This course examines the extraordinary changes that have taken place on the territories of the former Soviet Union in the past 15 years by setting these developments firmly into historical context. To this end, we will broadly sketch the nature and legacy of Stalinism, the impact of World War II, and the Khrushchev and Brezhnev periods. We will study greater depth the Gorbachev era and the causes and consequences of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Finally, we will study the Yeltsin regime and the beginnings of the Putin era. Although the basic lines of foreign policy will be sketched, our essential focus will be on the domestic scene in the Soviet and post-Soviet territories with particular attention to socio-economic conditions, and popular and dissident culture.

Course Requirements, Expectations, Grades:

Students are expected to attend all lectures and discussions. Active and regular participation is an essential part of our course. The course will be a mix of lectures, regularly scheduled class discussions, and videos/films. I will announce in advance when we will be having discussions based on the assigned materials, although I will expect you to stay current with the readings and be ready to engage in the give and take of ideas and questions whenever they arise. So as to facilitate the scheduled discussions, I will expect students to prepare a short "working paper" (1 typed page) which identifies the major issues raised in each reading, defines the author's point of view, and includes questions to be raised in class. These "working papers" will be turned in but not graded by the instructor.

A primary objective of this course is to enhance students’ research skills and to do so through the development of an independent, original research project based on the identification and analysis of primary documents, a discussion of relevant secondary works, and the crafting of a coherent narrative and a persuasive argument resulting in a paper of some 15-20 pages in length. This project will be the work of the entire semester and will constitute the largest part (60%) of the grade. Each student will be required to adhere to the following schedule and to compile a portfolio consisting in:

- Conference with instructor on defining a topic/broad area of investigation. These meetings will be individually scheduled between Sept. 13-22 and must be completed by Sept. 22. You should come prepared to discuss your ideas. Skimming Evtuhov and Stites A history of Russia: peoples, legends, events, forces since 1800 and/or Seventeen Moments in Soviet History http://www.soviethistory.org/index.php may help you identify a topic of interest. You may also wish to explore web-based materials: see my Resource Page available on the class Blackboard site. http://bb.oberlin.edu/

- 1-2 page preliminary write up of the topic to be investigated due at the beginning of class on Tuesday, Sept. 27. You should discuss: why is this topic worth investigating? what is its significance? what are the questions you want to answer? what is interesting or problematic? This essay will not be based on research; it is more like a 'think piece' which sets out issues to be explored and what you might learn from detailed research. In thinking about your topic, you should also consider the possible sources you will need to use and which sources are likely to be found in English translation if you are not able to read Russian.

- Following class with Reference Librarian Haipeng Li on Sept. 27, 1-2 page write up of research strategy and preliminary bibliography due no later than Tuesday, Oct. 4. Now would be a good time to order materials from Interlibrary Loan, if necessary.
1-2 page refined thesis statement with an appended annotated bibliography of approximately equal length which identifies and evaluates both primary and secondary materials due no later than noon Oct. 14. By this point, you should have identified and read at least one monograph central to your research, and you should be thinking about the next assignment due Oct. 21 (fall break begins). You should also be well on your way to gathering relevant material, sifting through it, and taking thorough notes on it.

2-3 page critical review of a monograph relevant to your topic due no later than noon Oct. 21. Your review should identify and discuss the argument made, the relevance of this monograph to your work, and the ways in which it helps shed light on other materials, primary or secondary, that you have been reading. Your review should include specific reference to scholarly reviews of the monograph. Please include xeroxed copies of at least two reviews from the scholarly journals which you have utilized.

During the second half of the semester as you continue with your research and begin to write, I will expect you to set appointments with me to discuss progress and/or problems with your work. False starts and dead ends are an inevitable part of original research...that's why you need to be working consistently on your project, so that you'll have sufficient time to search out new sources when the ones you had hoped would be useful prove not to be. Well before Thanksgiving break you should begin drafting parts of your paper which is another excellent way to identify gaps in your research that will need to be filled.

Chronology and Preliminary outline due Nov. 10. Sketching a chronology of major events will help you set the context for your argument; a preliminary outline will help you organize your thoughts, identify principle themes, make connections, and again, help identify gaps in your research. Your outline should begin with a paragraph which sketches your argument, i.e. don’t tell your reader what your paper is about, but rather the argument you will make.

First draft, to be exchanged with another student for critique by Nov. 17. You should plan to meet with your partner, share your mutual comments on each other’s work, and allow sufficient time so that a reworked version can be submitted to me no later than Dec. 1. [Thanksgiving break is Thursday Nov. 24 through Sunday Nov. 27.]

Second draft, to be submitted to instructor not later than Thursday, Dec. 1.

While not a requirement of the course, many of you will want to share your research findings with the class. Depending of the numbers, we will allot Dec. 8 and 13 for oral presentations.

Final paper, and portfolio of all the above written work, due in my office by 4:30 pm, Tuesday, Dec. 13.

Your grade will be determined on the basis of:

- Research portfolio -- 60% of grade
- Class participation and working papers --20% of grade
- Take-home final exam due no later than 4pm Dec. 20 -- 20% of grade

All written work must be turned in to receive credit for this class.

All work for this class is governed by the honor code. You must write and sign the honor code pledge at the end of each assignment.

http://www.oberlin.edu/students/links-life/rules-regs.html#honor

Please follow the following citation form: http://www.oberlin.edu/faculty/svolk/citation.htm.

A final note: Please turn off cell phones, pagers, beeping watches and the like for the entire class period; once class
begun, please refrain from taking breaks and leaving the room until the designated break for everyone half way through

Lectures, Readings, Resources

The following will serve as basic texts for the course. Evtuhov and Stites have been ordered for purchase at the Bookstore but please note that I’ve only assigned the last 100 pages or so. I have also placed this book on Reserve.

Evtuhov and Stites A History of Russia: peoples, legends, events, forces since 1800

All other assigned materials will be available on Reserve or ERES. A link to ERES will also be found in the class Blackboard site. http://bb.oberlin.edu/

Tuesday, Sept. 6 – First Class – Introduction

I. Sept 8-15 Formative Experiences and Foundational Myths
[General overview of the period: Evtuhov and Stites, pp. 416-422.]

Sept. 8: Building Socialism

Taubman, Khrushchev, The Man and His Era, pp. 18-75

Sept. 13: WWII and Late Stalinism

Seventeen Moments
1943 -900 Days
Seventeen Moments
1947 -Veterans Return
-Video Clip: Story of a Real Man


Sept. 15 Discussion: End of an era [review all readings for this section and prepare a working paper]

Excerpts from Vera Dunham “The Big Deal” in The Structure of Soviet History, Essays and Documents ed. by Ronald G. Suny

Sakharov, Memoirs, pp. 162-175.
II. Sept. 20- 29. The Khrushchev era: Dilemmas of reform
[General overview of the period: Evtuhov and Stites, pp. pp. 423-439]

Sept. 20 Early Khrushchev

Seventeen Moments
1956 – Khrushchev’s Secret Speech
Anti-Party Group

Sept. 22 Generational change

Film: Wings

Brodsky, "In a Room and a Half," in Less Than One

Sept. 27 Library Session

Sept. 29 Later Khrushchev [review all readings for this section and prepare a working paper]

Seventeen Moments
1961 - Khrushchev Slums
Akademgorodok

III. Oct. 4- 20 Brezhnev: Stability and Stagnation
[General overview of the period: Evtuhov and Stites, pp. 440-472]

Oct. 4 and Oct. 6 Putting the lid back on; Oil and Rust
Videos: People of Influence
Comrades Series: Steel Mill Soccer

Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici? sici=00071234%28198304%2913%3A2%3C129%3ATPEOTB%3E2.0.CO%3B2-R
Stable URL: http://links.jstor.org/sici? sici=00376779%28198524%2944%3A4%3C694%3ATLDBCT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Z

Seventeen moments
1973 -The Pessimistic citizen

Oct. 11 Society and Dissent [review all readings for this section to date and prepare a working paper]

Video: People of the countryside

Seventeen moments
1968 – The Generation Gap
The Double Burden: read the excerpt from Baranskaya, “A Week Like Any Other Week”
1973 – The Dissident Movement: read the texts – Liberal, Conservative, Marxist dissent
The Pessimistic citizen
1980 – Vladimir Vysotsky
Oct. 13 No Class – Yom Kipper

Oct. 18 Afghanistan and Soviet Central Asia

Film: From the Glasnost film Festival: Homecoming

Seventeen moments
- 1980 – Invasion of Afghanistan

Oct. 20
Film: From the Glasnost film Festival: “And the Past seems But A Dream”

BREAK WEEK

IV. Nov 1–15: Reform to Collapse
[General overview of the period: Evtuhov and Stites, pp. 473-491.]

Nov. 1 and Nov. 3 Transition to Gorbachev and the Beginnings of Perestroika

Cohen and van den Heuvel, eds. Voices of Glasnost, pp. 13-32, 115-139, 140-156

Remnick “The Double Thinkers” in Lenin’s Tomb, pp.162-79

“Perestroika and the End of Communism, 1985-1991” in Robert V. Daniels, A Documentary History of Communism in Russia, From Lenin to Gorbachev pp. 337-351. [e-book]
- perestroika
- glasnost
- challenging the party
- opening up the past

[reading assignments continued on next page]

Film: Perestroika from Below

Seventeen Moments
- Chernobyl

Nov. 8 The empire breaks away

Remnick “Postcards from the Empire” and “The October Revolution” in Lenin’s Tomb, pp. 234-247 [ERES]

Nov. 10 Coup and the end of the USSR

Video: The Week That Shook The World, The Soviet Coup

Seventeen Moments
- 1991 –The Nine Plus One Agreement
- The August Coup
Nov. 15 Discussion: Why perestroika? Why did it fail? [review all readings for this section and prepare a working paper]

V. Nov. 17 – Nov. 29: The Yeltsin Era
[General overview of the period: Evtuhov and Stites, pp.492-511.]

Nov. 17 and Nov. 22 Early Yeltsin, the Shock of Therapy, and the Political crisis of 1993

Film: Struggle for Russia

Remnick, “The October Revolution” in Resurrection

Nov. 24 No Class – Thanksgiving

Nov. 29 Later Yeltsin: Chechnya /1996 elections /financial meltdown

Lieven, Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power, pp.1-16; 150-185.

Reis, “Honest Bandits” and “Warped People”: Russian Narratives about Money, Corruption, and Moral Decay” in Ethnography in Unstable Places.

VI. Dec. 1 – 15: Putin’s Russia

Dec. 1 Putin: Elected Monarch of a Managed Democracy?

Video: Return of the Czar
First Person: An Astonishingly Frank Self-Portrait by Russia’s President Vladimir Putin pp. 163-207 [e-book]

Dec. 6 Summing up [review all readings for Nov. 17 – Dec. 6 and prepare a working paper]

S. Kotkin, “Trashcanistan: A tour through the wreckage of the soviet empire” The New Republic April 15, 2002

A. Meier, “West: The Skazka” in Black Earth pp. 313-382

Dec. 8 Research presentations

Dec. 13 Research presentations

Dec. 15 Last Class