

# Russian History I (HST 107): Origins to 1861

Oberlin College, Fall 2013  
M/W/F, 9:00-10:00am  
King 323

Instructor: Dr. Rebecca Mitchell

Office Hours: M/W 10-12, or by appointment

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## **Course Description:**

From the beginning of its history, Russia has struggled to define itself both as a multi-ethnic empire and as a nation. In this class, we will follow Russia's development, expansion and transformation from its earliest beginnings up to the period of the Great Reforms. How and why did Russia come to dominate a vast Eurasian space? How did Russia's Tsars, Emperors and Empresses exert control over the diverse cultures, languages, religions and peoples that came under their influence? What role did national identity play in the relationship between the imperial center and its peripheries? In addition to exploring Russia's imperial legacy, we will engage with the "accursed questions" of Russian history ("What is to be done?" "Who is to blame?"), placing them within the political and social framework from which they sprang and exploring the impact they had on the lives of real people living inside the Russian empire. Central themes will be political governance, both of the Russian interior and the borderlands, relations between Russian and non-Russian ethnic groups, questions of religious identity, social transformation and political governance.

### **Learning Goals:**

By the end of this course, you will have developed the ability to:

- 1) Analyze a variety of primary materials (textual, visual, aural)
- 2) Identify key figures, concepts and themes in Russian history, and engage with important debates
- 3) Critically engage in discussion of historical problems with your peers in a productive and respectful manner
- 4) Synthesize course readings in analytical writing

### **Required Texts:**

There are four assigned texts for this class: one primary source collection, one novel, one memoir, and one collection of scholarly microhistories. For those who desire additional background reading, there is also a suggested textbook with corresponding page numbers provided in the syllabus. All books are available for purchase in the bookstore and are also available on library reserve. Other assigned documents will be available on Blackboard and are listed in the syllabus according to week.

Serge Zenkovsky, ed., *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles and Tales* (Meridian, 1974)

Norris, Stephen and Willard Sunderland. *Russia's People of Empire: Life Stories from Eurasia, 1500-Present* (Indiana University Press, 2012), Abbreviation: RPE

Kiril Fitzlyon, trans. *The Memoirs of Princess Dashkova* (Duke University Press, 1995)

Ivan Turgenev, *Fathers and Sons* (Oxford World's Classics, 2008)

### **Suggested Textbook:**

Nicholas Riasanovsky and Mark Steinberg, *A History of Russia* (Oxford University Press, 2004)

### **Grading Schema:**

*Quizzes* (2): 10% each (total 20%, scheduled October 4, 2013 and November 6, 2013)

Each quiz will consist of a visual source and/or short answer (term identification).

Study guides will be distributed one week in advance.

*Microhistory* (6-8 pages, due October 18, 2013 by 5pm): 20%

You will be responsible for writing a microhistory of Princess Dashkova, whose memoirs are assigned reading for the class. We will be reading and discussing various examples of microhistories in Norris and Sunderland, *Russia's People of Empire* throughout the semester. *Pay attention* to these examples! Take note of what you find effective, and use these observations to help you craft your own microhistory.

*Primary Source Journal*: 20%

Each week you will select ONE primary source document out of those listed on the syllabus for that class session and write a BRIEF (300 word) critical analysis of the contents of the source in connection with the shared reading assignment for the week. You should be prepared to describe your source and your assessment of it in class. Each critical analysis should be printed out and included in a binder, which will be collected at several points over the course of the semester. By the end of the semester, you should have amassed a total of *twelve* (12) sources. As

these sources will provide the basis for your final (historical) essay, you should select a general topic area of interest to you from the list appended to the syllabus (social relations, minorities, colonialism, imperialism, autocracy, etc.) and choose primary sources related to that topic. If you are having difficulty selecting a topic, please come and speak with me. Other individual topics may be approved by the instructor. All primary source documents are available on Blackboard or in assigned texts.

*Final (Historical) Essay: 20% (8-10 pages, due December 17, 2013 at 4:00pm)*

Your final project, based upon your primary source journal and assigned readings throughout the semester, will require you to assess the development of the Russian empire in relation to a theme of your own choosing (potential themes listed in the syllabus). Be sure to consider what role the unique multicultural aspect of the Russian empire played in the historical development of your chosen topic.

*Participation and Discussion: 20%*

This class depends heavily upon your participation and engagement. You should come to each class prepared to discuss assigned readings and/or primary sources. Most classes will involve a mix of lecture and discussion; those classes marked as “discussion” in the syllabus will be entirely based on class discussion of assigned reading. *Be sure to bring a copy of the assigned texts to class so that you can ground your discussion in the actual document.* I will assess BOTH attendance and active participation after each class session. Unexcused absences and failure to engage in discussion will both negatively affect your participation grade.

*Late work* will be penalized by a reduction of 1/3 of a letter grade per day late. Thus, an “A” paper received two days late will be downgraded to a “B+”. Be sure to look over the schedule and plan accordingly!

*All course work must be received by December 17, 2013 at 4:00pm.*

### **Attendance Policy:**

Students are expected to attend and actively participate in all class sessions. As 20% of your final grade is based on participation and discussion, absence from class will negatively impact your performance.

### **Class Etiquette:**

- 1) Be sure to turn off ALL cell phones prior to class – this is a sign of respect for myself, your colleagues, and the atmosphere of learning in the classroom.
- 2) Please do NOT surf the internet during class time. Laptop computers are useful tools for learning and note-taking, but must be used responsibly. Internet surfing distracts both yourself and your colleagues and hinders classroom discussion. Offenders will be requested not to bring their computers to future classes.
- 3) When you send me an email, be sure to use proper written etiquette (formal address, correct grammar, clearly stated question or comment). Remember that this is a formal written exchange and part of your scholarly persona!

- 4) This classroom is a space for respectful discussion of concepts, ideas and events. Everyone has the right to express their ideas, pose questions, and engage in productive conversation. While differences of opinion will certainly arise, it is our collective responsibility to create an open, respectful and cordial atmosphere.

**Plagiarism and the Honor Code:**

“The word plagiarism derives from Latin roots: *plagiarius*, an abductor, and *plagiare*, 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 Conduct]. 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 plagiariser 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>Lookup/Directories>Honor Code. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism please see me or raise it in class.

**Students with Disabilities:**

If you have specific physical, psychiatric or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please let me know early in the semester so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. You will need to provide documentation of your disability to the Office of Disability Services in Peters G-27/G-28.

*Please Note: I reserve the right to change the syllabus over the course of the semester. Any changes that are introduced will be discussed in class at least one week prior to their implementation.*

**Course Schedule:**

**Week One: Origins of Rus’**

Session One (September 4, 2013): Syllabus and Introductions – Understanding Nation, Empire and Imperialism.

Session Two (September 6, 2013): Kievan Rus’ (Mythological Beginnings)

Reading Assignment: ANY THREE SELECTIONS FROM the *Primary Chronicle* (MR 43-77)

Primary Source Journal: ANY ONE selection from the *Primary Chronicle* (MR 43-77)

TURN IN PRIMARY SOURCE JOURNAL ENTRY

(Additional Reading: Riasanovsky/Steinberg, 23-62)

**Week Two: Medieval Russia**

Session Three (September 9, 2013): The Era of City-States (Novgorod, Pskov, Kiev)

Reading Assignment: *Novgorodian Chronicle* (MR 77-84); “Ruskaia Pravda” (Blackboard)

Session Four (September 11, 2013): The “Tatar Yoke” and the Rise of Muscovy

Reading Assignment: “Tale of the Destruction of Riazan” (MR 198-207); “Mongol Charter of Immunity Granted to the Church” (Blackboard)

Primary Source Journal: ANY ONE selection from MR 77-84, 198-207 OR Blackboard readings

Session Five: Discussion (September 13, 2013): *The Lay of Igor’s Campaign* (MR 167-193); Charles J. Halperin, “Rus’, Russia and National Identity,” *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 48:1/2 (March-June 2006): 157-166

(Additional Reading: Riasanovsky/Steinberg, 63-142)

### **Week Three: Russia as Empire**

Session Six (September 16, 2013): Ivan the Terrible and the Birth of Empire

Reading Assignment: Andrei Kurbskii-Ivan the Terrible correspondence (MR 366-379)

Session Seven (September 18, 2013): The Time of Troubles

Primary Source Journal: ONE selection from “Pseudo-Dmitry” (MR 379-386) OR *Domostroi* (excerpt one, Blackboard) OR *Domostroi* (excerpt two, Blackboard)

Session Eight: Discussion (September 20, 2013): “Ermak Timofeevich”, “Simeon Bekhulatovich” and Timofei Ankudinov” (RPE); Valerie Kivelson, “Muscovite ‘Citizenship’: Rights without Freedom,” *The Journal of Modern History* 74:3 (September 2002): 465-489 (Blackboard)

(Additional Reading: Riasanovsky/Steinberg, 143-174)

### **Week Four: The Romanov Dynasty**

Session Nine (September 23, 2013): The Early Romanovs and the Orthodox Schism

Session Ten (September 25, 2013): Discussion in Allen Memorial Art Museum

Reading Assignment: “Ulozhenie”; “The Life of Archpriest Avvakum By Himself” (MR, 399-448)

Primary Source Journal: EITHER Ulozhenie OR “Life of Archpriest Avvakum”  
TURN IN PRIMARY SOURCE JOURNAL!

OUT-OF-CLASS WORK DAY (September 27, 2013)

Quiz outline will be posted on Blackboard at 9am; use the time to study! You may study individually or in groups.

(Additional Reading: Riasanovsky/Steinberg, 175-212)

### **Week Five: Peter I**

Session Eleven (September 30, 2013): Peter the Great and Revolution from Above

Primary Source Journal: ONE selection from “From the Spiritual Reglement of Proklopovich”; “Proclamation on the Introduction of the New Calendar, 1700”; “Decree on Single Inheritance”; Letters of Peter the Great and his

son Alexei; The Table of Ranks (1722); Native Uprisings; Mikhail Shcherbatov, "Petition of the City of Moscow on Being Relegated to Oblivion"; Godfrey Kneller, *A Portrait of Peter the Great* (1698) (Blackboard)

Session Twelve (October 2, 2013): Discussion and In-Class Debate - After Peter  
Reading Assignment: "Gavril Romanovich Nikitin," and "Boris Ivanovich Korubut-Kurakin" (RPE)

*You are all members of the Russian nobility (new and old). Who should be supported as the rightful claimant to the Russian throne and why? What concerns do you have about Russia's future after the reign of Peter the Great? What policies do you want to see adopted and why?*

Session Thirteen (October 4, 2013): The Era of Palace Revolutions  
Quiz One

(Additional Reading: Riasanovsky/Steinberg, 213-253)

### **Week Six: Building an Empire**

Session Fourteen (October 7, 2013): Enlightened Absolutism at Home

Primary Source Journal: ONE selection from "Instructions of Catherine II"; Petition from a Russian Noblewoman (1768), Aleksandr Radishchev, *A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow* (1792); Fedor Rokotov, *Portrait of Catherine the Great* (1780s); Vergilius Erichsen, *Portrait of Catherine II Wearing a Kokoshnik* (1830s); The Pugachev Rebellion; Petition from Tatar Nobles in Kazan Province, 1767; Petition from Belarusian Jews, 1784 (Blackboard)

Session Fifteen (October 9, 2013): Enlightened Absolutism in the Borderlands

Reading Assignment: Princess Dashkova Memoir

Session Sixteen: (October 11, 2013): Discussion

Reading Assignment: "Catherine the Great," "Mikhail Lomonosov," "Petr Ivanovich Bagration" (RPE); Princess Dashkova Memoir

(Additional Reading: Riasanovsky/Steinberg, 254-299)

### **Week Seven: Controlling an Empire**

Session Seventeen (October 14, 2013): Aleksander I and the Napoleonic Era in Russia

Primary Source Journal: ONE selection from Address on the Accession of Aleksandr I; Nikolai Karamzin, "Love of Country and National Pride" (1802); "History of the Russian State (Foreword)" (1815); The Holy Alliance (1815); Austrian View of Aleksandr I (1815)

Session Eighteen (October 16, 2013): Discussion

Reading Assignment: Princess Dashkova Memoir (complete); "Johannes Ambrosius Rosenstrauch" (RPE)

Session Eighteen: (October 18, 2013): OUT OF CLASS WORK DAY  
MICROHISTORY DUE BY 5pm

(Additional Reading: Riasanovsky/Steinberg, 300-322)

FALL BREAK: October 20-27, 2013

**Week Eight: Preserving Empire**

Session Nineteen (October 28, 2013): Absolutism and Dissent at Home (1825-1845)

Primary Source Journal: ONE selection from Petr Chaadaev, Philosophical Letters; Decembrist memoirs (ONE of three); Baroness M.De Packh, "On the March to Siberia" (1840); The Autobiography of Aleksandra Kobiakova

Session Twenty (October 30, 2013): The Long War of the Caucasus (1817-1864)

STUDY GUIDE for Quiz Two posted at 10:00am

Session Twenty-One - Discussion (November 1, 2013):

Reading Assignment: "Imam Shamil" and "Zalumba Agra"(RPE); Thomas M. Barrett, "Lines of Uncertainty: The Frontiers of the Northern Caucasus" (Blackboard)

(Additional Reading: Riasanovsky/Steinberg, 323-347)

**Week Nine: Expanding Empire**

Session Twenty-Two (November 4, 2013): Expansion to Siberia and the Siberian *inorodtsy*

Session Twenty-Three (November 6, 2013): Religious Orthodoxy and its Discontents  
QUIZ TWO

Section Twenty-Four (November 8, 2013): Discussion

Reading Assignment: Gregory Freeze, "Institutionalizing Piety: The Church and Popular Religion"; Robert Crews, "Empire and the Confessional State: Islam and Religious Politics in Nineteenth-Century Russia," *The American Historical Review* 108:1 (February 2003): 50-83 (Blackboard)

**Week Ten: Social Trends at Home (1825-1861)**

Session Twenty-Five (November 11, 2013): Russian Society Before the Great Reforms

Session Twenty-Six (November 13, 2013): Life Under Serfdom

Primary Source Journal: ONE selection from "Aleksandr Nikitenko Responds to the Emancipation Manifesto"; Peter Kropotkin's Description of Nobles and Serfs; Nikolai Turgenieff on the Emancipation of Russian Serfs (Blackboard)

TURN IN PRIMARY SOURCE JOURNAL!

Session Twenty-Seven (November 15, 2013): Discussion

Reading Assignment: Steven L. Hoch, "The Serf Economy, the Peasant Family, and the Social Order"; Nikolai Shipov, "The Story of my Life and Wanderings" (Blackboard)

(Additional Reading: Riasanovsky/Steinberg, 341-347)

**Week Eleven: National Difference and Imperial Policy**

Session Twenty-Eight (November 18, 2013): National Differentiation in the Empire

Session Twenty-Nine (November 20, 2013): The Polish Problem

Reading Assignment: “Adam Mickiewicz” (RPE)

Primary Source Journal: ONE selection from Nicholas I’s Proclamation on the Abolition of the Polish Constitution; “Address to the House of Commons of Great Britain and Ireland by the Polish Refugees” (1832); “The Downfall of Poland, by a Polish Exile” (1841); “The Polish Question, or an Appeal to the Good Sense of Englishmen, by a Russian” (1863); Marcin Zaleski, *Taking of the Warsaw Arsenal* (1831); Frederic Chopin, “Revolutionary Etude” (op.10 no.12)

OUT OF CLASS WORKDAY (November 22, 2013):

Submit via e-mail a brief description of your final essay topic

### **Week Twelve: Intellectual and Cultural Trends at Home (1825-1861)**

Session Thirty (November 25, 2013): Hegelianism, Literature and Politics

Session Thirty-One (November 27, 2013): Discussion - The Russian *Intelligentsia*

Reading Assignment: “Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol” (RPE);

Primary Source Journal: Vissarion Belinsky, “Letter to Gogol” (1847); Chernyshevsky, “An Extraordinary Man” (*What is to Be Done?*); “Vera Pavlovna’s Dream” (*What is to Be Done?*); Herzen, *My Life and Thoughts* (excerpt), Glinka, *A Life for the Tsar*

THANKSGIVING BREAK (November 29, 2013)

(Additional Reading: Riasanovsky/Steinberg, 348-367)

### **Week Thirteen: Russian Thought and Culture**

Session Thirty-Two (December 2, 2013): The Russian *Intelligentsia*

Session Thirty-Three (December 4, 2013) – Discussion (*Fathers and Children*)

Reading Assignment AND Primary Source Journal: *Fathers and Children*

Session Thirty-Four (December 6, 2013): The Crimean War and Death of Nikolai I

(Additional Reading: Riasanovsky/Steinberg, 368-390)

### **Week Fourteen: The End of an Era**

Session Thirty-Five (December 9, 2013): Aleksandr II

Session Thirty-Six (December 11, 2013): Final Debate: Russia in 1861

You are advisors to Aleksandr II. What sort of reforms would you suggest Russia needs? Why?

(Additional Reading: Riasanovsky/Steinberg, 368-390)

FINAL PAPER AND PRIMARY SOURCE JOURNAL DUE TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17<sup>th</sup>, 4:00 pm. TURN IN HARD COPY TO MY OFFICE (313 Rice)



## **Potential Themes (Primary Source Journal)**

Autocracy/Political Governance

Empire (Center and periphery, imperialism and colonialism)

Religion and State

Social relations (gender, religious, ethnic)

Serfdom

Laws and legality

Reform and revolution