

Spring 2022 History 378-01 (IGS)  
2:00-3:15 MW Graham 308

## Russian History Since 1900

Instructor: Jeff Jones  
Office: 2139 MHRA  
Office Hours: M 11:00-12:00; W 9:00-9:50; and by appointment

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### Course Description

This introductory history course, which carries an International and Global Studies (IGS) marker, 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; and the upheavals 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 Nikita Khrushchev; neo-Stalinism under Leonid Brezhnev; the Soviet-Afghan War and Mikhail Gorbachev’s dramatic reforms in the 1980s; and the collapse of the USSR and post-Soviet Russia with an emphasis on the conflict in Chechnya. 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.

### Required Books:

- *And Quiet Flows the Don*, Mikhail Sholokhov (New York: Vintage Publishers, 1989; ISBN: 9780679725213).
- *Journey Into the Whirlwind*, Eugenia Ginzburg (New York: Mariner Books, 2002; ISBN: 9780156027519).
- *Ivan’s War: Life and Death in the Red Army, 1939-1945*, Catherine Merridale (New York: Picador, 2006; ISBN: 9780312426521).
- *Zinky Boys: Soviet Voices from the Afghanistan War*, Svetlana Alexievich (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1992; ISBN: 9780393336863).
- Reserve and online material identified below

**Required Film:** [“Prisoner of the Mountains”](#) (1996) directed by Sergei Bodrov

**Course Activities:**

Participation	40%	Midterm Exam	20%	(10% in-class; 10% Take Home Essay)
Review Essay	20%	Final Exam	20%	(10% in-class; 10% Take Home Essay)

**Participation:** The 40% class participation grade consists of Worksheets, Online Discussions, Internet Assignments, and Reaction Pieces (1-2 pages, double-spaced) to the readings designated below. The Reaction Pieces are *not* intended as a summary of the assigned reading but are meant to be your *reaction to* or *opinion of* the readings *illustrated and supported by direct evidence and specific examples from the readings*. What can these sources tell us about the period covered therein and/or about the perspectives/worldviews of their authors? What ideas or thoughts do they provoke? Did anything about the readings surprise you? When a RP is due for more than one reading you can either weave them together in a single response or deal with them in separate entries.

**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 and/or articles on that topic in a bibliography. **The essay is due April 13** but can be turned in at any point after March 28. **Essays should be double-spaced, 12-pt. font, 8-12 pages** in length. For more information see the Tutorial for the Review Essay and the two model essays on Canvas under “Files.”

Written assignments for the course will be graded on the basis of these criteria:

- 1) **Level of analysis/argumentation.** Present a thoughtful argument and interpretation, *not* a mere summary of facts. (Note: it does not matter which side of an issue one argues, only how well or how poorly one makes the argument).
- 2) **Use of evidence.** The source material you select to support your argument must be relevant and must clearly back up your argument; where necessary defend your argument by effectively refuting “the other side” of the issue.
- 3) **Clarity of communication.** You must present the evidence and express your argument in a clear, comprehensible manner.

<p><b>A = excellent performance on all three criteria.</b> <b>B = above average on all three, or excellent on some tempered by flaws in others.</b> <b>C = average across the board, or above average in part but with significant flaws.</b> <b>D = below average overall performance.</b></p>
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**Exams:** There is a midterm exam and a final exam (each worth 20%) for the class. The in-class exams are comprised of Slide/Visual IDs from course lectures, 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/course 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*. A Study Guide will be provided to students online for each of the exams no less than two weeks prior to the exam period.

**Grading:** Grades are compiled on a point system. For example, if you make an 80 on the Mid-term 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 (B+)**. Keep up with your grade on Canvas.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

Monday, January 10. Introduction

BEGIN READING: *And Quiet Flows the Don*, Parts I & II (“Peace” & “War”); [Worksheet 1](#) due in class February 2

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

Wednesday, January 12. Traditional Russian Society

- Reading for January 19: [“Prisoner of the Caucasus”](#) by Lev Tolstoy; **Online Post-1:** reply to the prompt on Canvas by 8:00am Wednesday, January 19

Wednesday, January 19. Russia in the Caucasus: Discussion of the Reading

- Reading for January 24: excerpts from [“What is to be Done?”](#) by V. I. Lenin; **Online Post-2:** reply to the prompt on Canvas by 8:00am Monday, January 24

Monday, January 24. The Origins of Russian Marxism & Lenin’s “What is to be done?”

- Reading for January 26: [“October Manifesto”](#)

Wednesday, January 26. The Russian Revolution of 1905: Battleship Potemkin

- Optional Reading: [“Potemkin’ Restored to Uncensored Glory”](#)

Monday, January 31. The 1905 Revolution (cont’d): “Battleship Potemkin”

- Optional Reading: [“The Story of an Assassination”](#) by Marie Sukloff

Wednesday, February 2. 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 February 21

Monday, February 7. WWI & 1917: Revolutionary Turmoil in Russia

Wednesday, February 9. Revolutionary Turmoil in Russia (cont’d)

Monday, February 14. Revolutionary Turmoil in Russia (cont’d)

- Reading for February 16: [“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; **\*\*RP-1** due in class

Wednesday, February 16. The Bolsheviks Come to Power

- Internet Assignment for February 21: [“Commissar”](#)

Monday, February 21. The Cossacks & the Civil War: Discussion of *And Quiet Flows the Don*

Wednesday, February 23. **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 a parliamentary democracy?

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

Monday, February 28. Stalin as a Historical Personality & the Struggle for Power

- Optional Reading: [“Stalin, Man of the Borderlands”](#) by Alfred Rieber

BEGIN READING: *Journey Into the Whirlwind*; **\*\*RP-2** due March 14

- Reading for March 2: [“Should This Pulitzer be Pulled?”](#) by Douglas McCollam; **Online Post-3:** reply to the prompt on Canvas by 8:00AM Wednesday, March 2  
Wednesday, March 2. The Stalin Revolution

BEGIN READING: *Ivan’s War*; **\*\*RP-3** due March 23

Monday, March 14. The Stalinist Repression(s): Discussion of *Journey Into the Whirlwind*

Wednesday, March 16. The Stalinist Repression(s) (cont’d)

Monday, March 21. The Beginning of World War II

- Optional Reading: [Stalin as Time’s “Man of the Year” 1939 & 1942](#)

Wednesday, March 23. WWII in the USSR: Discussion of *Ivan’s War*

- Optional Reading: excerpt from [Through the Burning Steppe](#)
- Internet Assignment for March 28: [“Life in a Kommunalka \(communal apartment\)”](#)  
Monday, March 28. WWII in the USSR (cont’d) & Russia After the War

- Reading for March 30: [excerpts from the 1947 speeches of Andrei Zhdanov and Harry Truman](#); **Worksheet 3** due in class

Wednesday, March 30. Origins of the Cold War: Discussion of the Reading

Monday, April 4. Khrushchev & de-Stalinization: the “Thaw”

- Optional Readings: Excerpt from Khrushchev’s 1956 [Secret Speech](#); 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 April 6: [“Fiasco in Riazan Oblast”](#) by Roy and Zhores Medvedev; and [“Bloody Saturday: Novocheerkassk, 1962”](#); **\*\*RP-4** due in class

Wednesday, April 6. Crisis in the Early 1960s

BEGIN READING: *Zinky Boys: Soviet Voices from the Afghanistan War*; [Worksheet 4](#) due April 18

- Reading for April 11: [KGB Report on Discos in Kiev](#); and [KGB Report on Cafes and Restaurants in Kiev](#); \*\***RP-5** due in class

Monday, April 11. The Brezhnev Era: Stability, Neo-Stalinism, & Stagnation

Wednesday, April 13. The Passing of a Generation: Gorbachev's Rise to Power; \*\***REVIEW ESSAY DUE IN CLASS**

- Optional Readings: [“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”](#) for an in-class discussion on April 25; \*\***RP-6** due in class

Monday, April 18. The Soviet-Afghan War: Discussion of *Zinky Boys*

- Optional Reading: [“Mothers and Prostitutes: The Representation of Women in Svetlana Alexievich's \*Zinky Boys\*”](#) by Jeff Jones

Wednesday, April 20. The Collapse of the USSR

Monday, April 25. Post-Soviet Russia: Discussion of “Prisoner of the Mountains”

Wednesday, April 27. Putin's Russia

**FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, May 4 at noon.**

**TAKE HOME ESSAY DUE. 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 at least three sources from the course, respond to this question: 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).

OR

2. Drawing on at least three sources from the course agree with one of these two statements:

a. The Soviet Union under Stalin and his successors was clearly a totalitarian society.

or

b. The term “totalitarian” does not adequately describe the Soviet Union under Stalin or his successors because it conceals more than it reveals.

### **List of Possible Topics\* for the Review Essay:**

- Traditional Russian culture and society
- Sport and entertainment in late imperial Russia and/or the Soviet period
- The 1905 Revolution and/or the “Transition Period” Between the Revolutions
- World War I in Russia/Russia's Role in World War I
- The 1917 Revolution(s)/Revolutionary Period/The Soviet Civil War
- The NEP period
- A Comparison of Different Biographies of (choose 1):  
Lenin/Stalin/Trotsky/Bukharin/Gorbachev, etc.

- The Collectivization of Agriculture/The “Stalin Revolution”
- The “Lysenko Affair” (involving the politicization of Soviet science/genetics)
- The Debate over the Ukrainian Famine (1932-33)
- The Debate over the Assassination of Sergei Kirov (December 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
- National Policy during the Stalinist/Soviet Period
- Soviet Foreign Policy in a specific area, i.e. Asia, Latin America; etc.
- Sino-Soviet Split
- The Role or Position of Women in Russia/the Soviet Union
- Anti-Semitism in Russia/the USSR
- The Soviet Educational System
- Nazi Occupation/the Holocaust in the USSR
- The Leningrad Blockade/World War II in the Soviet Union/Postwar Reconstruction
- The Origins of the Cold War
- The “Thaw”/Khrushchev Period
- The Brezhnev Period in Soviet History
- The Soviet-Afghan War
- The Gorbachev Reforms
- The Collapse of the USSR

\*These are just suggestions of topics for the Review Essay and this list is *not* intended to be exhaustive; students are welcome to come up with their own possible topics (or variations of those listed above).