

**HIST 408D**  
**Empire and Nationalism in Russia: A Borderland Perspective**

Fall 2023  
Thur. 12:30–3:00 pm  
Taliaferro (TLF) 2108

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

### **Course Description**

This class discusses uninterrupted processes of empire-building under the Romanov dynasty's rule from Peter the Great (r. 1682–1725) to the First World War from the angle of the Russian empire's multiethnic and multi-confessional composition. Formative of the course is the attempt to differentiate between the political, cultural and ideological frameworks of the Russian imperial state and those of a nation-state and to show a shifting character of the empire's center–periphery balance. This approach should enable us to discern and criticize persistent (especially in the post-Soviet states) elements of the nation-centered and teleological history narrative depicting pre-nationalist phenomena through the lenses of a later or today's nation(s).

We will be exploring the key and, paradoxically, *central* place of the imperial western, southern, and eastern borderlands in political, administrative, spatial and representational structures of the empire. Of our primary interest are diverse roles the borderlands played in the empire's workings. They can be viewed as laboratories of imperial statecraft; experimental sites for reform; arenas of bitter clashes between competing national projects; experiences shared with the neighboring continental empires – Habsburg, Hohenzollern, Ottoman.

Why did Polish lands stand out as the most troublesome of all the borderland regions? Was the “Russian” Central Asia a kind of colony, not unlike India for Britain or Algeria for France? Could Russia be imagined as an empire without Siberia? What visions and aspirations plunged 19<sup>th</sup>-century Russia into an exhaustive war in the North Caucasus? These and similar questions will be addressed in our discussions.

### **Assignments and Grading**

*Class Participation* – worth 20 points total:

The course is mostly a reading seminar. Attendance in class sessions, a careful reading of weekly assignments, and participation in discussions are crucial for success in the course. Our discussions will be based on a set of prompts/questions to be posted on ELMS in advance.

*Reaction Papers* – worth 5 points each:

Assigned for Weeks 3, 5, 7, and 10. You should write a reaction paper/response that focuses on the assigned reading for that same week but use also some of the other readings from the previous weeks – for comparison, contrast, context, etc. Cite the assigned readings by author and page number. Your typed response must be about 700 words long. In it, you are encouraged to

answer at least two questions from the 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 our class in Weeks 3, 5, 7, 10.

The total of four responses gives a maximum of 20 points.

*Reading Presentation* – worth 10 points each:

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

The total of two reading presentations gives a maximum of 20 points.

*Written Topic Proposal, due Thur., Nov. 30* – worth 10 points:

A 2–3-page paper should present a topic for your Term Essay, with the outline of questions you intend to discuss and the annotated bibliography of 4–5 titles (articles, books, book chapters, primary sources).

*Term Essay, due Dec. 18*– worth 30 points:

That’s a 10–12-page term paper focusing on complementary or competing approaches that historians have developed with regard to a certain subject from a broadly conceived history of imperial Russia. A separate handout on the paper will be discussed in class several weeks before it is due.

### **Grading Structure:**

Class Participation: 20 %

Short Responses: 20 %

Reading Presentations: 20 %

Written Topic Proposal: 10 %

Term Essay: 30 %

**Total: 100 %**

All assessment scores will be posted under “Grades” on ELMS.

### **Required Books**

1. Andreas Kappeler, *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History* (Pearson Education, 2001).
2. Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552-1917* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997 or any later printing).

All other readings will be posted on ELMS.

### **Course Outline**

**WEEK 1:** August 31.

Introduction to Course. The Russian Empire as a field of study

**WEEK 2:** Sept. 7.

**The Russian Empire: Social, Institutional, Environmental Frameworks; Dynamics of Territorial Expansion**

Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire*, pp. 1–41.

Kollmann, Nancy Shields, *The Russian Empire, 1450–1801* (Oxford UP, 2017), pp. 1–7, 9–18, 21–38.

**WEEK 3:** Sept. 14.

**Rule over the Imperial Borderlands: A Survey; Empire and Religion**

Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*, pp. 114–153, 157–162.

Crews, Robert, “Empire and the Confessional State: Islam and Religious Politics in Nineteenth-Century Russia,” *American Historical Review* 108: 1 (2003), pp. 50–67.

\*\*\* **Reaction Paper 1** due by Thur., Sept. 14

**WEEK 4:** Sept. 21.

**Eighteenth-Century Empire-Building and the Partitions of Poland–Lithuania**

Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire*, pp. 75–119.

Kappeler, Andreas, *The Russian Empire*, pp. 75–94.

**WEEK 5:** Sept. 28.

**Russia’s “America”**

Vinkovetsky, Ilya, *An Overseas Colony of a Continental Empire, 1804–1867* (Oxford UP, 2011), pp. 18–23, 52–72, 99–126.

*Primary source:*

Golovnin, Vasilii M., *Around the World on the Kamchatka, 1817–1819*, trans. by Ella L. Wiswell (Honolulu: The Hawaiian Historical Society & The University Press of Hawaii, 1979), pp. 120–158.

**WEEK 6:** Oct. 5.

**Nationalism and Empire: Nineteenth-Century Polish Uprisings and the Policies of Russification**

Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*, pp. 213–220, 247–261.

Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire*, pp. 315–344, 367–380.

Weeks, Theodore, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia. Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863–1914* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996), pp. 3–18, 71–84.

\*\*\* **Reaction Paper 2** due by Thur., Oct. 5

**WEEK 7:** Oct. 12.

**The “Ukrainian Question”: A Test for the Empire’s Assimilatory Potential**

Yekelchyk, Serhy, *Ukraine: Birth of a Modern Nation* (Oxford UP, 2007), pp. 5–9, 25–31, 33–52.

Plokyh, Serhii, *Lost Kingdom: The Quest for Empire and the Making of the Russian Nation* (Basic Books, 2017), pp. vii–xii, 105–153.

*Primary Source:* The “Valuev Circular” on the prohibition of publishing in Ukrainian, 1863.

**WEEK 8:** Oct. 19.

**The Jews in the Russian Empire**

Miller, Alexei, *The Romanov Empire and Nationalism* (Budapest: CEU Press, 2008), pp. 93–138.

Petrovsky-Shtern, Yohanan, *The Golden Age Shtetl: A New History of Jewish Life in East Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), pp. 1–55.

\*\*\* **Reaction Paper 3** due by Thur., Oct. 19

**WEEK 9:** Oct. 26.

**The Volga–Ural Region: An “Inner” Borderland**

Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*, pp. 24–44, 122–124, 261–264.

Geraci, Robert, “Ethnic Minorities, Anthropology, and Russian National Identity on Trial: The Multan Case, 1892–96,” *The Russian Review* 59 (October 2000), pp. 530–554.

**WEEK 10:** Nov. 2.

**The Russian Version of Orientalism: Imperial Rule in the North Caucasus and Central Asia**

Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*, pp. 171–185, 190–200.

Barrett, Thomas, “Lines of Uncertainty: The Frontiers of North Caucasus,” *Slavic Review* 54: 3 (1995), pp. 578–601.

King, Charles, *The Ghost of Freedom: A History of the Caucasus* (Oxford UP, 2010), pp. 64–98.

\*\*\* **Reaction Paper 4** due by Thur., Nov. 2.

**WEEK 11:** Nov. 9.

**The Russian Empire in World War I: Experimenting with Nationalism on the Eve of Collapse**

Kappeler, *The Russian Empire*, pp. 328–352.

Gatrell, Peter, *A Whole Empire Walking: Refugees in Russia during World War I* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), pp. 15–32.

**WEEK 12:** Nov. 16.

**Persons of the Imperial Borderlands**

Kotkin, Stephen, *Stalin: Paradoxes of Power, 1878–1928* (Penguin Books, 2014), pp. 1–87.

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

**WEEK 13:** Nov. 30.

**The Russian Empire’s Borderlands in Comparative Perspective**

Lieven, Dominic, *Empire. The Russian Empire and Its Rivals* (London: John Murray, 2000), pp. 201–261, 274–287.

\*\*\* **Written topic proposal** due by Thur., Nov. 30

**WEEK 14:** Dec. 7

**Concluding session.** Presentations about the topic and argument of your final paper. Be prepared to speak for approximately 5–7 minutes on your research findings.

\*\*\* *Final paper due by December 18* \*\*\*

**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 class meetings, careful reading of weekly assignments, and participation in discussions 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](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](mailto: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>