#108 - Russian History II

Our course begins with the reign of Alexander II (1855-1881) and the era of Great Reforms (1860s) and then proceeds to study Imperial Russia’s struggle with “modernity:” the tensions associated with industrialization and the creation of an urban working class; the impact of rapid socio-economic change on the village; the emergence of “middling classes” which began to demand civil rights; and the problems of maintaining a multi-ethnic empire. Next we examine the revolutionary crisis of 1905 and its aftermath, the descent into World War I and the Revolutions of 1917. The second half of the course studies the Soviet period, with emphasis on the process of state-building and the transformation of society and culture under Stalin; Soviet Russia’s experience in World War II; and the origins of Cold War. The course concludes with an examination of post-Stalinist attempts at reform and suggests some of the reasons for the dramatic collapse of the regime in 1991.

Course Requirements

1) Students are expected to attend all lectures. Active and regular participation is an essential part of the course; the instructor welcomes questions at any point.

2) Papers and Examinations.

Three essays based on the assigned readings.

Assignment #1 will be due on March 7 (20% of grade)
Assignment #2 will be due on April 23 (30% of grade)
Assignment #3 will be due on May 9 (20% of grade)

A final exam on May 16 from 7-9pm (30% of grade)

Attendance and participation (priceless)

Late paper policy:
· For an extension to be considered, the student must consult with the instructor in advance of the due date.
· If the student presents a valid excuse, an extension of up to one week will be granted.
· No more than one extension will be granted, that is, the other two papers must be turned in on time.
· Unexcused late papers will be penalized a grade step for each day (24 hours) late, that is, A goes to A-, A- goes to B+, etc.
· Credit for the course will not be given if all written work is not turned in.

3) Reading Assignments: All books and articles assigned in this course are available on Reserve or ERES.
The following books have been ordered for purchase:


Seventeen Moments in Soviet History, 1917-1991: [http://www.soviethistory.org/index.php](http://www.soviethistory.org/index.php) is an interesting and innovative web site that posts a fascinating array of documents, music, and images. Select a year and a pop up menu will appear with a wide selection of topics and events. I encourage you to routinely explore this site as an important supplement to the semester’s work.

A note on the textbooks: In the past I have simply placed several textbooks on reserve as recommended reading. This year, following comments from student evaluations, I am strongly encouraging students to select a textbook and read it consistently throughout the semester. My own preference is for C. Evtuhov, et. al. eds., *A History Of Russia: Peoples, Legends, Events, Forces* because it is the most up to date and comprehensive, and because it includes commentary on social and cultural history. Freeze, *Russia, A History* is also reasonably up to date, treats social and cultural topics, but is substantially shorter.

4) Students are encouraged to meet with the instructor during office hours or by appointment to discuss any aspect of the semester's work.

5) Honor Code: All course work is governed by Oberlin's Honor Code. [http://www.oberlin.edu/students/links-life/rules-regs.html - honor](http://www.oberlin.edu/students/links-life/rules-regs.html - honor)

6) Writing Proficiency: Students who wish to be considered for writing proficiency should notify me at the beginning of the semester.

A final note: Please turn off cell phones, pagers, beeping watches and the like for the entire class period; once class has begun, please refrain from taking breaks and leaving the room.

Lectures and Readings (Approximate Schedule)

**Feb.5: Introduction**

**Feb. 7- 16: The Crisis of the Nicholean System; Mid-Century Reforms and Response of Society**


Text:
Evtuhov and Stites, PB = pp.98-141. HB=pp. 406-449
Or
Freeze, pp. 170-193.

**Feb. 19- March 9: The Dilemmas of Modernity**


Text:
Evtuhov and Stites, PB = pp.142-254. HB = pp. 450-562
Or
Freeze, pp. 193-230

**March 7: First essay due**

**March 12-March 23: War, Revolution, Civil War**

War and Revolution

S.A. Smith *The Russian Revolution*, pp. 5-100


Text:
Or
Freeze, pp. 230-253

Explore “1917”
b) Civil War


Text:
Evtuhov and Stites: PB = pp.297-317. HB = pp. 605-625
Or
Freeze, pp. 253-262

Explore “1921”

March 24-April 1: Spring Break

**April 2- April 6: Early Soviet Polity and Society**

S.A. Smith *The Russian Revolution*, pp. 100-168

Text:
Evtuhov and Stites: PB = pp.318-354. HB = pp. 626-662
Or
Freeze, pp. 263-290

Explore “1924”

**April 9-April 27: Stalin’s Russia (1929-1953)**

a) Building Socialism


Text:
Evtuhov and Stites: PB = pp.355-387. HB = pp. 663-695
Or
Freeze, pp. 291-318

b) World War II and Late Stalinism

Kozhina, *Through the Burning Steppe* (entire)


Text:
Or
Freeze, pp. 319-346.

Explore “1943” “1947”

Film to be Scheduled: The Battle of Russia [probably Monday, April 23, 7-8:30pm]

**April 23: Second essay due**

**April 30 -May 4: Reform and Retreat: The Khrushchev and Brezhnev Eras**


Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted*, begin reading

Text:
Or
Freeze, pp. 347-382


**May 7-May 11: Reform, Collapse and New Directions?**

Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted*, finish reading

Text:
Or
Freeze, pp. 383-421

Explore “1986” “1991”
May 9: Third essay due.

May 11: Last Class

May 16: Final exam 7-9pm