

Spring 2004  
History 378

## Russia Since 1900

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

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Office Hours: M 10:00-11:00; W 11:00-12:00; F 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 20<sup>th</sup> century. The course is a continuation of the first half of the survey (377) that deals with pre-1900 Russian history, but the first half of the course is *not* required. 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 WWI, the revolutions of 1917, the civil war that followed, the communists’ consolidation of power, the New Economic Policy of the 1920s, Stalin’s dramatic shift to “revolution from above,” and finally 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 WWII, 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 history; and the role of ideology and socialism in theory and practice.

### Course Goals

By the end of the course students will understand, firstly, that history is not just the memorization of dates and facts, but rather the interpretation of the past; and, secondly, that we tend to see Russia and the world through a number of basic assumptions that are not always accurate. Students will take from the class the skills to critically appraise varying historical arguments and formulate their own interpretations.

### Readings:

- *The Russian Revolution*, Sheila Fitzpatrick;
- *Cement*, Fyodor Vasilievich Gladkov;
- *Journey Into the Whirlwind*, Eugenia Ginzburg;
- *The Thaw Generation: Coming of Age in the Post-Stalin Era*, Ludmilla Alexeyeva and Paul Goldberg;
- Reserve and online material identified below;
- Optional Text: MacKenzie/Curran, *Russia and the USSR in the Twentieth Century*.

**Films:** We will see four out-of-class films that are an important part of the course. The showings are set for Wednesday afternoons at 3:30 in Jarrell Hall in Jackson Library on the dates designated below. I will also put the films on reserve at the Teaching & Learning Center

(McNutt Building) for those who cannot make the out-of-class showings. 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](http://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 plus 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 quizzes can *only* make them up with a legitimate medical excuse or other reason. Inform me beforehand if you know you have to miss an announced in-class 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 do your paper and turn it 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 Wednesday, April 28.** See the 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**

Monday, January 12. Introduction: Themes in Russia History

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

**Part I: From Traditional Russia to the Stalinist Terror**

Wednesday, January 14. Traditional Russia

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

Friday, January 16. Russia in the Caucasus: Discussion of the Reading

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

Wednesday January 21. The Final Decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

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

Friday, January 23. The Origins of Russian Marxism & “A Peasant’s Lot”

Monday, January 26. Russian Marxism & Lenin’s “What is to be done?”

Wednesday, January 28. The Revolution of 1905: “Battleship Potemkin”

- Reading for next class: “The October Manifesto” and “1905 Pogroms in Russia” by Julia Mazelev

Friday, January 30. The 1905 Revolution (cont’d)

- Reading for next class: “The Story of an Assassination” by Marie Sukloff; e-reserve articles “*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

Monday, February 2. The 1905 Revolution (cont’d) & Russia in Transition

- Reading for next class: Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, pp. 1-39

Wednesday, February 4. Russia in Transition: World War One

Friday, February 6. The February Revolution

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

Monday, February 9. 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

Wednesday, February 11. The Bolshevik Revolution

- Reading for next class: “Declaration of the Rights of the Toiling and Exploited Peoples” and Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, pp. 40-67

Friday, February 13. The Bolshevik Revolution (cont’d): Discussion of the Reading

BEGIN READING *Cement*; **\*\*Reaction Piece** due Monday, February 23

Monday, February 16. The Consolidation of Soviet Power

- Reading for next class: Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, pp. 68-92, and “Anti-Soviet *Svodki* from the Civil War: Surveillance as a Shared Feature of Russian Political Culture,” by Peter Holquist in *Russian Review*, July 1997, pp. 445-50

Wednesday, February 18. The Russian Civil War

- Reading for next class: 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

Friday, February 20. The Russian Civil War (cont’d): Discussion of the Readings

Monday, February 23. The Russian Civil War (cont’d): Discussion of *Cement*

- Reading for next class: Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, pp. 93-119;
- Optional Reading: “Stalinism as Revolution from Above” by Robert Tucker

Wednesday, February 25. The New Economic Policy & the Stalin Revolution

- Reading for next class: Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, pp. 120-47

BEGIN READING *Journey Into the Whirlwind* by Eugenia Ginzburg; **\*\*Reaction Piece** due Monday, March 15

Friday, February 27. Revolution from Above: Discussion of the Reading

- Optional Reading: “Stalin, Man of the Borderlands” by Alfred Rieber

Monday, March 1. Stalin as a Historical Personality

- Reading for next class: “Should This Pulitzer be Pulled?” by Douglas McCollam

Wednesday, March 3. “Life is gayer, everyone is happier now”: Russia in the 1930s

WEDNESDAY, March 3. “Burnt by the Sun,” Jarrell Hall at 3:30

Friday, March 5. The Stalinist Terror of the 1930s

- Reading for Monday, March 15: “Fear and Belief in the USSR’s ‘Great Terror’” by R. W. Thurston; Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, pp. 148-72; 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
- Optional Reading: “What is Terror?” by Robert Conquest & Thurston’s “Reply”

March 6-14: SPRING BREAK

Monday, March 15. Stalinist Terror (cont’d): Discussion of the Readings & Film

Wednesday, March 17. Stalinist Terror (cont’d): Varying Perspectives

**Friday, March 19. MIDTERM EXAM**

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

Monday, March 22. “And Tomorrow there was War”

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

Wednesday, March 24. WWII in the USSR: Discussion of the Reading

- Reading for Monday: e-reserve excerpts from *Through the Burning Steppe*

WEDNESDAY, March 24. “Thief,” Jarrell Hall at 3:30

Friday, March 26. WWII in the USSR (cont’d)

Monday, March 29. WWII in the USSR (cont’d): Discussion of the Reading

- Reading for next class: e-reserve excerpts from *A Revolution of Their Own: Voices of Women in Soviet History*; **\*\*Reaction Piece** due in class

Wednesday, March 31. Russia After the War: Discussion of the Reading & Film

- Reading for next class: online excerpt from 1947 speech by Andrei Zhdanov

Friday, April 2. Origins of the Cold War: Discussion of the Reading

- Optional Reading: excerpts from *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Alexander Solzhenitsyn and *Not By Bread Alone* by Vladimir Dudintsev

Monday, April 5. Khrushchev & De-Stalinization

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

Wednesday, April 7. The “Thaw”: Discussion of Reading

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

BEGIN READING *The Thaw Generation*; **\*\*Reaction Piece** due Monday, April 26

Monday, April 12. Crisis in the Early 1960s: Discussion of the Reading

Wednesday, April 14. The Brezhnev Era: Stability & Neo-Stalinism

WEDNESDAY, April 14. “Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears,” Jarrell Hall at 3:30

Friday, April 16. Stagnation, War, & a Crisis of Ideology

Monday, April 19. The Passing of A Generation: Discussion of the Reading & Film

- Reading for Friday: e-reserve chapter “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 21. Gorbachev’s Rise to Power

Friday, April 23. The Gorbachev Phenomenon: *Perestroika & Glasnost*

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

Monday, April 26. Growing up in the Post-Stalin Era: Discussion of *Thaw Generation*

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS DUE by Wednesday, April 28**

Wednesday, April 28. The Collapse of the Soviet Union

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

WEDNESDAY, April 28. “Prisoner of the Mountains,” Jarrell Hall at 3:30

Friday, April 30. The Wars in Chechnya: Discussion of the Film

Monday, May 3. Russia in the 1990s: Discussion of the Reading

Tuesday, May 4. Russia Today

**Final Exam: Friday, May 7, 8:00-11:00**

**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 _____ | RP 1 _____ |  |
| Q 2 _____ | RP 2 _____ | RP 5 _____                             |
| Q 3 _____ | RP 3 _____ | RP 6 _____                             |
| Q 4 _____ | RP 4 _____ | RP 7 _____ Part. Grade (25 pts.)       |
| _____ +   | _____ +    | _____ = _____/2 = <input type="text"/> |
|           |            | +                                      |

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.