

HIST 237 RUSSIAN CIVILIZATION

Fall 2023
Tues./Thur. 9:30–10:45
Taliaferro Hall (TLF) 1101

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Office Hours: Tues. 11:00–noon and 2:00–3:00; and by appointment

Course Description

This course offers an interpretive introduction to the field. Rather than offer an old-fashioned march through the reigns of the tsars, or attempting to cover everything in a millennium of Russian history, this course is structured around the major problems and challenges that helped determine the shape of the civilization that emerged in Russia, with a special focus on the modern period from the eighteenth century on. In other words, the focus is on the biggest questions of continuity across the dramatic transformation of the Orthodox civilization of Muscovy that the Mongols had conquered into a great Eurasian empire and then the world's first communist superpower.

Five themes inform the course throughout and are traced chronologically during the semester: the autocratic Russian system of government, its legacy for the Soviet dictatorship, and the state's role in political violence; Westernization and how Russia/USSR positioned, transformed, and opposed itself to Europe and the West; serfdom, the peasantry, and the distinct world of rural Russia; empire, non-Russian peoples and borderlands, and the multiethnic society of the Eurasian continent; and, finally, that peculiar Russian socio-cultural formation, the intelligentsia, whose debates and movements drove so much of the Russian Revolution of 1917, late imperial and Soviet culture, and, in radicalized form, much of Bolshevism and Stalinism. The goal of the course is to have you successfully assimilate the materials and concepts related to these major topics, so that you will be well positioned to move on to advanced studies both in the Russian field and in history more generally.

Course Goals

Readings include a variety of historical works on Muscovy, imperial Russia, and the Soviet Union that represent different approaches to exploring both the specificity of Russian history and its comparability in broader European and world context. Students learn to formulate theses, to judge the validity of historical evidence for specific arguments, and to apply paradigms of historical expertise across long periods of time. The selection of literature for this course focuses on the recent works of historical scholarship, which enables students to identify the most seminal and insightful approaches taken in the past and to scrutinize works that exaggerate the singularity of Russian history. A special stress is placed on the methods used in nationalism and empire studies, the grasp of which by students is to be demonstrated through their analysis, in written assignments, of the different stages of Russian empire-building in relation to the emerging notion of the nation-state.

Assignments and Grading

Class Participation – worth 10 points total:

Attendance in both lecture and discussion sessions, a careful reading of weekly assignments, and participation in the discussion session are crucial for success in the course. While the week's first session will be devoted to a lecture, the second class will be devoted mostly to the discussion. Discussions will be based on a set of prompts/questions to be posted on ELMS in advance; so you need to complete the reading assignment by the discussion session but are encouraged to start doing it before the week's first meeting (lecture).

Reaction Paper – worth 4 points each:

At the end of Weeks 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10, write a reaction paper/response that addresses the assigned reading for that same week, but with an eye toward the other readings from the previous week. Cite the assigned readings by author and page number. Your typed response must be no less than 500 words long. In it, you are encouraged to answer at least two questions from those two weeks' discussion prompts. Discussion prompts are uploaded under "Assignments" on ELMS, and you should submit your response the same way, through "Assignments," by the time of the second class in Weeks 2, 4, 6, 8, 10.

The total of five reaction papers gives a maximum of 20 points.

Midterm Examination on Thursday, Oct. 12 – worth 20 points:

The exam will be based on modified discussion questions from Weeks 1–6.

Term Essay, due by Friday, Dec. 1 – worth 15 points:

That's a six-page term paper on a specific subject (of your choice, helped and shaped by guidelines) within the general topic, "Rupture and Continuity in Russian History." A separate handout on the paper will be discussed in class several weeks before it is due.

Final Examination on Thursday, Dec. 14 – worth 25 points.

This exam will be based on modified discussion questions mostly from Weeks 7–13.

Grading Structure:

Class Participation: 15 %

Reaction Papers: 20 %

Midterm Examination: 20 %

Term Essay: 20 %

Final Examination: 25 %

Total: 100 %

Assessment scores will be posted under "Grades" on ELMS.

Extra assignment: Reading Presentation – adding another 10 points to your grade:

Choose one class to introduce the assigned reading or its segment to the class for discussion. You are encouraged to provide more information about the events, policies, or persons discussed in the reading and include one or two discussion questions.

Required Texts

1. Orlando **Figes**, *Natasha's Dance: A Cultural History of Russia* (New York: Picador, 2002) ISBN 9780312421953
2. Barbara Alpern **Engel** and Janet **Martin**, *Russia in World History* (Oxford UP, 2015)

ISBN 9780199947898

3. Leo **Tolstoy**, *Hadji Murat*, transl. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2012) ISBN 9780307951342 – or any other modern translation

We will also be reading selections from *Picturing Russia: Explorations in Visual Culture*, ed. by Valerie A. Kivelson and Joan Neuberger (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); and David Goldfrank, Lindsey Hughes, Catherine Evtuhov, and Richard Stites, *A History of Russia: Peoples, Legends, Events, Forces* (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing, 2003) – all will be available on ELMS.

Course Outline

FIRST CLASS – Aug. 29.

INTRODUCTION: PERSISTENT FACTORS IN RUSSIAN HISTORY (lect.)

Introduction to the course and course requirements. Major recurring themes in Russian history and culture. Outline of major issues in early Muscovite/Russian history.

WEEK 1. Aug. 31 and Sept. 5.

MUSCOVY AS AN ORTHODOX CIVILIZATION (lect. and disc.)

Readings for this week:

- Engel and Martin, *Russia in World History*, pp. 1–20.
- Kivelson and Neuberger, *Picturing Russia*, chap. 7: Nancy Shields Kollmann, “The Cap of Monomakh,” pp. 38–41.

WEEK 2. Sept. 7 and 12.

SERFDOM AND EXPANSION (lect. and disc.)

Readings for this week:

- Engel and Martin, *Russia in World History*, pp. 21–44.
- Kivelson and Neuberger, *Picturing Russia*, chap. 9: Valerie A. Kivelson, “Mapping Serfdom: Peasant Dwellings on Seventeenth-Century Litigation Maps,” pp. 47–50.

***** Reaction Paper 1 due by Tues., Sept. 12**

WEEK 3. Sept. 14 and 19.

WESTERNIZATION (lect. and disc.)

Readings for this week:

- Figes, *Natasha’s Dance*, chap. 1: pp. 4-68.
- Engel and Martin, *Russia in World History*, pp. 45–59.

WEEK 4. Sept. 21 and 26.

THE RUSSIAN NOBILITY AND THE GOLDEN AGE OF RUSSIAN CULTURE (lect.

and disc.)

Readings for this week:

- Figes, *Natasha's Dance*, chap. 2, Sections 1-4 : pp. 72–118.
- Engel and Martin, *Russia in World History*, pp. 59–65.

*** **Reaction Paper 2** due by Tues., Sept. 26

WEEK 5. Sept. 28 and Oct. 3.

SLAVOPHILES AND WESTERNIZERS (lect. and disc.)

Reading for this week:

- Figes, *Natasha's Dance*, chap. 2, Section 6: pp. 130–139 – AND Chap. 3, Sections 1–3: pp. 150–171.
- Engel and Martin, *Russia in World History*, pp. 66–74.

WEEK 6. Oct. 5 and 10.

EMANCIPATION AND TELESCOPED MODERNIZATION (lect. and disc.)

Readings for this week:

- Figes, *Natasha's Dance*, chap. 4, Sections 1-3 and an excerpt from Sections 4–5: pp. 220–243, 248–259.
- Engel and Martin, *Russia in World History*, pp. 75–80.
- Kivelson and Neuberger, *Picturing Russia*, chap. 24: Richard Wortman, “Lubki of Emancipation,” pp. 90–95.

*** **Reaction Paper 3** due by Tues., Oct. 10

*** **Thur., October 12: MIDTERM EXAM on all material through Week 6**

WEEK 7. Oct. 17 and 19.

IMPERIAL ORDERS: THE WESTERN THEATER (lect. and disc.)

Reading for this week:

- Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552-1917* (Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 3–18, 23–35, 367–368, 376–382, 390–397.
- Engel&Martin, *Russia in World History*, pp. 80–82.

WEEK 8. Oct. 24 and 26.

IMPERIAL ORDERS: THE CAUCASUS (lect. and disc.)

Readings for this week:

- Leo Tolstoy, *Hadji Murat* (fiction).
- Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire*, pp. 18–23.

- David Goldfrank, Lindsey Hughes, Catherine Evtuhov, and Richard Stites, *A History of Russia: Peoples, Legends, Events, Forces* (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing, 2003), pp. 395–399.

*** **Reaction Paper 4** due by Thur., Oct. 26

WEEK 9. Oct. 31 and Nov. 2.

RUSSIA'S WARS AND REVOLUTIONS: 1904–1920 – part I
(lect. and disc.)

Readings for this week:

- Marshall T. Poe, *The Russian Moment in World History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 71–85.
- Engel and Martin, *Russia in World History*, pp. 80–94.

WEEK 10. Nov. 7 and 9.

RUSSIA'S WARS AND REVOLUTIONS: 1904–1920 – part II
(lect. and disc.)

Readings for this week:

- David Goldfrank, Lindsey Hughes, Catherine Evtuhov, and Richard Stites, *A History of Russia*, pp. 584–591, 601–604.
- Engel and Martin, *Russia in World History*, pp. 95–102.

*** **Reaction Paper 5** due by Thur., Nov. 9

WEEK 11. Nov. 14 and 16.

CULTURAL REVOLUTION (lect. and disc.)

Readings for this week:

- Figes, *Natasha's Dance*, chap. 7, Sections 1–3 and an excerpt from Section 4: pp. 434–482.

WEEK 12. Nov. 21 and [after the Thanksgiving Recess] 28.

STALINISM (lect. and disc.)

Readings for this week:

- Figes, *Natasha's Dance*, chap. 7, Sections 4–5 and an excerpt from Section 6: pp. 482–510.
- Engel and Martin, *Russia in World History*, pp. 102–107.

*** *November 22–26 – Thanksgiving Recess* ***

*** **Term Essay** due by Friday, Dec. 1

WEEK 13. Nov. 30 and Dec. 5.

WAR (lect. and disc.)

Readings for this week:

- Engel and Martin, *Russia in World History*, pp. 107–111.
- Catherine Merridale, “Introduction,” in *Ivan’s War: Life and Death in the Red Army*, pp. 1–23.
- Richard Overy, “Epilogue: Russia’s War, Myth and Reality,” in *Russia’s War: A History of the Soviet Effort: 1941–1945*, pp. 323–330.

WEEK 14. Dec. 7

Concluding Class – Review Session

*** Thur., Dec. 14 – FINAL EXAM

Procedures and Policies

Academic integrity:

The University's **Code of Academic Integrity**

<https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/undergraduate/registration-academic-requirements-regulations/academic-integrity-student-conduct-codes/>

is designed to ensure that the principles of academic honesty and integrity are upheld. In accordance with this code, academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Please ensure that you fully understand this code and its implications because all acts of academic dishonesty will be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of this code. All students are expected to adhere to this Code. It is your responsibility to read it and know what it says, so you can start your professional life on the right path.

On every examination, paper or other academic exercise not specifically exempted by the instructor, students must write by hand and sign the following pledge:

I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (or assignment).

Attendance and absences: Attendance in both lecture and discussion sessions, careful reading of weekly assignments, and participation in the discussion session are crucial for success in the course. Missed assignments may be made up by appointment with the instructor, upon the condition of previous satisfactory performance.

Prolonged absence from class or illness preventing attendance requires written documentation from the Health Center and/or health care provider verifying dates of treatment when student was unable to meet academic responsibilities.

Absence due to religious observance will not be penalized, however, it is the student’s responsibility to notify the instructor within the first 3 weeks of class regarding any religious observance absence(s) for the entire semester. The calendar of religious holidays can be found at http://faculty.umd.edu/teach/attend_student.html#religious

Accessibility and Disability Services:

The University of Maryland is committed to creating and maintaining a welcoming and inclusive educational, working, and living environment for people of all abilities. The University of Maryland is also committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the University, or be subjected to discrimination. The **Accessibility & Disability Service (ADS)** provides reasonable

accommodations to qualified individuals to provide equal access to services, programs and activities. ADS cannot assist retroactively, so it is generally best to request accommodations several weeks before the semester begins or as soon as a disability becomes known. Any student who needs accommodations should contact me as soon as possible so that I have sufficient time to make arrangements.

For assistance in obtaining an accommodation, contact Accessibility and Disability Service at 301-314-7682, or email them at adsfrontdesk@umd.edu. Information about **sharing your accommodations with instructors, note taking assistance** and more is available from the **Counseling Center**.

More on the UMD Course Related

Policies: <http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>