

HSTR 359
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Russia to 1917

Welcome to the History of Russia to 1917! This course examines the history of Russia from days of Kievan Rus all the way up through the Bolshevik takeover of 1917. Focusing mostly on the imperial period—taking place between the reigns of Peter the Great (r. 1682-1725) and Nicholas II (r. 1894-1917)—this course pays special attention to the multi-national and multi-religious makeup of the Eurasian region and the role of cross-cultural relations in its history.

I. Desired Learning Objectives:

- a)** To gain an understanding of the major events taking place in Russian imperial history from the early eighteenth century until the Bolshevik revolution of 1917.
- b)** Discussing events thematically and comparatively.
- c)** To read history texts more critically, distinguishing between different narratives of the same historical events.
- d)** To develop a sense for viewing current political conditions in the region in a more historical manner.
- e)** To strengthen various technical skills, such as the reading of primary source material, writing, and presenting material orally.

II. Evaluation: Students will be required to complete the following coursework. **All** of these assignments must be completed in order to earn a passing grade in this course.

Map quiz: 5%
Attendance and participation: 20%
Two five-page papers: 20% (10% each)
Quizzes/Written work: 10%
Midterm: 20%
Final Exam: 25%

III. Required texts and film

Nicholas Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*

Orlando Figes, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia*

Michael Khodarkovsky, *Bitter Choices: Loyalty and Betrayal in the Russian Conquest of the North Caucasus*

Charles King, *Odessa: Genius and Death in a City of Dreams*

Film: *Russian Ark* (2003)

We will also be discussing translations of Russian state documents assembled in James Cracraft's *Major Problems in the History of Russia*. Copies of these short readings will be distributed and read in class.

IV. Plagiarism: Students caught plagiarizing or otherwise cheating will receive an 'F' in this course and will be reported to the Provost's office. Students can view the code of conduct they are expected to live by [here](#).

V. Electronic devices. Please turn all electronic devices, including cell phones and computers, off. If you cannot function without a computer and feel perplexed by this rule, please talk to me. **Every time** I see someone employing an electronic device (texting, using a computer, etc) without permission, your attendance/participation grade for the semester **will fall by one point**, whether I mention this to you in class or not.

VI. How to address me. You can call me "Jim" or "Professor Meyer," depending on what you feel most comfortable with. Please **don't** call me "Mr. Meyer."

Some web resources pertaining to current affairs in the region:

[The Moscow News](http://themoscownews.com) (themoscownews.com)

Eurasianet.org

CLASS SCHEDULE

Key Dates: Map Quiz (Thursday Sept. 6); First Paper (Tuesday Oct. 2); Midterm (Thursday, Oct. 11); Second Paper (Thursday Nov. 8); In-class final (Thursday, Dec. 6).

Week 1 (August 28-30): Introduction to the class and the region

Tuesday: Syllabus talk

* For Thursday Aug. 30: Read "Governing Russia: Putin's Federal Dilemmas" (handout)

Thursday: Russia today; themes for the class and region.

* For Tuesday of Week 2: Read Riasanovsky, 29-42, 67-76, 95-113;143-174.

* For Thursday of Week 2: Read Orlando Figes, "Introduction."

Week 2 (Sept. 4-6): Pre-imperial Russia

Tuesday: Muscovite Russia; Discussion of Riasanovsky.

Thursday: **Map Quiz**; More on pre-Petrine Russia; Discussion of Figes.

* Reading for Week 3: (Tuesday) Riasanovsky: 213-241; (Thursday) Figes, 1-68

Week 3 (Sept. 11-13): Peter the Great and the Creation of the Russian Empire

Tuesday: Peter the Great; Discussion of upcoming writing assignment

Thursday: Peter's legacy; Discussion of Figes

* Reading for Week 4: (Tuesday) Riasanovsky, 254-299; (Thursday) Robert D. Crews, "Empire and the Confessional State" (D2L).

Week 4: Sept. 18-20: Catherine the Great and the Enlightened Autocracy

Tuesday: Catherine the Great;

Thursday: Administrative diversity under Catherine; Discussion of Crews article.

* Reading for Week 5: (Tuesday) Riasanovsky, 300-340;
(Thursday) Figes, 69-146.

Week 5 Sept 25-27: The reigns of Alexander I and Nicholas I

Tuesday: Alexander I and the Napoleonic Wars

Thursday: Nicholas I and the Crimean War; Discuss Figes.

* Reading for Week 6: (Tuesday) Riasanovsky 368-390;
(Thursday) Khodarkovsky, ix-66.

Week 6 (Oct. 2-4): The Great Reforms & Foreign Policy

Tuesday: **First paper due at start of class;** the Great Reforms

Thursday: Russian Foreign Policy in the late nineteenth century
Discuss Khodarkovsky.

* For Week 7: (Tuesday) Khodarkovsky, 93-171 (end);
(Thursday) Study for Midterm.

Week 7: (Oct. 9-11): Review and Midterm

Tues: Discuss Khodarkovsky, midterm review

Thurs: **Midterm.**

* For Week 9: Read: (Tuesday) Figes, "The Peasant Marriage,"
217-288; (Thursday) Figes, "In Search of the Russian Soul," 289-354.

Week 8: (October 16-18): Russian Ark

Tuesday and Thursday: Watch and discuss *Russian Ark* in class.

Week 9: (Oct. 23-25) Russia at the end of the nineteenth century

Tuesday: The State: Post-Reform Changes; Discuss "The Peasant Marriage"

Thursday: The People in the Late 19th Century; Discuss "In Search of the Russian Soul."

* For Week 10: (Tuesday) Riasanovsky, 404-421; (Thursday); King, 11-96.

Week 10: (Oct. 30-Nov. 4) The Revolution of 1905

Tuesday: The Russo-Japanese War and the 1905 Revolution.

Thursday: More on 1905; Discuss King.

* For Week 11: (Thursday) Read Riasanovsky, 422-452; Submit Second Writing Assignment at the beginning of class.

Week 11: Nov. 8 Parliamentary system, counter-coup. Second papers due.

Tuesday: No class!

Thursday: The parliamentary system and counter-coup; **Second papers due at beginning of class.**

* For Week 12: (Tuesday) Read Figes & Kolonistskii (Digital Reserves); (Thursday) King, 97-176.

Week 12: (Nov 13-15) WWI and the Revolutions of 1917

Tuesday: Russia and the First World War

Thursday: The Revolutions of 1917

* For Week 14: (Tuesday) Read King, 177-282 (end).

Week 13: (Nov. 20-22): Classes cancelled!

Tuesday & Thursday: no class

Week 14: Nov. 27-29 Discuss King, Wrap-up

Tuesday: The End of the Russian Empire; King

Thursday: After the Russian Empire

Week 15: Dec. 4-6 Review and in-class final exam

Tuesday: Review

Thursday: **Final Exam in class!**

Have a great semester!