 5:15 in Jarrell Hall

- Reading for April 14: “Gorbachev: From High Hopes to the Bitter End,” by Theodore von Laue; and Gorbachev as *Time*’s “Man of the Year” 1987 & 1989

Thursday, April 14. The Passing of A Generation & Gorbachev’s Rise to Power

Tuesday, April 19. The Gorbachev Phenomenon: *Perestroika & Glasnost*

- Optional Reading: “Whither Human Rights in Russia?”: Statement of Ludmilla Alexeyeva, Chair, Moscow Helsinki Group

Wednesday, April 20: “Prisoner of the Mountains” at 5:15 in Jarrell Hall

- **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS DUE by Thursday, April 21**

Thursday, April 21. The Collapse of the Soviet Union: Discussion of *The Thaw Generation*

Tuesday, April 26. Russia in the 1990s: the War in Chechnya

- Reading for April 28: “Russia is Finished” by Jeffrey Tayler and “Don’t Count Russia Out: A Reply to Jeffrey Tayler” by W. George Krasnow

Thursday, April 28. Russia & the Former USSR Today

Final Exam: Thursday, May 5, Noon-3:00

GRADE RECORD for History 378

Participation Grade (RP = Reaction Piece; Q = Quiz)

{Note: Reaction Pieces are worth 4-6 points; Quizzes are worth 5 pts.}

Add your scores on these assignments:

Q 1 ____ Q 4 ____ WS 1 ____ RP 1 ____ RP 4 ____
Q 2 ____ Q 5 ____ WS 2 ____ RP 2 ____ RP 5 ____
Q 3 ____ WS 3 ____ RP 3 ____ RP 6 ____

Qs ____ + WSs ____ + RPs ____ = Part. Grade (25 pts.)
_____/2 =

Midterm (15 pts.)
(number grade) ____ x .15 =

Midterm Take Home Essay (10 pts.)
(number grade) ____ x .10 =

Written Assignment (25 pts.)
(number grade) ____ x .25 =

= _____*

*This is your numerical grade going into the Final Exam, which covers the remaining 25% of the grade, including a Take Home Essay Question worth 10% of the overall course grade. To convert the number to a letter grade, divide it by 75, which is the total number of points possible prior to the Final Exam.