

Spring 2015: HIS-377 (01)
TR 2-3:15 Bryan 117

The HISTORY of RUSSIA to 1900

(<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 9th century until the eve of the 20th 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 largely 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; and war and peace.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- Comprehend that history is not the memorization of dates, names, and facts, but rather the *interpretation* of the past.
- Critically appraise varying historical arguments and formulate their own interpretations.
- Analyze the key terms, issues, and events in early Russian history and thereby gain an informed historical perspective.
- Identify the main claims, thesis, logical structure, and evidence base in a scholarly interpretation and recognize competing historical interpretations among scholars.
- Interpret history through primary source material by identifying the author(s), purpose(s), literal meaning(s), point(s) of view, biases and omissions in such texts.
- Analyze historical duration, succession, and change in terms of human agency and larger systems or structures in a wide variety of places and periods.
- Critically read and distinguish between different types of historical sources and “read between the lines” of differing points of view.

Course Readings:

- Aleksandr Nikitenko, *Up From Serfdom: My Childhood and Youth in Russia, 1804-1824*. Translated by Helen Saltz Jacobsen. Foreword by Peter Kolchin (Yale University Press, 2002). ISBN: 978-0300097160.
- Ivan Turgenev, *Fathers & Sons*. Translated and with an introduction and notes by Richard Freeborn (University of Oxford Press, 2008). ISBN: 978-0199536047.
- Online material designated below

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 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. 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: 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 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 (double-spaced, 12-point font, 8-10 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 Tuesday, April 21**, but can be turned in at any point of the semester after March 24; **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) + an 88 on participation (26.4/30) + 85 on the Review Essay (17/20) + 84 on the final exam (12.6/15) + 90 on the final Take Home Essay (9/10) your final grade = **85.7/B**

CLASS SCHEDULE

Tuesday, January 13. Introduction: Images of Russia

- Reading for January 15: [Why Study History Through Primary Sources?](#) and “[An Arab Traveler to Kiev](#)”; **Reaction Piece** (1-2 pages) to the Arab Traveler reading due in class
- Thursday, January 15. Early Settlements in Russia & Daily Life of the Early Slavs

Part I: Early Russia to 1700

- Reading for January 20: Excerpts from [The Russian Primary Chronicle](#); **Worksheet 1** due in class

Tuesday, January 20. The “Norman Theory”: Discussion of the Reading

- Reading for January 22: “[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](#)

Thursday, January 22. Kievan Rus & the Christianization of Russia: Discussion of the Reading

- Reading for January 27: and “[Russians Flip out over Flapjacks as Lent Nears](#)”
Tuesday, January 27. The Decline of Kiev: Discussion of the Readings
 - Reading for January 29: [Accounts of the Mongol Invasion of Russia](#); **Reaction Piece** (1-2 pages) due in class
Thursday, January 29. The Mongol Invasion & its Aftermath: Discussion of the Readings
 - Reading for February 3: “[The Mongol Impact on Russia](#)” by George Vernadsky; Optional: “[Russia in The Mongol Empire in Comparative Perspective](#)” by Charles Halperin
Tuesday, February 3. The Impact of the Mongols & the Rise of Novgorod
 - Reading for February 5: [The Novgorod Chronicle](#); **Worksheet 2** due in class
Thursday, February 5. The Decline & Fall of Novgorod: Discussion of the Reading
 - Reading for February 10: “[The Domostroi](#)” from “The Voice of Russia” (scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on “Listen” and/or read the brief text)
Tuesday, February 10. The Rise of Muscovy & Ivan IV’s Childhood
 - Reading for February 12: “[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
Thursday, February 12. Ivan IV (the “Terrible”): Discussion of the Readings
 - Reading for February 17: [Ivan IV’s Oprichnina](#)
Tuesday, February 17. Ivan IV’s *Oprichnina* & the Roots of the “Time of Troubles”
 - Reading for February 19: “[A German Merchant’s Account of Famine in Russia](#)” “[An English Account of the Bolotnikov Uprising](#)”; and “[Who was Tsar Dmitrii?](#)” by Chester Dunning; **Worksheet 3** due in class
Thursday, February 19. The “Time of Troubles” (cont’d): Who Was False Dmitrii?
 - Reading for February 24: Excerpt from [The Law Code of 1649](#); **Reaction Piece** (1-2 pages) due in class
Tuesday, February 24. The Reestablishment of Autocracy & the Origins of Serfdom
 - Reading for February 26: Excerpts from [Avvakum’s Autobiography](#); **Worksheet 4** due in class
Thursday, February 26. Religious Crisis & the Church Schism: Discussion of the Reading
- Tuesday, March 3. **MIDTERM EXAM: TAKE HOME ESSAY** (see topic below) **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 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 17th 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 18th century.

Part II: Imperial Russia 1700-1900

Thursday, March 5. Peter the Great: Childhood & Early Reign

- Reading for March 17: "[The Artisan Tsar](#)" by V. O. Kliuchevsky; and "[Personal Observations and Recollections of Peter the Great](#)"

Tuesday, March 17. Peter the Great (cont'd): Discussion of the Readings

- Reading for March 19: [Views of Catherine the Great & Catherine the Great's Views](#)

Thursday, March 19. Russia in the mid-18th Century

- Reading for March 24: "[Bribery and Justice in the Provinces in the Reign of Catherine II](#)" by Janet Hartley; [Worksheet 5](#) due in class

Tuesday, March 24. Catherine II (the Great): Enlightened Despotism?

- Reading for March 26: "[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

Thursday, March 26. Catherine II & Alexander Radishchev: Discussion of the Readings

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

Thursday, April 9

- Reading for March 31: [Edicts from and Petitions to Emelian Pugachev](#)

Tuesday, March 31. The Pugachev Rebellion: Discussion of the Reading

- Reading for April 2: “[The Monarch and the State in 18th Century Russia](#)” (Review Essay) by Paul Bushkovitch; and “[Letter to the Editor](#)” by Aleksandr Kamenskii; Optional: “[The Decembrists](#)” & “[Apology of a Madman](#)”

Thursday, April 2. Alexander I & Napoleon

Tuesday, April 7. The Decembrist Uprising of 1825

Thursday, April 9. 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 Thursday, April 23

- Reading for April 14: [Inspector General](#) by Nikolai Gogol & “[Letter to Gogol](#)”; **Reaction Piece** (1-2 pages) due in class; Optional: “[Overcoat](#)” by Gogol

Tuesday, April 14. Russian Literature as Social Critique: Discussion of the Readings

Thursday, April 16. Alexander II’s Great Reforms

Tuesday, April 21. Alexander II’s Great Reforms (cont’d)

- **REVIEW ESSAY DUE**

Thursday, April 23. Russia on the Eve of the 20th Century: Discussion of *Fathers & Sons*

FINAL EXAM: Thursday, April 30, 3:30-6:30: TAKE HOME ESSAY (see possible topics below) **DUE IN CLASS**

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:

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?

List of Possible Topics for the Review Essay:

{NOTE: this is definitely *not* an exhaustive list and students are welcome to identify their own topics for the historiographical/review essay}

- The Early Slavs
- The Church and Religion in Russia
- Kievan Rus
- Novgorod
- The Impact of the Mongol Invasion
- Ivan IV (“the Terrible”)
- The Time of Troubles
- Witchcraft in Russian history
- Peasant Uprisings in Russian History
- Pugachev Uprising
- Peter the Great
- Catherine the Great
- The Decembrist Uprising
- Crimean War
- Serfdom in Russia and/or Emancipation
- Alexander I
- Napoleonic War/Era in Russia
- Nicholas I
- Alexander II
- The “Great Reforms”
- Anti-Semitism in early Russian History
- Recreation and Leisure
- Russian literature/art/music
- Disease and Public Health Issues
- Alcoholism in Russian History
- The Old Believers in Russia
- The Secret Police in Russian History
- The Role/Position of Women in Russian History
- The Role/Position of Peasant/Serfs in Russian History
- Russian Foreign Policy
- Russian Expansion