Course Description:
In 1917, Vladimir Lenin and the Bolshevik Party seized power in the former Russian Empire and embarked on a campaign to transform the very basis of human society. This “Soviet Experiment” was intended to forge a fundamentally new means of structuring human life. The challenges they faced included the transformation of political and social structures, the evolution of gender and class relations, and the conflict between religious, ethnic and Marxist ideals in a communist state. But how and why did this revolutionary movement emerge out of Imperial Russian society? We will examine such central themes as the causes for revolution, structures of political governance (both of the Russian interior and the borderlands), questions of social transformation, and religious, ethnic and social identity. The impact of Joseph Stalin’s industrialization and collectivization campaigns, the political terror of the 1930s, the traumatic events of the Great Patriotic War, the emergence of the Cold War, economic stagnation and the ultimate decline of the Soviet Union will be explored. Central to our discussions will be the following questions: What precedents for revolutionary change emerged in Imperial Russia? What were socialism and communism in the USSR (both in idea and in practice)? What were the multiple roles adopted by Soviet citizens in their interactions with the State (including
collaborators, victims, dissidents and outcasts)? How did internal and external factors (political, social, economic) transform Soviet policy and life? Was the collapse of the USSR inevitable? Throughout the course, special attention will be paid to the ways in which the history of Russia and the Soviet Union was shaped, not only by political leaders, but by ordinary people.

**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 five assigned texts for this class: one monograph, one novel and three memoirs. All books are available for purchase in the bookstore and can also be accessed through Oberlin Library or Ohio Link. Other assigned documents will be available on Blackboard and are listed in the syllabus according to week.

Vladislav Tamarov, *Afghanistan: A Russian Soldier’s Story* (Ten Speed Press, 2001)

**Grading Schema:**
*Take-Home Essay (2):* 15% each (total 30%, due February 20, 2015, and March 20, 2015)
Each take-home essay will consist of a 2-3 page analytical essay based on class reading and lecture. You will receive potential questions one week prior to the due date.

*Map Quizzes (2):* 10% (5% each, scheduled February 16, 2015 and April 29, 2015)

*Primary Source Journal: 20%*
Throughout our discussion of the Soviet Period of Russian history (Weeks Four-Twelve) you will keep a primary source journal. For each session marked “Primary Source Journal” you will select ONE primary source document from the website *Seventeen Moments in Soviet History* (www.soviethistory.org) and write a BRIEF (300 word) critical analysis of the contents of the source in connection with the shared reading assignment for the week. The year(s) that you should select from are noted in the syllabus for each assignment. 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 (noted in the syllabus). By the end of the semester, you should have amassed a total of ten (10) sources. You are strongly encouraged to choose a common theme (gender, politics, economics, terror and repression, etc.) and choose primary sources related to that topic.

Final Essay: 20% (5-6 pages, due Wednesday, May 13, at 9:00pm)
In your final essay, you will be required to demonstrate an understanding of the chronology and development of Russian and Soviet history, as well as the ability to critically construct an argument based on source materials covered in class. Specific topics will be distributed after Spring Break.

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 Wednesday, May 13 at 9:00pm. In order to pass the class, you must turn in all required assignments.

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 clearly identify yourself and your question (full name, course number, 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: plagiarus, 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: Russia and the Great Reforms**
- **Session One** (February 2, 2015): Snow Day!
- **Session Two** (February 4, 2015): Syllabus and Introductions – Russia Before the Great Reforms
- **Session Three** (February 6, 2015): Aleksandr II and the Great Reforms
- Reading Assignment: Alexander II, “Emancipation Manifesto” (1861)

**Week Two: Assassination, Reaction and the Twilight of Empire**
- **Session Four** (February 9, 2015): The Revolutionary Movement
  - Reading Assignment: Figner, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, 39-86; Sergei Nechaev, “Revolutionary Catechism” (1869); A.V. Iartsev, “Proclamation” (1873)
- **Session Five** (February 11, 2015): To Kill a Tsar
- **Session Six** (February 13, 2015): Discussion - Figner, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* (complete)

**Week Three: Revolutionary Russia**
- **Session Seven** (February 16, 2015): Conservatism and the Decline of the Old Order
  - MAP QUIZ ONE
- **Session Eight** (February 18, 2015): The Revolutions of 1905 and the Twilight of Empire
  - Reading Assignment: Susan Morrissey, “The ‘Apparel of Innocence’: Toward a Moral Economy of Terrorism in Late Imperial Russia,” *Journal of Modern History* 84:3 (September 2012): 607-642
- **Session Nine** (February 20, 2015): Late Imperial Russia: Culture and Society
  - TAKE-HOME ESSAY ON FIGNER DUE

**Week Four: Revolutionary Russia continued**
- **Session Ten** (February 23, 2015): Marxism-Leninism
  - Reading Assignment: Lenin, *What is to be Done?* (1901)
Session Eleven (February 25, 2015): The Revolutions of 1917
  Reading Assignment: Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution, 1-67
  Primary Source Journal One: Seventeen Moments in Soviet History, 1917
Session Twelve (February 27, 2015): The Civil War (1918-1921)
  Reading Assignment: Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution, 68-92;
  Makhnovist declarations (1920) (Blackboard)

Week Five: Political and Social Transformation
Session Thirteen (March 2, 2015): Nationalities Policy in the USSR
  Reading Assignment: Vladimir Lenin, “The Right of Nations to Self-
  Determination”; Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia (1917);
  Iosef Stalin, “On the Limitation of National Self-Determination”
  Primary Source Journal Two: Seventeen Moments, 1921
Session Fourteen (March 4, 2015): The New Economic Policy
  Reading Assignment: Fitzpatrick, Russian Revolution, 93-119; Lenin, Last
  Testament (1922); Mikhail Zoshchenko, “Nervous People” (Blackboard)
Session Fifteen (March 6, 2015): Collectivization and the First Five-Year Plan
  Primary Source Journal Three: Seventeen Moments, 1924
  Reading Assignment: Fitzpatrick, Russian Revolution, 120-147

Week Six: Stalinism as “Civilization”
Session Sixteen (March 9, 2015): No Class; read Platonov, The Foundation Pit
Session Seventeen (March 11, 2015): Discussion: Platonov, The Foundation Pit
Session Eighteen (March 13, 2015): Political Struggles in the 1930s
  Primary Source Journal Four: Seventeen Moments, 1929
  Reading Assignment: Fitzpatrick, Russian Revolution, 148-172

Week Seven:
Session Nineteen (March 16, 2015): A New Class (Rise of New Bureaucracy)
  Primary Source Journal Five: Seventeen Moments, 1934, 1936, OR 1939
  TURN IN PRIMARY SOURCE JOURNAL!!!
Session Twenty (March 18, 2015): Everyday Stalinism
  Reading Assignment: Hellbeck, “Fashioning the Stalinist Soul: The Diary of
  Stepan Podlubnyi (1931-39), Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas 44: 3
Session Twenty-One: (March 20, 2015): NO CLASS; ESSAY ON PLATONOV DUE

SPRING BREAK: March 23-27, 2015

Week Eight:
Session Twenty-Two (March 39, 2015): The Great Patriotic War and Its Aftermath
  Primary Source Journal Six: Seventeen Moments, 1943
Session Twenty-Three (April 1, 2015): Domestic Policy in Stalin’s Final Years
Session Twenty-Four (April 3, 2015): International Policy in Stalin’s Final Years (The
  Cold War)
  Reading Assignment: Stalin Speech, USSR response to NATO
Week Nine: De-Stalinization
Session Twenty-Five (April 6, 2015): De-Stalinization (The Thaw)
  Reading Assignment: Khrushchev’s Secret Speech (excerpt)
Session Twenty-Six (April 8, 2015): Challenges and Promises
  Primary Source Journal Seven: Seventeen Moments, 1956
  Reading Assignment: Polly Jones, “Memories of Terror or Terrorizing Memories?
  Terror, Trauma and Survival in Soviet Culture of the Thaw,” Slavonic and
  TURN IN PRIMARY SOURCE JOURNALS
Session Twenty-Seven (April 10, 2015): From Khrushchev’s Thaw to Brezhnev’s
  Stagnation
  Primary Source Journal Eight: Seventeen Moments, 1968

Week Ten: The Post-Stalin Era
Session Twenty-Eight (April 13, 2015): The Interregnum (Debate)
Session Twenty-Nine (April 15, 2015): Soviet History According to Gorbachev
  Reading Assignment: Gorbachev, On My Country, 3-54
Session Thirty (April 17, 2015): Perestroika and glasnost’
  Reading Assignment: Gorbachev, “On Convening the Regular 27th CPSU
  Congress and the Tasks Connected with Preparing and Holding it,”
  Pravda (April 23, 1985); Gorbachev, On My Country, 55-82
  Primary Source Journal Nine: Seventeen Moments, 1985

Week Eleven: Perestroika and glasnost’
Session Thirty-One (April 20, 2015): Discussion (Afghanistan)
  Reading Assignment: Tamarov, Afghanistan: A Soldier’s Story
Session Thirty-Two (April 22, 2015): Successes and Failures (perestroika and glasnost)
  Reading Assignment: Kiev Conversations (February 20, 1989); Gorbachev, On
  My Country, 83-133
Session Thirty-Three (April 24, 2015): The End of the Soviet Union
  Reading Assignment: Russian Federation Duma Transcript (August 23, 1991);
  The Minsk Agreement (December 8, 1991); Gorbachev, On My Country,
  134-148
  Primary Source Journal Ten: Seventeen Moments, 1991

Week Twelve: The End of the Soviet Union
Session Thirty-Four (April 27, 2015): Boris Yeltsin and the New Russia
  MAP QUIZ TWO
Session Thirty-Five (April 29, 2015): Discussion: Was the Collapse of the Soviet Union
  Inevitable?
  Reading Assignment: Gorbachev, On My Country, 149-170
Session Thirty-Six (May 1, 2015): Allen Memorial Art Museum

Week Thirteen: The Putin Era
Session Thirty-Seven (May 4, 2015): Discussion - *My Perestroika*
Viewing Assignment: Film, *My Perestroika*

Session Thirty-Eight (May 6, 2015): The Rise of Putin
Reading Assignment: Putin’s First Address to the Russian State Duma (April 2001);

Session Thirty-Nine (May 8, 2015): Towards a New Authoritarianism?
Reading Assignment: Documents on Ukraine Crisis

FINAL PAPER AND PRIMARY SOURCE JOURNAL DUE Wednesday, May 13th at 9:00 pm. TURN IN HARD COPY TO MY OFFICE (Rice)
DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Historians use a wide variety of materials to construct our understanding of the past. Archaeological artifacts, oral tradition, visual images (paintings, photographs, film), and of course written texts can and should be used to gain a clear picture of the period in question.

**General Questions of Origin (who, what, where, why and when):**

| Author(s) | Not only the name of the author(s), but also the biographical information about him or her that will allow an understanding of biases (gender, age, religion, profession, political affiliation, etc). |
| Context | What are the historical circumstances in which the author is writing or creating the source? What has s/he been experiencing and seeing during or proceeding the time of writing? Note the year of publication, location, etc. |
| Language | How would you characterize the author(s) use of words (or images)? Is it: angry, vindictive, loving, inspiring, boring/academic, colloquial, accessible, etc.? This should help gauge intent, but also figure out to whom the source is written for or directed toward. |
| Audience | To whom is the document directed? This will tell you a great deal about the author's intentions and possible biases. |
| Intent | What was the author trying to do? Was s/he attempting to change minds, overthrow a government, vent to a friend in a letter…? Knowing this will also help the reader to understand the full meaning of the source better. |
| Message | Finally, what is actually written or produced in the source? This is what is commonly known as “the facts.” What does it tell us about the time and place under consideration? You must be able to place the primary document in **historical context**. |

Some questions are less obvious and demand much more thought. For example, what can we gain by careful reading (i.e. reading between the lines)? What does the author share with his/her audience? Are there certain values stated either implicitly or explicitly? Look for superlatives, emotion, and emphasis.

How does the source compare to others you have encountered or evaluated this semester?

How does it help you understand the other sources we have been reading? Answer or reject some of the major historiographical questions we have been asking?

**Evaluation**

- Is the document believable and trustworthy? Can we consider it and the statements in it genuine?
- Is the author consistent in his/her stated purpose and message?
- How does the document inform the time and topic under consideration?