HIST 108: Russian History II
From The Great Reforms to The Putin Presidency

Dr. Christopher Stolarski
Monday, Wednesday, Friday 1:30-2:20 PM
Location: King Building 321

Course Description

In the Age of Extremes, the historian Eric Hobsbawn writes that “the world that went to pieces at the end of the 1980s was the world shaped by the impact of the Russian Revolution of 1917. We have all been marked by it.” The birth of the Soviet Union punctuated the opening of the so-called “short twentieth century” (1914-1991), and its demise signaled that ‘short’ century’s end. During its lifetime, much of the world viewed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) as the defining political experiment, the great modern challenge to capitalism and liberal democracy. In short, the primary focus of this course is the Soviet century.

But to focus solely on the history of the Soviet Union is to ignore the great impact of Russia before the Revolution and its continuing influence on world affairs to this day. The twentieth century, it could be argued, is not simply a short ‘Soviet century’ but rather a long Russian one, beginning in the rich intellectual climate of the late-nineteenth century. During this period Russia enchanted Europeans with its writers, painters, and ballet; shocked them with its radical activists and anarchist philosophers; and beguiled with its autocratic political system and royal opulence. This world eventually gave violent birth to the Soviet Union, much like, decades later, the collapse the Communism in Eastern Europe and Russia brought about the world we live in today. Tracking change and continuity, as Russians passed through one phase of their history to another, will be this course’s overarching concern.

Required Texts


Other readings will be available on Blackboard. The books listed above are available at the Oberlin College Bookstore and on reserve at the Mudd Center library.

Contact
Email: chris.stolarski@oberlin.edu
Office: Rice Hall 308
Office Hours: MW 3-5 PM, Th 1-3 PM
Telephone: 440-775-8059

The easiest way to reach me is by email or by coming to my office hours. I check my email daily on weekdays and Sunday evenings. Please note that it may take up to 24 hours for me to respond to your email.
Course Objectives

- To identify key figures, concepts, and themes of Russian (and Soviet) history, from the Great Reforms of the 1860s to rise and current presidency of Vladimir Putin;

- To recognize important historical debates in Imperial and Soviet Russia, and through course assignments and class discussion, to participate in these scholarly conversations;

- To analyze a wide variety of written and visual primary sources, covering the political, social, cultural, and economic histories of Russia and the Soviet Union;

- To engage critically in discussion of historical problems with your classmates in a respectful and productive manner;

- To synthesize course readings in written assignments, and to communicate in clear and concise written prose.

Accommodations

If you have a documented disability that may have some impact on your work in or out of class, and for which you may require accommodations, please let me know how your learning needs may be appropriately met. For documentation, please visit the Office of Disability Services in Peters Hall, Room G-27/28. For more information: http://new.oberlin.edu/office/disability-services/

Learning

It is important that everyone in this course help make our classroom a supportive learning community. Our work in this class will thrive if we create a space where we all are allowed to explore new ideas, perhaps change our minds, and participate in honest yet respectful debate. Since everyone comes to this course with different sets of skills and knowledge, we may have differences of opinion at times – and it is not the aim of this course for us all to reach consensus. We do need to consider each other’s perspectives respectfully, however, and to sharpen our own skills and perspectives through dialogue and learning from each other.
Graded Assignments

I will provide more detailed instructions about the assignments during the semester. See page 9 for due dates.

Participation
Students are expected to participate actively in class. This will be the sole criterion considered in regards to your grade in this category. Most classes will combine a formal lecture with a more informal discussion of the week’s readings; classes designated as “discussion” in the syllabus will be entirely based on oral analysis of assigned readings. Please come prepared to talk about course content. Students are recommended to bring copies of assigned text in order to ground discussion in documentary evidence.

Quizzes (3)
Each quiz will consist of a visual source and/or short answer section (term identification). Study guides will be distributed one week in advance.

Reading Responses (7)
You will select a minimum of THREE primary sources and then write a brief (350 word) critical analysis of their contents in connection to the week’s assigned readings more broadly. You may select any of the given week’s readings, except in Weeks 3, 6, 7, and 12 when you must select *Five Sisters*, *Sofia Petrovna*, *The Russian Revolution*, and *Voices from Chernobyl* respectively, as one of your selected sources. Each response will be graded individually and is meant to reflect your meaningful engagement with the readings. These responses are meant to help you to express your thoughts precisely and concisely in any academic or professional setting. Your SIX best papers will contribute to the final grade for this assignment.

Final Web-based Learning Resource Project
The Internet has become an important source of information about history. Online encyclopedias, blogs, and news media sites make authoritative claims about the past despite inaccuracies and dubious sourcing. In your final project, you will choose an aspect of Russia’s post-1860s history and create a web-based learning resource, such as an original Wikipedia entry, a series of blog posts, an image gallery, or another type of online publishing. This assignment should be around 1000-1250 words. In addition to allowing you to explore an aspect of Russian history you find interesting, this project will also allow you to consider the implications and responsibilities involved in creating and publishing publicly accessible information.

Course Etiquette

- This class depends on discussion and community learning, and thus it is important that you attend every class. However, since the academic semester is unpredictable, there will be days when you will be unable to attend. Throughout the semester, I will not keep track of attendance, but I shall rely on your observance of the Honor Code when you miss class due to illness, family emergencies, or other extenuating circumstances.

- Please make sure to turn off and put away your cell phones. Laptops and tablets are allowed for consulting the readings. However, I recommend taking notes with pen and paper. If it becomes clear that laptops are used for other purposes during class, I will no longer allow laptops or tablets in class.

- You are expected to participate actively in class discussions. As our discussions are an important component of the course, it is crucial that you come to class prepared to discuss the readings. Please come see me to discuss strategies if you feel uncomfortable or unable to participate in class discussion.
Plagiarism & the Honor Code:
“The word plagiarism derives from the Latin roots: *plagiarius*, an abductor, and *plagiar* to steal. The expropriation of another author’s work and the presentation of it as one’s own, constitutes plagiarism and is a serious violation of the ethics of scholarship.” [American Historical Association, Statement on Standards of Professional Contact]. Presenting the work of others as one’s own goes against everything that a liberal education is about. It is a serious affront to the other students in the course, to me as a member of the course, and to the plagiarizer him/herself. The College requires that students sign an “Honor Code” for all assignments. This pledge states: “I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment.” For further information, see the student Honor Code, which you can access via Blackboard. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me or raise it in class.

Late Work
Reading response papers will be graded on a five-point scale: 5 for excellent, 4 for good, 3 for adequate, 2 for inadequate, 1 for incomplete, and 0 for no submission. These papers are due in class during our regular Friday discussion sections. Any paper submitted after this deadline will receive a deduction of 0.5 points, and an extra 0.5 points will be deducted for every day late following.

Late final project assignments will receive deductions of one-third of a letter grade per day. So, an “A” Final Project Proposal handed in one-day late will receive a “B+”, two-days late, a “B”, and so on.

Extensions will be considered on a case-by-case basis and will be given in case of emergency/illness or if you ask for an extension because of a heavy workload during the week. In the latter case, an extension will be granted if students provide me with no less than two (2) days notice.

All written work must be turned in for students to achieve a passing grade. All course work must be received by Friday, May 13, 2016 at noon (12 PM).

Support
If you find yourself unable or struggling to finish the assigned readings, or to contribute to class discussion, please meet with me so that we can discuss some possible strategies going forward. Please reach out to me if you ever feel you need extra help, or if you would like to discuss the readings more fully, or if there is anything else that concerns you. I am available during my regularly scheduled office hours, as well as by appointment.

Grading

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If you wish to dispute a grade, I request that you do so in writing. Please explain your justification carefully. After writing, we shall follow up in person during office hours. Disputes must be submitted to me at least twenty-four hours in advance of an appointment. Please note that a dispute does not guarantee a better grade.
Class Schedule

WEEK 1
Monday 2/1: **Introduction**
No Readings

Wednesday 2/3: **Alexander II and The Great Reforms**
Documents:
- The Emancipation Manifesto, 3 March 1861, pp. 307-311
- The Political Debates (1856-61) & The Reform Statutes (1861-66), pp. 430-435

Friday 2/5: **The Turbulent 1870s**
Documents:
- A.V. Iartsev, Proclamation of a Populist Activist, 1873
  *Five Sisters*, “Vera Figner,” pp. 3-58

WEEK 2
Monday 2/8: **Terrorism, Revolutionaries, and Reaction**
Documents:
- The Catechism of the Revolutionary, 1868, pp. 350-354
- Demands of Narodnaia Volia, 1879, pp. 355-363
- Alexander III, Proclamation of April, 1881

Wednesday 2/10: **Society and Culture at the End of the 19th Century**
Documents:
- Konstantin Pobedonostsev, from Reflections of a Russian Statesman
- Sources on “Mixed Marriage in the Russian Empire”
  *Five Sisters*, “Praskovia Ivanovskaia,” pp. 95-142

Friday 2/12: **Discussion/Reading Response 1**

WEEK 3
Monday 2/15: **1905 Revolution**
Documents:
- V.I. Lenin, Our Programme, 1899
- V.I. Lenin, from What is To Be Done? (1902)
- Workers’ Petition, 9 January 1905 (“Bloody Sunday”)
- Father Gapon’s Petition to Nicholas II, 22 January 1905, pp. 409-413
- Concessions of Nicholas II in the Revolution of 1905, pp. 414-416

Wednesday 2/17: **The Twilight of Tsarist Russia**
Documents:
- Program of Russian Political Parties (1903-1905), pp. 425-450
- Manifesto of June 3rd, 1907 (Dissolution of the Second Duma)
- Witte’s Views of the Jewish Problem, pp. 375-385
- Rasputin: The Holy Devil, pp. 479-490

Friday 2/19: **Discussion/Quiz 1**
- Anastasia Verbitskaia, from The Keys of Happiness, pp. 333-336
- E.A. Nagrodskaia, from The Wrath of Dionysus, pp. 341-248

WEEK 4
Monday 2/22: **The Revolutions of 1917**
Documents:
- Abdication of Nicholas II, March 1917, pp. 523-525
- V.I. Lenin, The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution (“April Thesis”), 17 April 1917
- V.I. Lenin, Advice to Workers and Peasants, 1917
- Conditions of the Troops at the Front, 13 October 1917
- Soviet of People’s Commissars, Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia, 16 November 1917
  Sheila Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution, pp. 15-67

Wednesday 2/24: **The Civil War**
Documents:
- People’s Commissariat of Justice, Instructions to the Revolutionary Tribunal, 1 January 1918
- Central Executive Committee, Dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, 19 January 1918
- V.I. Lenin, On the Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government, 30 April 1918
- Council of People’s Commissars, Resolution on Red Terror, 5 September 1918
  Sheila Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution, pp. 68-92

Friday 2/26: **Discussion/Reading Response 2**
Documents:
- A. Kollontai, The Family and the Communist State &
Class Schedule (continued)

Make Way for the Winged Eros, pp. 67-76, 84-94
- L. Trotsky, From the Old Family to the New, pp. 77-83
- Maria Fedotovna Filipenko, “My Life (The Story of Maria Fedotvna Filipenko),” 1924

WEEK 5
Monday 2/29: The New Economic Policy
Documents:
- Central Committee, RKP, On Anti-Religious Agitation and Propaganda among Women Workers and Peasants, 15 September 1921
- V.I. Lenin, Letter to the Thirteenth Party Congress, 23 December 1922
- Nikolai Ognev, Diary of a Communist Schoolboy, 1924
- Lev Kamenev, Speech to the Fourteenth Party Congress, December 1925
- Fedor Gladov, from Cement, 1925
- S. Kartashov, Klasha, 1927
Sheila Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution, pp. 93-119

Wednesday 3/2: Soviet Avant-Garde
Documents:
- V.I. Lenin, Directives on the Film Business, 17 January 1922
- Sergei Eisenstein, The Method of Making Workers Films, 11 August 1925
- Leon Trotsky, Vodka, the Church and the Cinema, 12 July 1923
Film: Bed and Sofa (Room, 1927)

Friday 3/4: Discussion @ the Allen Memorial Museum
Documents:
- Clara Zetkin, Conversation with Lenin: Art Belongs to the People, pp. 50-52

WEEK 6
Monday 2/7: Industrialization & Collectivization
Documents:
- Joseph Stalin, Problems of Agrarian Policy in the USSR, 27 December 1929
- Joseph Stalin, Problems of the Collective-Farm Movement, 2 March 1930
- Maurice Hindus, from Red Bread, pp. 27-34
- John Scott, from Behind the Urals, pp. 15-21
- Young Leningrad Worker, Personal letter from Magnitogorsk, June 1931
Sheila Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution, pp. 120-148

Wednesday 2/9: Everyday Stalinism
Documents:
- AKhR Declaration, February 1928
- RAPM (Russian Association of Proletarian Musicians), Ideological Platform, 1929
- A. Artiukhina, To the Highest Level, 18 January 1930

Friday 2/11: Discussion/Reading Response 3
Documents:
- Evgenii Zamiatin, Letter to Stalin, June 1931
- Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR, Statute of the Main Administration for Affairs of Literature and Publishing, RSFSR (Glavlit and its Local Organs, 6 June 1931)
Sheila Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution, pp. 149-172

WEEK 7
Monday 3/14: Stalinist Terror
Documents:
- The December 1936 Plenum of the Central Committee
- Joseph Stalin, On Deficiencies in Party Work and Measures for Liquidating Trotskyites and other Double-dealers, 29 March 1937
- Nikolai Ezhov, Operational Order, 30 July 1937
- L.S. Tsel'merovskii, Letter to Presidium of Supreme Soviet, 13 September 1938

Wednesday 3/16: Discussion
Lydia Chukovskaya, Sophia Petrovna (whole book)

Friday 3/18: No class/Reading Response 4

March 19-27: Spring Break!

WEEK 8
Monday 3/28: Confronting Fascism
Documents:
- Viacheslav Molotov, The Meaning of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact, 31 August 1939
- Strictly Secret Instructions Regarding the Manner of
Class Schedule (continued)

Conducting the Deportation of the Anti-Soviet Elements from Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, 14 June 1941

- TASS, 'None so Deaf as Will Not Hear,' 14 June 1941

Wednesday 3/30: The Great Patriotic War
Documents:
- Joseph Stalin, Radio Address to the Soviet People, 3 July 1941
- E.I. Kochina, from Blockade Diary, 1941-1943
- Lavrentii Beria, From the Report of the NKVD Department of Special Settlements, 5 September 1944
- Lavrentii Beria, Top Secret, 5 March 1940
- Report by Wehrmacht Officer on Massacre in the Ukraine, 3 January 1942
- Pavel Lidov, Tanya, 26 January 1942

Friday 4/1: Discussion/Quiz 2
Documents:
- Evgenii Evtushenko, “Babii Yar,” 29 September 1961
- Nikita Khruschev, From a Speech at a Meeting of Party and Government Leaders With Workers in Literature and the Arts, 8 March 1963

WEEK 9
Monday 4/4: The Origins of the Cold War
Documents:
- Joseph Stalin, Interview on Churchill’s Iron Curtain Speech, 14 March 1946
- George F. Kennan, Sources of Soviet Conduct, 1947
- Joseph Stalin, Inevitability of Wars among Capitalist Countries, 1952

Wednesday 4/6: De-Stalinization & Khrushchev’s Thaw
Documents:
- Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Decree of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet transferring Crimea Province from the Russian Republic to the Ukraine Republic, 27 February 1954
- Il’ia Ehrenburg, from The Thaw, Spring 1954
- Evgenii Evtushenko, from Precious Autobiography, 1963
- Minutes, Third Session, Plenary Session of the Central Committee, 8 July 1953

Friday 4/8: Discussion/Reading Response 5
Documents:
- Mikhail Zoshchenko, The Adventure of a Monkey, 1945
- Andrei Zhdanov, On the Errors of the Soviet Literary Journals, ZVEZDA and LENINGRAD, 20 August 1946
- Il’ia Ehrenburg, from Memoirs 1921-1941, 1963
- L. Smirnov, Material for Talks: Untiringly Raise the Political Vigilance of Soviet People, January 1953

WEEK 10
Monday 4/11: Stagnation & Corruption Under Brezhnev
Documents:
- Popular Anecdotes, 1970s
- A. Levashova, Fashion and Economic, 9 May 1971
- I. Kirianov, A Case Is Heard: Accomplices, Not Witnesses, 9 August 1972

Wednesday 4/13: The Erosion of the Soviet Empire
Documents:
- Konstantin Simis, USSR – The Corrupt Society
- M. Gapurov, On the Tasks of the Republic’s Party Organization..., 3 April 1973

Friday 4/15: Discussion/Reading Response 6
Documents:
- Andrei Sakharov, Progress, Coexistence, and Intellectual Freedom, 1974
- Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Letter to the Soviet Leaders, 1974
- Roy A. Medvedev, On Socialist Democracy, 1975
- The Confinement of Zhores Medvedev in a Psychiatric Hospital, 30 June 1970

WEEK 11
Monday 4/18: Afghanistan and Chernobyl
Documents:
- TASS, On Events in Afghanistan, 30 December 1979
- Report on Events in Afghanistan on 27-28, 31
Class Schedule (continued)

December 1979
- Viktor Kurchatov, What Society Owes the Afghanistan Veterans, 13 December 1987
- Artem Borovik, Afghanistan: Preliminary Results, July 1988
- V. Skosyrev, A Lesson Which Should Be Learned, 4 May 1989
- The Nuclear Power Industry in the Ukraine, February 1986
Svetlana Alexievich, *Voices from Chernobyl*, pp. 1-23

Wednesday 4/20: **Gorbachev and the End of the Cold War**
Documents:
- Mikhail Gorbachev, On Convening the Regular 27th CPSU Congress and the Tasks Connected with Preparing and Holding it, 23 April 1985
- TV Shows Kiev Conversations, 20 February 1989
Svetlana Alexievich, *Voices from Chernobyl*, pp. 25-79

Friday 4/22: **Discussion/Quiz 3**
Documents:
- Andrei Lapik, What’s Going on? 15 November 1987
- D. Mysiakov, Nina of Minsk, 9 October 1986
- Donahue in Russia, 14 March 1987
- A. Kuznetsov, Not All Theaters Are Erotic, 28 July 1990

WEEK 12

Monday 4/25: **The Collapse of the USSR**
Documents:
- Yeltsin’s Election Platform, 21 March 1989
- Vitalii Tretiakov, The People Have Made Their Choice, 1 April 1989
- Ukraine, Independence Referendum, 1 December 1991
- Committee on the State of Emergency, Message to the Soviet People from the State Committee for the State of Emergency, 18 August 1991
- Boris Yeltsin, Decree of the President of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic on the Activity of the CPSU and the RSFSR Communist Party, 6 November 1991
- Mikhail Gorbachev, Resignation, 25 December 1991
Svetlana Alexievich, *Voices from Chernobyl*, pp. 81-149

Wednesday 4/27: **Boris Yeltsin and the New Russia**
Documents:
- Boris Yeltsin, Appeal to the Citizens of Russia, 11 December 1994
- Principles for Determining the Foundation of Relations Between the Russian Federation and the Chechen Republic, 31 August 1996
- Boris Yeltsin, Address to the Russian People, 31 December 1999
Film: *Prisoners of the Mountains* (Sergei Bodrov, 1996)

Friday 4/29: **Discussion/Reading Response 7**
Svetlana Alexievich, *Voices from Chernobyl*, pp. 151-236

WEEK 13

Monday 5/2: **The Rise of Vladimir Putin**
Documents:
- Vladimir Putin, *First Person* (interview)
- Conversation of Writer Grigorii Chkhartishvili (Boris Akunin) with Mikhail Khodorkovsky, *Esquire* (Russian Edition), October 2008

Wednesday 5/4: **Ukraine, Crimea, and Russia’s “Ambitions”**
Documents:
- Vladimir Putin, Speech on the Annexation of Crimea, 18 March 2014
- Sean Guillory, Graffiti for Crimea, *Sean’s Russia Blog*, 1 April 2014
- Ukraine, Putin, and the West, *N+1*, Spring 2014

Friday 5/6: **Discussion**
Documents:
- Frank Jacobs, What Russia Could Look Like in 2035, If Putin Get His Wish, *Foreign Policy*, 4 June 2014
- Film clip: “Oh Dear,” (Curtis, 2014)
Overview of Due Dates

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<th>Task</th>
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* Please submit your Reading Responses on Blackboard before our class discussion sessions.

NB. I reserve the right to change the syllabus over the course of the semester. Any changes will be discussed in class at least one week prior to their implementation.

Bibliography


* Available on reserve in the Mudd Center library.