

Soviet/Post-Soviet Russia  
HIST 464  
Fall 2012  
3 credits  
TTh 11:30-1  
Gruening 401

Brian Kassof  
bkassof@alaska.edu  
474-6507  
Office Hours: MT 1:30-3  
or by appointment  
Gruening 605A

The goal of this class is to introduce students to the history of the Soviet Union. We will look at both high-level political, economic, and cultural developments, and the everyday lives of the people, from the 1917 Revolution through the end of the Soviet state in 1991. We will examine how the Communist Party tried to create a socialist, industrial Utopia in one of the poorest and most rural countries in Europe, creating a multi-national empire that eventually rose to become a "super-power," before its eventual collapse and disintegration. Students should have taken History 275 prior to this class, or have permission of instructor.

Course goals and outcomes: By the end of this course, students should have a good understanding of the key events/actors/concepts of Russian/Soviet history during the period in question, and be able to identify and explain their importance and their relationship to one another. Students will develop/improve their skills reading primary source documents, in order to understand their meaning and the context in which they were written. Because of the politicized nature of much of the historical writing on Russia and the Soviet Union, students will also consider how political beliefs influence the way history is written and shaped. Lastly, students will develop research skills and improve their ability to construct, justify, and present arguments in written and oral form.

**Evaluation:** Grades will be based on the following criteria, 600 points total.

**Attendance and discussion: 90 points (15%)** Discussion of readings and other materials is an integral part of this class. Students are expected to do all readings and come to class prepared to discuss them. If you do not participate, I

will call on you directly. Because of the nature of the course, regular and timely attendance is essential. Students are allowed two unexcused absences during the course of the semester—additional unexcused absences will impact your grade (see attendance policy below).

**Mid-Term Exam: 90 points (15%)** An in-class mid-term covering material up to and including the Great Break will be given on October 19.

**In-Class Final: 60 points (10%)** The in-class portion of the final (covering id's, multiple choice, and matching) will be at 10:15 a.m. on December 16.

**Take-Home Final: 90 points (15%)** Questions for the take-home essay portion of the final will be distributed in class on Thursday December 9 and is due at the start of the in-class final on December 16.

**3 Primary Source Reactions: 20 points each (60 points total, 10%)**  
During the course of the semester students will be expected to post 3 reactions/questions about primary source readings assigned for class on Blackboard by noon the day before the texts are due. These posts should be at least 4-5 sentences long and can (but do not have to) be based on reading questions I suggest in class. Other students are encouraged to respond to these posts on Blackboard as well.

**Article Review: 60 points (10%)** Students will read and review one article. An article review provides a very brief summary of the author's argument, how they support that argument, the types of evidence used, and where it fits into the broader themes discussed in the course and historiography. Length--about 4 pp. Due October 7.

A number of articles are available via Blackboard--students should select one article for review.

**Research Paper: 150 points (25%)** Students will research and write a 12-15 pp. paper on an approved topic of their choosing. The assignment consists of several components:

Topic and preliminary bibliography: 15 points, due on 9/30

Annotated bibliography: 15 points, due on 11/4

Outline/rough draft: 15 points, due on 11/23

Final draft: 105 points, due on 12/2

Further instructions for the paper will be distributed later in the semester.

Grades: 555-600 A 540-554 A-

525-539 B+ 495-524 B 480-494 B-

465-479 C+ 435-464 C 420-434 C-  
405-419 D+ 375-404 D 360-374 D-  
under 360 F

Grading Rubrics—available on Blackboard under Assignments

### **Attendance and preparation:**

Attendance and preparation: Students are expected to come to class having read all assigned materials and to be prepared to discuss them. Attendance is mandatory. Students can miss two classes without penalty—this includes classes missed for any reason. Starting with the third missed class, unexcused absences will be penalized at the following rate: first unexcused absence (third absence overall)—1% grade reduction; second unexcused absence—2% grade reduction; unexcused absences 3-4—4% grade reduction; unexcused absences 5-6—5% grade reductions. After your seventh unexcused absence, you will be dropped from the class.

### **Academic Honesty:**

Students are expected to adhere to the student code of conduct (see Fall 2010 Course Catalog, 117). Cheating or dishonesty will not be tolerated in this course, including plagiarism or fabrication. Plagiarism is the appropriation of either specific passages of text or unique ideas from another source without proper attribution. Reusing your own work (without informing the instructor) is also unacceptable. Fabrication is the use of invented materials or the deliberate misrepresentation of materials in your work. Any form of cheating on a course assignment (paper or test) will result in a failing grade for the course and the case will be referred to the appropriate university authorities.

Discussion may sometimes touch on contentious issues. While you are encouraged to express your thoughts and opinions, please remain respectful of your classmates and their views.

### **Paper submissions, make-ups, and extra credit:**

All papers must be submitted to me in hard copy. Assignments are due at the start of class on the day indicated. In extraordinary cases I will accept an electronic version of a paper as a time stamp, but you need to get an identical hard copy to me as soon as is possible. Further instructions will be included with each paper assignment. All papers must conform with my style guidelines, or they will be returned immediately.

Late papers and assignments will only be accepted by prior agreement. You must request permission to submit the paper late before the time it is due—if you do not contact me by this time, the paper will not be accepted. There are no exceptions—please plan accordingly. Late papers will be graded down a full letter grade for each day they are late (i.e., a paper that is one hour late will be dropped one letter grade, one that is 25 hours late by two letter grades).

Make-up exams will only be given in cases of documented emergencies. Make-up exams may have different content than the regular exam.

Extra credit. Just like life, this class does not have extra credit. so don't ask.

### **Other Class policies:**

Please come to class on time—late entrances are disruptive and disrespectful. Repeated tardiness will be treated as one or more absences.

Computers--Students may use computers to take notes and access course documents during class. Students engaging in inappropriate computer usage (web-surfing, working on assignments, emailing, etc.) during class will have this privilege revoked. This applies to all electronic/digital devices.

Wikipedia—This has become a popular source for information. However, it is not peer-reviewed, and the information and ideas presented on it are often incorrect or unreliable. Wikipedia or other non peer-reviewed on-line sites are not acceptable sources for papers or assignments. It is occasionally useful for very basic information (dates of birth, for example) or as a starting point for an inquiry, but it is not an acceptable source for writing or class assignments. If you do use Wikipedia, however, please be sure to provide the necessary citation--even anonymous materials must be cited.

Necessary accommodations will be made for any students with documented disabilities—if you have any kind of learning disability, please contact Mary Matthews at the Center for Health and Counseling (x7043) to obtain the necessary documentation. Please deal with this as soon as possible—I cannot make retroactive accommodations for assignments that have already been submitted.

In general, if there is something interfering with your work, it is better to contact me about this sooner than later, so we can determine the best way to help you succeed in the course. I encourage you to come speak to me about any potential problems that you may face in the course—I can't help you if I don't know about it.

Required texts (available at the University Bookstore)  
Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Soviet Experiment*

Sheila Fitzpatrick and Yuri Slezkine, eds., *In the Shadow of Revolution*  
Lydia Chukovskaia, *Sofia Petrovna*  
Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*  
Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*

There will also be a course reader available through University Readers.

September 2--Introductory Session

**Week 1--Setting the Stage**

read Suny, 3-28; Fitzpatrick, 123-31, 169-79; read Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*

September 7: Russia on the Eve of World War One  
Reader 3-12

September 9: Radical Russia and Socialism  
Reader 13-22

**Week 2 War and Revolution**

read Suny, 29-33 and Ch. 2; Fitzpatrick 33-39, 49-65

September 14: World War One and the February Revolution  
Reader 23-27

September 16: 1917 and the October Revolution  
Reader 28-37

**Week 3 Civil War and the Consolidation of Power**

read Suny, Ch. 3-5; Fitzpatrick 39-48, 73-81, 89-103, 118-22.

September 21: The Civil War, Part I--Defeating the Whites  
Reader 38-46

September 23: The Civil War, Part II--Establishing a Dictatorship  
Reader 47-53

**Week 4 Compromise and Utopia**

read Suny, Ch. 7; Fitzpatrick 195-209

September 28: The New Economic Policy  
Reader 54-66

September 30: Utopian Dreams  
Reader 67-79

**paper topics and bibliography due on September 30**

**Week 5 The General Secretary and His New Path**

read Suny, Ch. 6, 217-27, 233-46; Fitzpatrick 219-40

October 5: Lenin's Death and the Struggle for Succession  
Reader 80-88

October 7: The Great Break, Part I--Collectivization and Industrialization  
Reader 89-112

**Article Review due on October 7**

**Week 6 Cultural Revolution, Social Retrenchment**

read Suny, 209-13, 227-31, 246-51; Fitzpatrick 195-206, 243-76

October 12: The Great Break, Part II--Cultural Revolution  
Reader 113-23

October 14: High Stalinism, Part I--Retrenchment  
Reader 124-32

**Week 7 High Stalinism--A New Civilization?**

read Suny, 269-90; Fitzpatrick 277-89, 305-21, 331-41, 367-83))

**October 19—mid-term exam.**

October 21: High-Stalinism, Part II--A New Civilization?  
Reader 133-43

**Week 8 Terror and Purges**

read Suny, Ch. 11; Fitzpatrick 324-30, 342-49, 359-64, 394-418  
Lydia Chukovskaia, *Sofia Petrovna*

October 26: The Great Terror--Politics and Purges  
Reader 3-14 (start volume 2)

October 28: The Great Terror--Terror Lived  
Reader 18-23

**Week 9 Two Wars, Hot and Cold**  
read Suny, Ch. 13-15

November 2 : The Second World War  
Reader 24-40

November 4: The Cold War Begins  
Reader 41-45

**Annotated Bibliography due November 4**

**Week 10 The End of the Stalin Era**  
read Suny, Ch. 16-17 & pp. 404-07; Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*

November 9: Post-War Stalinism  
Reader 46-59

November 11: Stalin's Death and "The Thaw"  
Reader 60-62

**Week 11 Searching for a New Path--the 1960s and 1970s**  
read Suny, Ch. 18-19

November 16: The Khrushchev Era  
Reader 63

November 18: The Era of Stagnation (1965-1983)  
Reader 64-87

**Week 12 Alliance and Dissent**

November 23: The Warsaw Pact  
Reader 88-89

**Paper outline due November 23**

November 25—No class-Thanksgiving

**Week 13 Perestroika and the End of the Soviet Union**

read Suny, Ch. 20-21

November 30: The Dissident Movement

Reader 90-145

December 2: Gorbachev and Perestroika

Reader 146-62

**Final research paper due on December 2**

**Week 14 Post-Soviet Russia**

December 7: The Fall of the Soviet Union

Reader 163-66

December 9: Russia in the 1990s

Reader 167-85

**Take home final due 12/16**

**In-class final 12/16 at 10:15 a.m.**