HIST378: MODERN RUSSIA

The present course covers two centuries of what is probably one of the world’s most turbulent histories. From the Ancien Regime of 19th century Russia of the tsars emerged the first communist society and augured in what might justifiably be termed the Soviet Century, a century in which Soviet Russia helped define half the world, and transformed the capitalist West in important ways as well. We shall seek the roots of this dramatic and brutal transformation and particularly of Soviet Russia’s militant and uncompromising revolutionary ideology in the fissure points of the 19th century. If modern Russia is to be understood, it must be examined within its own cultural, political and social context, and not as a negative reflection of the capitalist world. Its ultimate failure in no way renders the entire Soviet experiment illegitimate or unworthy of serious study.

This course is structured around several books, including two collections of Russian and Soviet literary authors. Through a combination of secondary history texts and primary literary texts, I hope to provide a richer cultural picture of modern Russian history. The lectures are not intended to duplicate the course readings but to complement them. It is essential, therefore, that you do the readings prior to the lectures, in order that you are prepared for the lectures. Obviously, regular attendance is required.

WEBSITE: This syllabus will be posted on my website at the following address (http://fccorn.people.wm.edu/) (NOT BLACKBOARD). Please download extra copies from there if you need them. Please check on the website from time to time as I use it as a platform for this course.

Required texts (all available at the William & Mary Bookstore; one copy of all but the Gibian are available at the Reserve Desk at Swem):

Films:

During the 1920s and again during the 1980s and afterwards, Soviet cinema produced an especially rich variety of movies about the Soviet experience. I will therefore be screening 2 or 3 films throughout the course during the early evenings. These are intended to add cultural depth to this course, and to add a cultural dimension to our inclass discussions. They will be screened on dates to be arranged throughout the course.

Course Requirements:

1. You will complete one written paper (10 typewritten, double-spaced pages, paginated, with footnotes) on a subject of your choice, decided upon in agreement with me (either by email or in person) [Friday, May 4, in class].

2. One mid-term: one-hour, in-class examination [Mar. 7]

3. One final three-hour examination [May 9, 13.30-16.30]

4. In addition, each week I will ask two students to prepare a short oral report (no more than 5 minutes) on one or more of the primary sources for the following week. This will count towards the participation portion of your grade.

N.B. Late assignments will be accepted, if you are prepared to accept substantial grade penalties.

Written Work:

I take the writing assignment very seriously, regardless whether they are papers prepared at home or examinations taken in class. Papers must be typed, double-spaced, paginated, stapled, with margins that do not mask a lack of material. Any phrases or sentences that are not entirely your own must be clearly indicated and referenced. Short quotes may be set off in "quotation marks"; longer quotes (3 or more lines) should be written in single-spaced, indented blocks. Do not use quotation marks around blocked quotes. You must use footnotes.

All written assignments must be well-structured arguments, not Joycean streams of consciousness. They should address the question or issue at hand, succinctly and cogently. Please proofread them for syntactic and grammatical accuracy. Papers will be graded on content, creativity, style and presentation.

N. B. I have a zero tolerance for plagiarism. I will submit all cases of suspected plagiarism to the Honors Council. If you are unclear about plagiarism, check out the College guidelines on this.

Grade Breakdown:

Paper: 35% (Friday, May 4, in class)
Midterm: 25% (Wed. Mar. 7, in class)
Final: 25% (Wed. May 9, 10am-1pm)
Attendance/participation: 15%

Students with Disabilities

If you have any special needs due to a disability, please inform me at the beginning of the course, so that I can work with the College's Disability Services to accommodate these special needs.

Classroom Policies and Conduct

Please avoid side-conversations in class. They disrupt both my ability to teach and students' ability to learn. It is a sign of disrespect to me and other students to read the paper in class, to leave class early without informing me beforehand, or to pack up your things early. Of course, if I have gotten carried away with my lecturing, and have gone way past the end of class, please let me know.

History Writing Resources Center

The History Department offers a special resource for students taking history courses who want some additional assistance with history writing and research. The History Writing Resources Center in James Blair 347 is staffed by advanced graduate students who are very familiar with all of the types of history papers. If you would like some help writing a history paper or doing historical research, feel free to make an appointment at the HWRC by calling 221-3756, e-mailing Write1@wm.edu, or going to www.wm.edu/hwrc. The web site also offers information about the Center, such as current hours of operation and what to bring with you for your first consultation. In addition, it lists announcements of special events and includes a vast number of helpful handouts and links that will assist you with every facet of history writing.
Lecture Schedule

1. The Sinews of Power in Imperial Russia (Jan. 24, 26, 29)
Stites and Evtuhov, ch. 1, 2.
Gibian, Nineteenth-Century Russian Reader: Pushkin’s Bronze Horseman, 8-21

2. The Apogee of Autocracy (Jan. 31, Feb. 2, 5)
Stites and Evtuhov, ch. 3.
Gibian, Nineteenth-Century Russian Reader: Griboedov’s The Trouble with Reason, 35-128.

3. The Peasant ‘Problem’ (Feb. 7)
Stites and Evtuhov, ch. 4, 5.
Gibian, Portable Nineteenth-Century Russian Reader, Gogol’s The Overcoat, 199-232.

4. The Great Reforms (Feb. 9, 12, 14)
Stites and Evtuhov, ch. 6.
Gibian, Nineteenth-Century Russian Reader: Goncharov’s Oblomov’s Dream, 293-333.

5. The Radical Intelligentsia (Feb. 16, 19)
Stites and Evtuhov, ch. 7.
Gibian, Nineteenth-Century Russian Reader: Herzen’s Recollections of Russian Intellectuals, 393-400.

6. The Crisis of the Autocracy and the Counterreforms (Feb. 21, 23, 26)
Stites and Evtuhov, ch. 8.
Gibian, Portable Nineteenth-Century Russian Reader, Tolstoy’s, 437-489.

7. Industrialization and Social Change (Feb. 28, Mar. 2, 5)
Stites and Evtuhov, ch. 9, 10, 11.
Gibian, Nineteenth-Century Russian Reader: Gorky’s Twenty-Six Men and One Girl, 616-629.
MIDTERM EXAMINATION: Mar. 7 (in-class, bring blue books)

8. Russia in War, Revolution and Civil War (Mar. 9, 19, 21, 23)

Stites and Evtuhov, ch. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16.
Smith, The Russian Revolution.

9. Experimentation and Repression: The 1920s and 1930s (Mar. 26, 28, 30, Apr. 2)

Stites and Evtuhov, ch. 17, 18, 19, 20.
Ivanova, Labor Camp Socialism.
Brown, Portable Twentieth-Century Russian Reader: Olesha’s Envy, 246-378.
Brown, Portable Twentieth-Century Russian Reader: Shalamov’s tales, 418-434.

10. Slide Lecture (Avantgarde Art and Socialist Realism) (Apr. 4)

11. The Great Patriotic War and Its Aftermath (Apr. 6, 9)

Stites and Evtuhov, ch. 21, 22.
Zubkova, Russia After the War, parts I and II.

12. Khrushchev and the Thaw (Apr. 11, 13, 16)

Stites and Evtuhov, ch. 23.
Zubkova, Russia After the War, parts III and IV.
Brown, Portable Twentieth-Century Russian Reader: Vladimov’s Faithful Ruslan, 539-571.

13. Brezhnev and Zastoi (Stagnation) (Apr. 18, 20, 23)

Stites and Evtuhov, ch. 24, 25.
Brown, Portable Twentieth-Century Russian Reader: Sokolov’s School for Fools, 600-611.

14. Gorbachev, Glasnost’ and the End of the USSR (Apr. 25, 27, 30, May 2, 4)

Stites and Evtuhov, ch. 27, 28.
Kotkin, Armageddon Averted.