

History 5446

Soviet Russia Fall 2007 Tuesdays, 3:30-6:00 pm

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The course will introduce students to the history of the Soviet Union from 1917 to 1991. We will cover selected topics in political, social, and cultural history, with a particular focus on the Stalinist period from 1929 to 1953. We will examine the evolution of the Soviet system: the visionary expectations of its founders, the bureaucratization and brutalization of the Stalinist period, the movement for reform under Khrushchev followed by the reactionary conservatism of the Brezhnev era, the return to reform and "New Thinking" under Gorbachev, and finally, the collapse of the Soviet Union in the wake of serious economic decline, rising nationalism, and the discrediting of Soviet ideology. We will explore the relationship between state and society and evaluate Soviet communism as a mobilizational political culture. We will consider the multi-ethnic structure of the Soviet Union and how this shaped its history and eventually contributed to its denouement. Although we will be focusing on Soviet leaders and outstanding figures who have shaped Soviet history, we will also examine the lives of ordinary Soviet citizens, their experiences, hopes, and tragedies. Our goal is to understand the multiple factors that shaped the Soviet system, why it enjoyed popular support, why it collapsed, and why its appeal may not be entirely extinguished.

The format for the course is a seminar, organized around weekly discussions of assigned readings, supplemented by informational and background lectures. In order for the class to succeed, everyone must be ready to discuss and ask questions. **This means that you must do the readings each week and be prepared to take part in class.** The textbook will provide chronology, basic facts and historical background, while the supplemental readings will give you a deeper understanding of and exposure to Soviet politics and society.

Required Texts:

All of the following are available for purchase in the campus bookstore.

David G. Rowley, *Exploring Russia's Past: Narrative, Sources, Images*. Volume II: Since 1856. Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006. Abbreviated in the syllabus as TEXT.

Jeffrey Brooks and Georgiy Chernyavskiy, *Lenin and the Making of the Soviet State: A Brief History with Documents*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007.

Lydia Chukovskaia, translated by Aline Werth. *Sofia Petrovna*. Northwestern University Press, 1988.

Roy A. Medvedev and Zhores A. Medvedev, translated by Andrew R. Durkin. *Khrushchev: The Years in Power*. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1978.

Natalya Baranskaya, *A Week Like Any Other*. The Seal Press, 1979.

David Marples, *The Collapse of the Soviet Union, 1985-1991*. Pearson Longman, 2004.

M.A. students will have additional readings . See syllabus for listed readings. You are responsible for both the undergraduate and M.A. readings. The assignments in the Rowley text are intended to provide historical background for the more specialized M.A. readings, many of which deal with critical historiographical issues.

Grading:

Final Exam: 35%

Historiographical Essay: 30%

Summary-Analyses of Supplemental and M.A. Readings: 25%

Class Discussion/Quizzes/Class Participation: 10%

I. Grading--Examinations

There will be one take-home final examinations. It may consist of any or all of the following: identification questions (write a detailed paragraph explaining the significance of specific terms), map questions, short-answer questions, and essays. The final will not be comprehensive, but the essays may ask you to reflect on the entire course and/or the legacy of Soviet history. The exam should be typed with one-inch margins, font-size of either 10 or 12 points.

II. Grading--Written Assignments:

You will have both formal and informal writing assignments.

1). You will choose a date to lead class discussion on the given topic. You will be expected to complete the assigned readings for the day, give a brief summary of the main themes and issues covered in the readings, and explain the relevance of the readings and the topic for understanding Soviet history. Your goal is to engage the class in a discussion of the issue, and of the assigned readings. Topics will be selected on the first day.

2). You are to write a three-page, typed summary-analysis for three of the assigned supplemental books: *Lenin and the Making of the Soviet State*, *Khrushchev: The Years in Power*, and *The Collapse of the Soviet Union*, and two-page summary/analyses for at least five of the assigned M.A. article and documentary readings.

For the three supplemental books, you should evaluate each in terms of its argument, research base, and contribution to the field of Soviet studies. Provide a brief overview of the contents (an analytical summary, not a retelling of the story), explain the historical context, the main purpose or theme, and then analyze the significance of the work for understanding Soviet history. What is the major thesis of the book? Does the author or authors make a convincing argument? What methodological tools does the author or authors employ? What sources do they use? What do you learn from the work? Do you agree with the conclusions of the author? Why or why not? In the case of the first book, *Lenin and the Making of the Soviet State*, you should also discuss the selection of documents and the editing of these documents. Do the documents selected substantiate the authors' points about Lenin? How useful are the documents for understanding the complexities of Lenin's character and actions as a revolutionary leader?

After evaluating the work as an historical source, you should record your own individual reactions to the reading. What have you gained from reading this book? Did you find the book accessible to you? What do you find to be most significant or most striking about the reading? Would you recommend that this book continue to be assigned in a course examining Soviet history?

For the assigned MA articles, you must turn in at least five two-page summary-analysis papers during the semester. You should identify/summarize the author's or authors' argument and assess its quality and depth. What historiographical issue does the reading address? Is the

author arguing against a specific school of thought or a specific historian's work? If there are two or more articles assigned, do the authors agree or disagree? Draw connections between the articles if possible. Are they providing insight into different dimensions of a single issue? Discuss the relative merits of the argument(s) and assess the author's sources and methodological approach. Do you agree or disagree with the conclusions, and why? What contribution does the article make to the understanding of Soviet history? If there are documents included, then discuss each as an historical source. Identify the document and explain its historical significance. What does it tell historians, and how can it be used to understand or reconstruct the Soviet past? How reliable is the document?

Be prepared to share information and conclusions from your M.A. readings with the rest of the class.

The summaries are due on the dates assigned for discussion of the books and articles.

3. Each student will write an historiographical review essay (minimum fifteen typed pages with one-inch margins) of at least four books (excluding those required for the course) on the same specific issue, event, or person in Soviet history. You will choose four books to read, with my approval, each of which must deal with the same topic. The point of the paper is to assess the historiography of a specific topic and discuss the place of these works within it. You will contrast and critique the content, style, methodology, etc. of the books. As background, you will need to discuss the historical issue treated by the books in addition to evaluating their specific presentation of that issue. **You must select the four books and have them approved by me no later than September 25. This is not a research paper. You are to evaluate critically the way in which these books present and analyze your given topic. Do not provide a discussion of the topic itself beyond your introduction.**

Questions to consider include: How do the approaches or methodologies of the authors differ; can you detect distinct biases in each; how are primary sources used? What archival work has been done by the authors? How effective is the argumentation? Which book is most useful for understanding Soviet history and the specific issue in question? What can be concluded definitively about the issue or problem being treated? Is there any consensus among the authors; if different, are the conclusions in opposition to each other?

The historiographical essay is due by 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 27, 2007

All written assignments must be typewritten and doublespaced, exclusive of endnotes and bibliography (works cited) page. Margins must be no larger than one inch. The standard guide of the history department is Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 5th edition, or the *Chicago Manual of Style*, available in the reference section of the book store and of the library; in addition, the library has three copies on permanent reserve--ask at the circulation desk.

You will be graded for both content and style. Each paper should have a concrete thesis; an introduction that states your purpose, what questions you will address and what methodology you will use; a body that develops your argument/thesis in an orderly sequence; and a conclusion that is not just a restating of the topic, but that sums up your argument and explains what you have discovered. Factual material should be clearly presented and relative to the theme of the paper. You need to put forward your own ideas based on reading and research. Do not pour out everything you have gathered; select the facts which best explain, illustrate, or substantiate your points. Credit direct quotations of ideas or data of others in endnotes at the

back of the paper (or in footnotes at the bottom of the page). Errors in logic or fact, errors in mechanics (grammar, spelling, and punctuation) and general messiness will lower your grade. Avoid slang or sloppy constructions, and do not use contractions in formal writing. Learning how to express your thoughts in a clear and logical manner is an invaluable skill.

Start Early! Be sure to keep a copy for your files.

PLEASE NOTE: Computer glitches do not excuse you from the established deadlines.

I will ask you to submit periodic progress reports. If you have any problems or questions regarding the writing of essays and reports, please see me or make use of the excellent University Writing Center. I will be happy to examine rough drafts (submitted at least two weeks prior to due date) and offer comments.

III. Grading--Class Participation

You should take part in class discussions, ask questions, and be present for in-class writing assignments. The more you participate, the more you will learn, and the more likely it will go in your favor if you are in a borderline grading situation. Included in class participation are unannounced quizzes and writing assignments as well as the report on class discussion topics and the assigned readings. Graduate students will be expected to lead discussions and share points drawn from their extra readings with the class.

Questions are provided in the syllabus (See "Questions for Discussion") which may form the basis for either in-class writing assignments or out-of-class assignments. These are based primarily on the textbook and supplemental readings, and are meant for the entire class. They do not specifically relate to the M.A. readings. But you may be asked to write responses to these questions, so be sure to think about them as you do the assigned readings. The questions are intended to prepare you for class discussions and activities.

***Please Note: Graduate Students will meet outside of class with the instructor to discuss readings, either on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. These meetings are mandatory. The meeting times will be worked out during the first week of class depending on student schedules.

Assignments:

Students are expected to have completed the assigned readings in advance of each class session and to be able to discuss them. Some of the readings are lengthy, so plan ahead and budget your time accordingly. Try not to fall behind! **All written assignments are due on the specified date; unexcused late work will lower the grade by one grade level for each late day.**

Cheating Policy and Plagiarism:

Anyone caught cheating or helping someone to cheat will be asked to leave the class and will receive a course grade of "F." Plagiarism, or claiming someone else's work as your own, will result in failure. This rule is in effect for all assignments, examinations, quizzes, and extra credit work.

Attendance:

Make every effort to be in class and on time. You are responsible for all materials and announcements presented in class. If you must be absent, be sure to get the notes from a classmate. More than one unexcused absence will affect your final grade. More than two may lead to a W/F. Absences due to illness or school business will be excused if you bring me a written note. Being late to class or leaving class early will also lower your grade. Two tardies will count as one unexcused absence, and the same for leaving early. If you are tardy, it is your responsibility to inform me of your presence at the end of class. Regular attendance and

punctuality will enhance your learning experience and can work in your favor in borderline grading situations (or against you, if not maintained). Missed quizzes cannot be made up, so repeated absences can bring down your class participation grade.

Office Hours:

My office is Room 3222 in the TLC Building and the hours are Tuesday and Thursday, 11:00 am–2:00 pm or by appointment. My office phone number is 678-839-6048; my email address is emclarn@westga.edu. Please contact me if you have questions or concerns with any part of the course.

Tentative Course Outline and Readings Schedule

August 21: Introduction/The Legacy of Imperial Russia

Readings: TEXT, Introduction, pp. 1-13; 22-28

***M.A. Reading: Lynne Viola, "The Cold War and American Soviet Historiography and the End of the Soviet Union," *Russian Review* 61 (January 2002): 25-34 (handout)

Questions for Discussion: Why is it important to study the history of Soviet Russia? What is the relationship between Russia and the Soviet Union? What were the major factors shaping Soviet history?

August 28: The Great Reforms to 1917

Readings:

TEXT, Chapter 12, pp. 31-39, 42

Ch 13, pp. 57-59; 62-65; 73-75

Ch 14, pp. 79-92; 102-105

Questions for Discussion: What were the major events, forces, and factors shaping Russian history from 1861 to 1917? Was revolution in 1917 inevitable?

September 4: Revolutions of 1917

Readings: TEXT, Ch. 15, pp. 106-130

Lenin and the Making of the Soviet State, pp. 1-17 and 37-60

Questions for Discussion: Consider the nature of the October Revolution. How do we define revolution? Was this a revolution in the true sense of the word, or was it a coup from above? What role did Lenin play in the revolution? Can you draw any comparisons between the October Revolution and other revolutions you have studied, such as the American or French Revolutions?

September 11: The Civil War and the Formation of the Soviet Union

Readings: TEXT, Ch. 15, pp. 115-119, 129

Lenin and the Making of the Soviet State, pp. 17-33; 61-102

***M.A. Reading: Sheila Fitzpatrick, "The Legacy of the Civil War," in Koenker, Rosenberg and Suny, eds., *Party, State, and Society in the Russian Civil War*, pp. 385-398 (handout)

Questions for Discussion: Who is the real Lenin? What do the documents show us about Lenin's conception of Marxism? Of revolution? Of the proletarian state? What influence did the Russian Civil War have on Lenin? On Bolshevism? On the new Soviet state?

September 18: NEP Russia, "The Experimental Decade"?

Readings: TEXT, Ch 16, 131-154/ *Lenin and the Making of the Soviet State*, pp. 103-161

***SUMMARY ANALYSIS PAPER DUE ON *Lenin and the Making of the Soviet State*

***M.A. Reading: Excerpts from "Politics, Society, and Culture in the 1920s," in Ronald Suny, *The Structure of Soviet History*, pp. 89-124 (handout)

Terry Martin, "An Affirmative-Action Empire: The Emergence of Soviet Nationalities Policy, 1919-1923," 93-102

"Resolutions of the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party," 112-117

"The Question of Nationalities or Autonomisation (Continued)," 122-124

Questions for Discussion: What impact did Lenin's death have on the evolution of the Soviet system? What do you think Soviet Russia would have been like had Lenin lived? What were Lenin's intentions for the New Economic Policy? Was it a temporary break from the intensity of War Communism, or an alternative path to building socialism in Russia? What do the documents suggest? How did the NEP influence political, economic, and cultural trends in the 1920s? How did workers, peasants, and the intelligentsia fare in the first decade of Soviet power? What did the revolution mean for women? How were their lives changed?

LAST DAY FOR CHOOSING TOPIC FOR HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY IS SEPT 25

September 25: The Stalin Revolution

Readings: TEXT, Ch 17, 155-179

***M.A. Reading: "The Magic Tablecloth," in Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, pp. 89-114 (handout)

David L. Hoffman, "Was There a 'Great Retreat' From Soviet Socialism? Stalinist Culture Reconsidered," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, 4 (Fall 2004): 651-74

The Hoffman article can be accessed through Project Muse (go to Ingram Library home page and under Find Information, click on Articles (or Journal Locator), then Databases, then write in Project Muse in the search box. Click on Project Muse and then do a search either 1) for the journal, *Kritika*. Click on the specific volume and issue, then click on the title link or 2) for the specific article. Type in the name of the article and then click search. Please contact me if you have any problems accessing this article.

Questions for Discussion: What was the Stalin "Revolution"? In what ways were his policies "revolutionary"? What is meant by the term "Stalinism"? Was this the natural outcome of the October Revolution and Marxism-Leninism, or was it an aberration? Did Stalinist policies become more conservative after 1934?

October 2: Stalinist Society/The Terror—One Woman's Experience

Readings: *Sofia Petrovna*, all

***M.A. Reading: "The Terror: Stalinism and Repression," in Evan Mawdsley, *The Stalin Years: The Soviet Union, 1929-1953*, pp. 97-112 and selected documents (handout)

"A Time of Troubles," in Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, pp. 190-217 (handout)

Questions for Discussion: How does the novel show you the process through which "terror" and arrests became a mass phenomenon? How does the novel help you to understand what life

was like for many Soviet citizens during the 1930s? What is the effect of fear and suspicion both on Sofia and on those around her? How did ordinary people contribute to the climate of suspicion and fear, as well as to the arrests?

October 9: Film (TBA)

***Brief progress report due October 16. Turn in your topic and annotated working bibliography.

October 16: The Great War of the Fatherland/Postwar Stalinism

Readings: TEXT, Ch 18, 180-205

***MA Reading: David M. Glantz, "The Red Army at War, 1941-1945: Sources and Interpretations," *The Journal of Military History*, Vol. 62, No. 3 (July 1998), 595-617

Peter Gatrell and Mark Harrison, "The Russian and Soviet Economies in Two World War: A Comparative View," *The Economic History Review*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (August 1993), 425-452

These articles can be accessed through J-Stor (go to Ingram Library home page and under Find Information, click on Articles, then Databases, then write in Jstor in the search box. Click on Jstor and then do a search for the article. Please contact me if you have any problems accessing this article.

Questions for Discussion: What accounts for the catastrophic losses suffered by the Soviet Union in World War II? What impact did the war have on the Soviet state and society? Why does the war become such a seminal experience for the Soviet people, more so than any previous event? What were Stalin's foreign policy goals in the immediate post-war period? How did life in the Soviet Union change after World War II?

October 23: Khrushchev, the Cold War, and De-Stalinization

Readings: TEXT, Ch 19, 207-232

***MA Reading: Melvin P. Leffler, "The Cold War: What Do 'We Now Know'?", *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 104, No. 2 (April 1999), pp. 501-524

This article can be accessed through J-Stor (go to Ingram Library home page and under Find Information, click on Articles, then Databases, then write in Jstor in the search box. Click on Jstor and then do a search for the article. Please contact me if you have any problems accessing this article.

Questions for Discussion: Who is to blame for the Cold War, the United States or the Soviet Union? Was the Cold War inevitable? Did the Cold War change with the death of Stalin? What were Khrushchev's foreign policy goals in the 1950s? What was the meaning of "peaceful coexistence"? What were his reform goals?

October 30: Khrushchev and De-Stalinization

Readings: *Khrushchev: The Years in Power*, all

***SUMMARY ANALYSIS PAPER DUE ON *KHRUSHCHEV: THE YEARS IN POWER*

Questions for Discussion: Why did Khrushchev institute de-Stalinization and what were its effects? What critical contradictions and ambiguities did Khrushchev display? How do the Medvedev brothers evaluate Khrushchev's role as a reformer? Was he successful? Why or why not?

November 6: The Brezhnev Era: Stagnation, Detente, and the Social Compact

Readings: TEXT, Ch 20, 233-256

***M.A. Reading: "Stagnation," in Suny, *The Structure of Soviet History*, pp. 359-399 (handout)

Questions for Discussion: What are the “paradoxes of Brezhnev’s long reign”? Is it fair to refer to this period as one of “stagnation”? Why is it that many Russians even today look back nostalgically upon the Brezhnev period? In what ways had Soviet society modernized? What is the nature of the “social compact” forged by the regime with society, and how effective was it? What problems were emerging by the end of the Brezhnev era?

November 13: Post-Stalinist Society and Trends
Readings: *A Week Like Any Other*, pp. 1-62

Questions for Discussion: As you read this work, think about the role and status of women in Soviet society. How does this story illuminate the concept of the “double burden” in Soviet society? Compare Olga’s story to that of Sofia Petrovna. What changes can you see in Soviet society from the time period of *Sofia Petrovna* to that of *A Week Like Any Other*?

November 20: Afghanistan, Perestroika, and Collapse

Readings: TEXT, Ch. 21, 257-283

M.A. Reading: Marples, *The Collapse of the Soviet Union*, all
SUMMARY ANALYSIS PAPER ON *The Collapse of the Soviet Union* DUE

Questions for Discussion: What is the significance of Mikhail Gorbachev for Soviet history? For World History? Was he a revolutionary or a reformer? What were his goals? Did these goals change over time? How will the textbooks in 2104 present Gorbachev? How old were you when the Soviet Union came to an end in 1991? Were you aware of what was going on at the time—did you discuss it in school, at work, or at home? How did you understand this process; did people try to explain it? Did you know about the August Coup in 1991?

HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY IS DUE BY 3:30 PM ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27

November 27: The New Russia?

Readings: TEXT, Ch 22, 284-311

Questions for Discussion: Was the collapse of the Soviet Union inevitable? If you had to explain the collapse of the Soviet state now to a group of students, what factors would you identify as most critical? What has been the most significant consequence of this collapse? Do you consider it a positive or negative historical process?

TAKE HOME FINAL DUE TUESDAY DECEMBER 11 BY 3:30 P.M.

