

Spring 2003  
History 378

## Russia Since 1900

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

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Office Hours: M 11:00-11:50; W 2:00-3:00; 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 three parts: Part I takes us “From Traditional Russia to Revolution,” focusing on the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and the social, national, and political pressures leading to Russia’s revolutionary explosion in 1917. Part II deals with the “Consolidation of Soviet Power & Stalinism,” emphasizing the Civil War, the Stalin Revolution of the late 1920s and early 1930s, and the Stalinist terror; Part III takes us “From WWII to Post-Soviet Russia,” dealing with WWII and 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 system, Russia’s difficult transition in the 1990s, and the wars in Chechnya.

The course will explore several underlying themes of modern Russian 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; the role of ideology and socialism in theory and practice; imperialism and national identity; and the international economy. By the end of the course each student 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:

- ?? *Cement*, Fyodor Gladkova
- ?? *Behind the Urals: An American Worker in Russia’s City of Steel*, John Scott
- ?? *A Revolution of Their Own: Voices of Women in Soviet History*, Barbara Alpern Engel and Anastasia Posadskaya-Vanderbeck
- ?? *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:** I will show six out-of-class films that are an important part of the course. These showings are set for Thursday evenings at 6:00 in either Stone Building or 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: “Commissar”; “Burnt by the Sun;” “Thief”; “The Cranes are Flying;” “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	20 %
2 Midterm Exams	15 % each
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 with 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 20%). 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 30.** See the Guidelines to the Written Assignment for the choice of topics and further information.

**Exams:** There are two midterms (worth 15% each) and a final (worth 25%). Each of the three exams covers *only* the part of the course for which they are designated, so they are not cumulative. However, the final exam will also include a comprehensive essay question (worth 10% of the overall grade) that draws on broader issues/themes dealt with over the entire semester.

**Grading:** Grades will be compiled on a point system. For example, if you make an 80 on the 1<sup>st</sup> Midterm Exam (12/15) + 88 on 2<sup>nd</sup> Midterm Exam (13.2/15) + 93 on the Final Exam (14/15) + 80 on the cumulative Take Home Essay (8/10) + 85 on your Written Assignment (17/20) + 90 on Participation (27/30), your final grade = **91** or A-

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

Monday, January 13. Introduction: Themes in Russia History

?? Reading for Friday: e-reserve short story “Prisoner of the Caucasus” by Lev Tolstoy

## **Part I: From Traditional Russia to Revolution**

Wednesday, January 15. Traditional Russia

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

Friday, January 17. Russia in the Caucasus: Discussion of Reading

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

Wednesday January 22. 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 24. “A Peasant’s Lot” & the Rise of Marxism in Russia

Monday, January 27. “What is to be done?” & the 1905 Revolution

Wednesday, January 29. The Revolution of 1905: “Battleship Potemkin”

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

Friday, January 31. The 1905 Revolution (cont’d) & Russia in Transition

?? Reading for next class: “The Story of an Assassination” by Marie Sukloff

Monday, February 3. World War One & the Collapse of Autocracy

Wednesday, February 5. The February Revolution

?? Reading for next Wednesday: “Nicholas in Hell” by Elizabeth Jones Hemenway and “Declaration of the Rights of the Toiling and Exploited Peoples”

Friday, February 7. 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

Monday, February 10. The Bolshevik Revolution (October 1917)

Wednesday, February 12. The Bolshevik Revolution (cont’d): Discussion of Reading

## **Friday, February 14. FIRST MIDTERM EXAM**

## **Part II: Consolidation of Soviet Power & Stalinism**

BEGIN READING *Cement*; \*\*Reaction Piece due Monday, February 24

Monday, February 17. The Consolidation of Soviet Power

?? Reading for Friday: 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 19. The Russian Civil War

THURSDAY, February 20. “Commissar,” Stone Building (Rm. 142) at 6:00

Friday, February 21. The Russian Civil War (cont’d): Discussion of Readings

Monday, February 24. The Russian Civil War (cont’d): Discussion of *Cement* & Film  
?? Reading for Friday: “Stalinism as Revolution from Above” by Robert Tucker

BEGIN READING *Behind the Urals*; \*\*Reaction Piece due Monday, March 17  
Wednesday, February 26. The New Economic Policy & the Stalin Revolution

Friday, February 28. Revolution from Above: Discussion of Reading  
?? Optional Reading: “Stalin, Man of the Borderlands” by Alfred Rieber

Monday, March 3. Stalin as a Historical Personality  
?? Reading for Friday: e-reserve excerpts from *Gulag Archipelago* by A. Solzhenitsyn  
and “How the mice buried the cat” by Sheila Fitzpatrick

Wednesday, March 5. “Life is gayer, everyone is happier now”: Russia in the 1930s

THURSDAY, March 6. “Burnt by the Sun,” Jarrell Hall at 6:00

Friday, March 7. The Stalinist Terror of the 1930s: Varying Perspectives  
?? Reading for Monday, March 17: “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  
?? Optional Reading: “What is Terror?” by Robert Conquest & Thurston’s “Reply”

March 8-16: SPRING BREAK

Monday, March 17. Stalinist Terror (cont’d): Discussion of Readings and Film  
?? Reading for Friday: Stalin as *Time*’s “Man of the Year” 1939 & 1942

Wednesday, March 19. Stalinist Terror (cont’d): Varying Perspectives

Friday, March 21. “And Tomorrow there was War”: Discussion of Reading

**Monday, March 24. SECOND MIDTERM EXAM**

**Part III: From WWII to Post-Soviet Russia**

BEGIN READING *A Revolution of Their Own*; \*\*Reaction Piece due Mon., April 7  
Wednesday, March 26. WWII in the USSR

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

THURSDAY, March 27. “Thief,” Jarrell Hall at 6:00

Friday, March 28. WWII in the USSR (cont’d)

Monday, March 31. WWII in the USSR (cont’d): Discussion of Reading

?? Reading for next class: e-reserve excerpts from *Solik: Life in the Soviet Union, 1939-1946* by K. S. Karol; \*\*Reaction Piece due in class

Wednesday, April 2. Russia After the War: Discussion of Reading & Film

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

THURSDAY, April 3. “The Cranes are Flying,” Jarrell Hall at 6:00

Friday, April 4. Origins of the Cold War: Discussion of the Reading

?? Optional Reading: excerpts from *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovitch* by A. Solzhenitsyn and *Not By Bread Alone* by Vladimir Dudintsev

Monday, April 7. Khrushchev and De-Stalinization

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

Wednesday, April 9. The “Thaw”: Discussion of Reading & Film

?? 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

Friday, April 11. Crisis in the Early 1960s: Discussion of Reading

BEGIN READING *The Thaw Generation*; \*\*Reaction Piece due Monday, April 28

Monday, April 14. The Brezhnev Era: Stability and Neo-Stalinism

Wednesday, April 16. Stagnation, War, and a Crisis of Ideology

Monday, April 21. The Passing of A Generation: Discussion of Reading

?? Reading for Friday: e-reserve chapter “Gorbachev: From High Hopes to the Bitter End,” by T. von Laue and Gorbachev as *Time*’s “Man of the Year” 1987 & 1989

Wednesday, April 23. Gorbachev’s Rise to Power

THURSDAY, April 24. “Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears,” Jarrell Hall at 6:00

Friday, April 25. The Gorbachev Phenomenon: *Perestroika* and *Glasnost*

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

Monday, April 28. Growing up in the Post-Stalin Era: Discussion of *Thaw Generation*

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS DUE by Wednesday, April 30**

Wednesday, April 30. 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

THURSDAY, May 1. “Prisoner of the Mountains,” Jarrell Hall at 6:00

Friday, May 2. The Wars in Chechnya

Monday, May 5. Russia in the 1990s: Discussion of Reading

Tuesday, May 6. Russia Today

**Final Exam: Wednesday, May 14, 12 Noon-3:00**

**GRADE RECORD for History 378**

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

{Note: Reaction Pieces and Quizzes are worth 5 pts.}

Add your scores on these assignments:

Q 1 _____	RP 1 _____	RP 5 _____	
Q 2 _____	RP 2 _____	RP 6 _____	
Q 3 _____	RP 3 _____	RP 7 _____	Part. Grade (25 pts.)
_____ +	_____ +	_____ = _____/2 =	<input type="text"/>
			+
		<u>1st Midterm (15 pts.)</u>	
		(number grade) _____ x .15 =	<input type="text"/>
			+
		<u>2nd Midterm (15 pts.)</u>	
		(number grade) _____ x .15 =	<input type="text"/>
		<u>Written Assignment (20 pts.)</u>	
		(number grade) _____ x .20 =	<input type="text"/>
			= _____*

\*This is your numerical grade for the course 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.