

Spring 2009: MW 2-3:15  
History 378-01: MHRA 2211

## Russian History Since 1900

([www.uncg.edu/~jwjones/russia](http://www.uncg.edu/~jwjones/russia))

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Office Hours: M 9:30-10:30; T 1-2; W 10:30-11:30; and by appointment	

### Course Description

This introductory course examines Russian and Soviet history in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in two parts: Part I, “From Traditional Russia to the Civil War,” looks at traditional Russian society and culture; developments in the late 19<sup>th</sup> 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 in the 1950s; 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.

### Learning Outcomes

- Students will learn 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 contemporary Russian/Soviet history 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 learn how to critically read and distinguish between different types of historical sources and to “read between the lines” of differing points of view
- Students will experience “hands-on” work with primary source material and gain insight on how to interpret history through such sources
- Students will develop analytical skills and 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

### Readings

- *And Quiet Flows the Don*, Mikhail Sholokhov;
- *Journey Into the Whirlwind*, Eugenia Ginzburg;
- *Russia’s Sputnik Generation: Soviet Baby Boomers Talk About Their Lives*, Don Raleigh;
- Reserve and online material identified below;
- Optional Text: MacKenzie/Curran, *Russia & the USSR in the Twentieth Century*.

**Films:** We will see three films that are an important part of the course. The showings are set for Wednesdays at 7:00 in the Music Building Room 217 on the dates designated below. I will put the films on reserve at the Teaching & Learning Center (McIver Building) for those who cannot

make the out-of-class showings (they are also available at some local video stores and on Netflix). The titles are: “Battleship Potemkin;” “Thief”; and “Prisoner of the Mountains”

### Course Activities:

Participation	30%
Written Assignment	20%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	25%

**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.

**Written Assignment:** Students have a choice of several paper topics or a book/film review for this assignment (worth 20%). All papers should be 3-5 pages, double-spaced, with 12-point font. 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 Monday, April 27.** 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%). The exams cover *only* the part of the course for which they are designated, so they are *not cumulative*. Both exams 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 (17/20) + 90 on Participation (27/30), your final grade = **86.9** or **87 B+**

### CLASS SCHEDULE

Wednesday, January 21. Introduction

**BEGIN READING:** *And Quiet Flows the Don*, Parts I & II (“Peace” & “War”); **Worksheet 1** due in class Monday, February 16

### Part I: From Traditional Russia to the Civil War

Monday, January 26. Traditional Russian Society

- Reading for January 28: “Prisoner of the Caucasus” by Lev Tolstoy; **Online Discussion:** reply to the prompt on Blackboard by midnight Tuesday

Wednesday, January 28. Russia in the Caucasus: Discussion of the Reading

Wednesday, January 28: **“Battleship Potemkin”** 7:00 Music Building Rm. 217

- Reading for February 2: excerpts from “What is to be Done?” by V. I. Lenin; **Online Discussion:** reply to the prompt on Blackboard by midnight Sunday

Monday, February 2. The Origins of Russian Marxism & Lenin’s “What is to be done?”

- Reading for February 4: “October Manifesto”

Wednesday, February 4. The Russian Revolution of 1905

- Optional Reading: “1905 Pogroms in Russia” by Mazelev

Monday, February 9. The 1905 Revolution (cont’d): Discussion of Battleship Potemkin

- Optional Reading: “‘Potemkin’ Restored to Uncensored Glory”

Wednesday, February 11: Between the Revolutions: Russia in Transition

- Optional Reading: “The Story of an Assassination” by Marie Sukloff; “*Krylov vs. Krylova*: ‘Sexual Incapacity’ and Divorce in Tsarist Russia” by Gregory Freeze; “An Epidemic of Possession in a Moscow Rural Parish in 1909” by Christine Worobec

Monday, February 16. Calm Before the Storm: Discussion of *And Quiet Flows the Don*

BEGIN READING: *And Quiet Flows the Don*, Parts III & IV (“Revolution” & “Civil War”);

Worksheet 2 due Monday, March 2

Wednesday, February 18. 1917: Revolutionary Turmoil in Russia

- Optional Reading: “Nicholas in Hell” by Elizabeth Jones Hemenway

Monday, February 23. Revolutionary Turmoil in Russia (cont’d)

- 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
- Reading for February 25: “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** due in class

Wednesday, February 25. The Bolsheviks Come to Power

Monday, March 2. The Cossacks & the Civil War: Discussion of *And Quiet Flows the Don*

Wednesday, March 4. **MIDTERM EXAM**

## **Part II: From the Rise of Joseph Stalin to post-Soviet Russia**

BEGIN READING: *Journey into the Whirlwind*; **\*\*Reaction Piece** due Wednesday, March 25

Monday, March 16. Stalin as a Historical Personality

- Optional Reading: “Stalin, Man of the Borderlands” by Alfred Rieber
- Reading for March 18: “Stalinism as Revolution from Above” by Robert Tucker; **Online Discussion**: reply to the prompt on Blackboard by midnight Tuesday

Wednesday, March 18. The Struggle for Power & the Stalin Revolution

- Reading for March 23: “Should This Pulitzer be Pulled?” by Douglas McCollam; **Online Discussion**: reply to the prompt on Blackboard by midnight Sunday

Monday, March 23. The Stalinist Terror of the 1930s

- Optional Reading: “What is Terror?” by Robert Conquest & Thurston’s “Reply”

Wednesday, March 25. The Stalinist Terror (cont'd): Discussion of *Journey into the Whirlwind*

BEGIN READING *Russia's Sputnik Generation*; **\*\*Reaction Piece** due Monday, May 4

- Reading for March 30: Stalin as *Time's* "Man of the Year" 1939 & 1942  
Monday, March 30. "And Tomorrow there was War": Discussion of the Reading

Wednesday, April 1. WWII in the USSR (cont'd)

- Optional Reading: excerpt from *Through the Burning Steppe*

Monday, April 6. Russia After the War

- Reading for April 8: excerpts from the 1947 speeches of Andrei Zhdanov and President Harry Truman; **Worksheet 3** due in class

Wednesday, April 8. Origins of the Cold War: Discussion of the Reading

- Reading for April 13: Khrushchev as *Time's* "Man of the Year" 1957  
Monday, April 13. 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
- Reading for April 15: "Fiasco in Riazan Oblast" from *Khrushchev: The Years in Power* by Roy & Zhores Medvedev; and "Bloody Saturday: Novocherkassk, 1962"; **\*\*Reaction Piece** due in class

Wednesday, April 15. Crisis in the Early 1960s & the Rise of Brezhnev

Wednesday, April 15: **"Thief"** 7:00 Music Building Rm. 217

Monday, April 20. The Brezhnev Era: Stability, Neo-Stalinism, & Stagnation

Wednesday, April 22. The Passing of A Generation & Gorbachev's Rise to Power

- Optional Reading: "Gorbachev: From High Hopes to the Bitter End," by Theodore von Laue; and Gorbachev as *Time's* "Man of the Year" 1987 & 1989

Wednesday, April 22: **"Prisoner of the Mountains"** 7:00 Music Building Rm. 217

Monday, April 27. The Gorbachev Phenomenon: *Perestroika & Glasnost*; **\*\*WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE IN CLASS**

Wednesday, April 29. The Collapse of the USSR & Post-Soviet Russia

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

Monday, May 4. Russia Today: Discussion of *Russia's Sputnik Generation*

**Final Exam: Wednesday, May 13**

**Noon-3:00**