This course is about Russian history, politics, and society from the 1917 Revolution to the present. The lectures and readings focus primarily on the main periods, turning points, and outcomes during these nearly one hundred years, and the large explanatory questions raised by them.

Even apart from the long Cold War, which may or may not finally be over, there are good reasons why American students might want to study Russia's experience during and after the twentieth century. Four are worth identifying at the outset.

First, since 1917, Russia has experienced almost every kind of political and social trauma known in modern history—international war, revolution, civil war, famine, dictatorship, mass terror, military invasion and occupation, demographic catastrophes, loss of empire, and collapse of statehood—but also many achievements, including modernization of everyday life, scientific and technological feats, military victory, world-class culture, and democratization. Given this extraordinary range of experiences, Russia provides an opportunity to explore and evaluate various factors commonly used to explain major events in history more generally—factors such as historical tradition, ideology, personal leadership, economics, and others.

Second, because Russia's history has been so unlike our own American one, studying that country tests our ability to understand a very different national (human) experience, or what is sometimes called "foreign culture." To take an example that is both historical and contemporary: Are we able to understand why, despite all the traumatic events of the Soviet era, a substantial majority of Russians today nonetheless express strong pride in and even nostalgia for that era?

Third, considering Russia's special history and vast geography—even after the Soviet Union it remains the largest territorial country in the world—where does it belong as a civilization: with us in the West; in the East; in a realm of its own? Has this question been answered or altered by the Kremlin's professed alliance with America since Sept. 11, 2001? And does it matter? (Russians themselves have fiercely debated this question for centuries and still not resolved it.)

Finally, it may be that Russia, in the form of the Soviet Union, shaped our own twentieth-century history more than did any other country, and thus the lives of your parents (and grandparents). If so, studying Russia may be a way of also learning something important about your own past and the America you are now inheriting.

You should understand, however, that there is no scholarly or political consensus about these issues among Western specialists or Russians themselves, only conflicting positions and controversy. Therefore, there is no reason for you to feel any obligation to
the course, we do not ask or expect you to answer the question based on knowledge of Russian or Soviet history but solely on the basis of which author, in your judgment, makes the most persuasive case in these readings.

You may occasionally want to discuss these or other matters individually with your preceptor, who will inform you of his or her weekly office hour. My office is at 19 University Place, Room 210. My regular office hours are on Tuesdays, from 3:30 to 5:00 pm. If necessary, you can arrange to see me at another time. I do not have email, but you can contact me by telephone at 998-8289 or by fax at (212) 865-3873.
Jan. 30 – Feb. 4

**Revolution, Civil War, and the Birth of the Soviet Party-State**

Readings:

2. Lenin, “State and Revolution” (excerpt), *Reader*, pp. 31-34.

Feb. 6-13

**NEP and the Leninist Tradition: Politics and Society**

Readings:

1. Lenin, Last Writings (1922-23), *Reader*, pp. 61-77.

Feb. 18-27

**Revolution From Above and the Stalinist Experience**

Readings:

Russia’s “Transition”: From Yeltsin to Putin

Readings:


2. Cohen, Failed Crusade (excerpts), Reader, pp. 219-37. (Note that this reading and the preceding one present several different views of Russia under Yeltsin.)

3. Opposing Western Views of Russia Today: Weldon and Satter, Reader, pp. 239 – 46; and Kuchins (ed.), Russia After the Fall, chap. 16.

The Structure of Communist Rule Prior to Gorbachev's Reforms

J. Hough and M. Fainsod, How the Soviet Union Is Governed
D. Hammer, USSR: The Politics of Oligarchy
L. Schapiro, The Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Politics and Society in the Leninist/NEP Era

R. Daniels, The Conscience of the Revolution
M. Lewin, Lenin's Last Struggle and Russian Peasants and Soviet Power
A. Erlich, The Soviet Industrialization Debate
L. Siegelbaum, Soviet State and Society, 1918-1929
I. Deutscher, The Prophet Unarmed
R. Tucker, Stalin as Revolutionary
S. Fitzpatrick, et.al. (eds.), Russia in the Era of NEP

The Stalin Revolution and Stalinism

R. Tucker (ed.), Stalinism
A. Ulam, Stalin
M. Lewin, The Making of the Soviet System
L. Trotsky, The Revolution Betrayed
S. Fitzpatrick, The Cultural Front
A. Werth, Russia at War
H. Salisbury, The 900 Days
S. Linz (ed.), The Impact of WW II on the Soviet Union
R. Medvedev, Let History Judge
I. Deutscher, The Prophet Outcast
A. Solzhenitsyn, One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich and The First Circle
A. Solzhenitsyn, The Gulag Archipelago
E. Ginzburg, Journey Into the Whirlwind and Within the Whirlwind
V. Dunham, In Stalin's Time
R. Conquest, Harvest of Sorrow
R. Tucker, Stalin in Power, 1929-41
A. Larina, This I Cannot Forget
W. Rosenberg, et.al. (eds.), Social Dimensions of Soviet Industrialization
G. Boffa, The Stalin Phenomenon
S. Fitzpatrick, Everyday Stalinism
A. Knight, Who Killed Kirov?
S. Kotkin, Magnetic Mountain
E. Zubkova, Russia After the War
The Gorbachev Years

S. Cohen and K. vanden Heuvel (eds.), Voices of Glasnost
R. Daniels, The End of the Communist Revolution
R. Davies, Soviet History in the Gorbachev Revolution
R. Suny, The Revenge of the Past
R. Sakwa, Gorbachev and His Reforms, 1985-1990
A. Roxburgh, The Second Russian Revolution
J. Wieczynski (ed.), The Gorbachev Reader
J. Miller, Mikhail Gorbachev and the End of Soviet Power
R. Kaiser, Why Gorbachev Happened (exp. ed.)
Y. Ligachev, Inside Gorbachev's Kremlin
D. Remnick, Lenin's Tomb
A. Brown, The Gorbachev Factor
A. Dallin & G. Lapidus (eds.), The Soviet System: From Crisis to Collapse
M. Gorbachev, Memoirs
M. Gorbachev, On My Country and the World
B. Fowkes, The Disintegration of the Soviet Union
S. Solnick, Stealing the State
J. Hough, Democratization and Revolution in the USSR
P. Christensen, Russia's Workers in Transition
J. Matlock, Autopsy on an Empire
A. Chernyaev, My Six Years With Gorbachev
R. English, Russia and the Idea of the West
M. Cox (ed.), Rethinking the Soviet Collapse
M. Goldman, What Went Wrong With Perestroika
M. Ellman & V. Kontorovich (eds.), Destruction of the Soviet Econ. System
M. Beissinger, Nationalist Mobilization & The Collapse of the Soviet State
M. McFaul, Russia's Unfinished Revolution
S. Kotkin, Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse
G. Hahn, Russia's Revolution From Above
D. Kotz, Revolution From Above
W. Odom, The Collapse of the Soviet Military
G. Breslauer, Gorbachev and Yeltsin as Leaders

Post-Communist Russia Under Yeltsin and Putin

W. Laqueur, Black Hundred: The Rise of the Extreme Right
B. Yeltsin, The Struggle for Russia
A. Lieven, Chechnya
A. Sinyavsky, The Russian Intelligentsia
J. Wedel, Collision and Collusion
R. Daniels, Russia's Transformation
R. Medvedev, Post-Soviet Russia