

HST 480: Russia's Imperial Borderlands

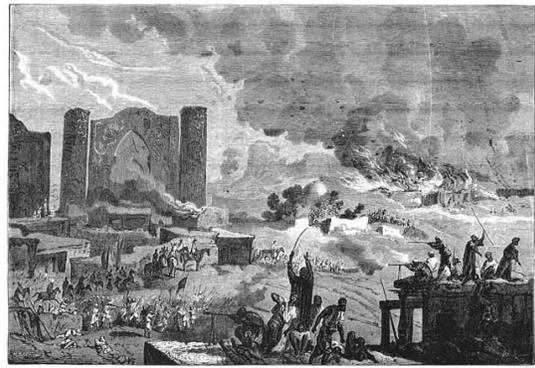
Oberlin College, Fall 2013
Monday, 7:00-9:00pm
Rice 017

Instructor: Dr. Rebecca Mitchell

Office Hours: M/W 10:00-12:00, or by appointment

Office: Rice 313

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Взятие Самаркандской цитадели. Рис. П. Врангель, грав. П. Жюльен.

Course Description:

This class will introduce students to the complex fabric of the multi-ethnic lands of Eastern Europe and Eurasia both as they emerged by the nineteenth century and as they were affected by the mass population movements and ideological politics of the twentieth century. Turning our focus away from the core of the Russian Empire, we will consider the experience of lands on the “periphery”: regions that have often emerged as independent countries in the twentieth century, but remain shaped by their imperial past. Students will learn to think of boundaries between states as historically defined and to approach national identity as a “daily plebiscite”. Among our areas of interest, we will question: how did shifting relations with Russia and other imperial systems shape local identities? How and when did nationalist sentiment emerge in these regions, what historical narratives or justifications were offered by local actors, and how did the imperial center(s) respond? How did borders affect local identities, particularly when those with similar linguistic, religious or cultural practices found themselves subjects of different political systems? How did forms of imperial patriotism co-exist or conflict with local or national identities? How did the emergence of communist regimes and later nation-states affect power relations and ethnic interactions? Countries to be covered include modern-day Ukraine, Belarus, Poland, Georgia, the Baltic countries and the Central Asian states, and we will also give attention to the Jewish experience in Russia’s former Pale of Settlement.

Learning Goals:

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

- 1) Engage in advanced analysis of historical methodologies.
- 2) Evaluate the problematic legacy of empire in the former lands of the Russian Empire and Soviet Union.
- 3) Assess the interaction between borders, local and national identities, and how these have shifted over time.
- 4) Offer written analysis of the current state of the scholarly field.

Required Texts:

There are seven required texts for this course, all of which are available in the bookstore and on library reserve. All assigned articles are posted on Blackboard. Many of these will also be available through OhioLink, so be sure to plan ahead! As our main goals are to familiarize you with a specific body of literature and to develop your ability to critically and efficiently assess a book and its main arguments, each class will require significant reading responsibilities. We will discuss effective reading strategies over the course of the semester; if you are having difficulty keeping up, please come and talk to me or raise the issue in class.

Michael Khodarkovsky, *Bitter Choices: Loyalty and Betrayal in the Russian Conquest of the North Caucasus* (Cornell UP, 2011)

Willard Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field* (Cornell UP, 2004)

Theodore R. Weeks, *Nation and State in late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863-1914* (Northern Illinois UP, 2008)

Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place* (Harvard, 2005)

Jeff Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent, 1865-1923* (Indiana UP, 2007)

Douglas Northrop, *Veiled Empire: Gender and Power in Stalinist Central Asia* (Cornell UP, 2003)

Yuri Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors* (Cornell, 1994)

Suggested Text: (Available on reserve)

Andreas Kappeler, *The Russian Empire* (Pearson, 2001)

Course Requirements:

Please note: as a writing-intensive class, particular attention will be given to developing your critical writings skills over the course of the semester. In addition to the assignments, you are expected to take notes on the readings for each week and bring them to class (along with a copy of the book/articles) to aid in discussion.

Class Discussion, Participation and Attendance (25%): This course is based on active discussion of readings and regular participation. It is essential that you come to class each week prepared to analyze the main themes, arguments, and methodology of the author(s) assigned for the week. Over the course of the semester, we will also develop your ability to read a large amount of material quickly in order to assess the primary argument, claims and evidence. Since we

only meet once a week and because our approach will be interactive, it is essential that you attend ALL class sessions.

Discussion Leader and Reading Analysis (25%): Each student will be responsible for leading ONE class discussion over the course of the semester. The student will be required to prepare a two-page analysis highlighting the themes from the assigned reading for the week. This paper will provide the basis for introducing class discussion. In addition, you will be required to prepare FIVE discussion questions to start off our discussion. These questions should be posted on Blackboard Learn the FRIDAY prior to the class for which you are responsible.

Book Reviews (2): (10% each) (750-1000 words): You will select two monographs assigned in class and write a scholarly book review for each (due October 14, November 25). The goal of this assignment is to develop your ability to concisely analyze the argument, methodology, structure, audience, strengths and weaknesses of a scholarly monograph. As *conciseness* and *precision* are the goals in this assignment, reviews that are over the specified word limit will not be accepted.

Historiographic Paper (30%) (12-15 pages): Select a geographic area or theme of your own choice (with instructor approval), and write an analysis of earlier scholarship in the area. You should examine *five (5)* scholarly monographs (only one of which may have been assigned in this class), or a combination of scholarly articles and monographs. *Three (3)* articles are considered equivalent to one monograph. Topics and a bibliography for this paper are due November 11, 2013.

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 21, 2013 at 11:00am.

Attendance Policy:

Students are expected to attend and actively participate in all class sessions. As 25% of your final grade is based on participation and discussion, and as we only meet once per week, absence from class will be extremely detrimental to your performance. Any student with three or more unexplained absences will receive a failing grade.

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.

Class Schedule:

Week One (September 9, 2013): Russia as Empire

Discussion Leader: R. Mitchell

Reading Assignment: From the Editors, “The Imperial Turn,” *Kritika* 7:4 (Fall 2006): 705-712

Suggested Reading: Kappeler, 1-13, 114-167

Week Two (September 16, 2013): The Caucasus

Discussion Leader:

Reading Assignment: Khodarkovsky, *Bitter Choices*

Suggested Reading: Kappeler, 168-185

Week Three (September 23, 2013): The Steppe

Discussion Leader:

Reading Assignment: Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field*

Suggested Reading: Kappeler, 185-200

Week Four (September 30, 2013): The Western Provinces

Discussion Leader:

Reading Assignment: Weeks, *Nation and State in late Imperial Russia*

Suggested Reading: Kappeler, 213-230, 247-261, 267-273

Week Five (October 7, 2013): Central Asia

Discussion Leader:

Reading Assignment: Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent*; Sahadeo, "Visions of Empire: Russia's Place in an Imperial World," *Kritika* 11:2 (Spring 2010): 381-409 (Example of Historiographic Article)

Suggested Reading: Kappeler, 261-267

Week Six (October 14, 2013): Suspect Nations

Discussion Leader:

Reading Assignment: Serhii Plokhii, "Ukraine or Little Russia? Revisiting an Early Nineteenth-Century Debate," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* (September-December 2006): 335-353; Brian Glyn Williams, "Hijra and Forced Migration from Nineteenth-Century Russia to the Ottoman Empire," *Cahiers du Monde russe* 41:1 (Jan – March 2000): 79-108; Daniel Brower, "Russian Roads to Mecca: Religious Tolerance and Muslim Pilgrimage in the Russian Empire," *Slavic Review* 55:3 (Autumn 1996): 567-584

Suggested Reading: Kappeler, 273-279

First Book Review (Khodarkovsky, Sahadeo, Sunderland, or Weeks) *due*.

FALL BREAK (October 21, 2013)

Think about the topic for your historiography paper!

Week Seven (October 28, 2013): The Soviet Union – Social Engineering and National Identity

Discussion Leader:

Reading Assignment: Slezkine, "Soviet Union as Communal Apartment"; Peter Holquist, "Conduct Merciless Mass Terror": Decossackization on the Don, 1919," *Cahiers du Monde russe* 38 (1-2): 127-162; Terry Martin, "The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing," *The Journal of Modern History* 70:4 (December 1998): 813-861

Discussion of historiography paper

Bibliography and theme for historiography paper due

Individual Meetings with Professor

Week Eight (November 4, 2013): The Western Provinces

Discussion Leader:

Reading Assignment: Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place*

Week Nine (November 11, 2013): The Jewish Question

Discussion Leader:

Reading Assignment: Benjamin Nathans, "Conflict, Community, and the Jews of Late Nineteenth-Century St. Petersburg," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 44:2 (1996): 178-216; Natan M. Meir, "Jews, Ukrainians, and Russians in Kiev," *Slavic Review* 65:3 (Autumn 2006): 475-501; Jonathan Dekel-Chen, "'New' Jews of the Agricultural Kind: A Case of Soviet Interwar Propaganda," *Russian Review* 66:3 (July 2007): 424-450;

Week Ten (November 18, 2013): Central Asia

Discussion Leader:

Reading Assignment: Northrop, *Veiled Empire*

Week Eleven (November 25, 2013): Siberia and the Far East

Discussion Leader:

Reading Assignment: Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors*

Second Book Review (Brown, Northrop, Slezkine) due.

Week Twelve (December 2, 2013): Post-Soviet Challenges

Discussion Leader:

Reading Assignment: Sebastien Peyrouse, "Nationhood and the Minority Question in Central Asia. The Russians in Kazakhstan," *Europe-Asia Studies* 59:3 (May 2007): 481-501; Georgi Derluguian and Serge Cipko, "The Politics of Identity in a Russian Borderland Province: The Kuban Neo-Cossack Movement, 1989-1996," *Europe-Asia Studies* 49:8 (December 1997): 1485-1500; Victor Shnirelman, "Stigmatized by History or by Historians? The Peoples of Russia in School History Textbooks," *History and Memory* 21:2 (Fall/Winter 2009): 110-149

Week Thirteen (December 9, 2013):

In-Class Workshop: The Historiography Paper
FIRST DRAFT DUE

Final Paper due (hard copy) December 21, 2013 at 11:00am