This course uses the culture and history of one country to explore general questions of interpretation and critical thought. Our purpose is to use the details of one national history and culture to form general arguments and pose general questions. Russia is a good example for examining certain questions in particular. What holds a society together? How does it collapse? How do various groups of political activists and professionals try to engineer their societies? What can we learn from art – literature, music, architecture – that might not be clear from a written document, and what methods can we use to extract that knowledge? Is coercion a sufficient tool to maintain order and power, even in the most brutal dictatorships?

The purpose of such an approach is two-fold. It raises questions and analytic problems that will be useful throughout your academic career. And it sharpens analytic skills and critical faculties that will be useful in any number of academic and non-academic contexts.

Additional assistance for this class is available to you free of charge at the College Learning Center located on the 1st Floor of Weinstein Hall (right behind Java City). For information on one-on-one and group peer tutoring, please stop by the CLC or go to their website: http://www.nyu.edu/cas/clc/index.html

**Format:**
The course combines lectures with film, visual art, music, and literature. The textbook is required, and will provide the necessary background. We will look at each of these media as sources that require their own type of analysis, in ways that will be explained in the lectures and the recitations. Familiarity with all of these media will be necessary to do well in the course.

**Grading and Requirements:**
There will be three five-page essay questions that will be answered in class. Each is worth 25 percent of the final grade, for a total of 75 percent. Writers should use detail gleaned from the lectures, readings, and other media in order to offer broad arguments and critical analysis.
Attendance at lectures, and attendance and participation in discussion sections, are mandatory, and comprise 25 percent of the final grade. Final grades will be reduced by two or more unexcused absences from either the lecture or the recitation, at the discretion of the preceptor and the lecturer.

Participation means rhetoric, i.e., the ability to convey and defend an idea orally. This is a component part of a college education, and will be weighed heavily by the graders. The instructors will be looking for preparedness as well as a growing ability to make coherent arguments.

**Books and readings:**

Most texts are available on Blackboad.

The following are available for purchase at the Book Centre:

Nicholas Riasanovsky and Mark Steinberg, *A History of Russia* (Seventh Edition)
Nikolai Gogol, *The Diary of a Madman and Other Stories: “The Nose” and “The Overcoat”
Fedor Dostoyevskii, *Notes from the Underground*
Evgeny Zamiatin, *We*
Mikhail Bulgakov, *Heart of a Dog.*
Vladimir Lenin, *The State and Revolution*
Ilf and Petrov, *The Twelve Chairs*
Kurban Said, *Ali and Nino*

**SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS**

**Session 1: Tuesday, 20 May:**
-Introduction to World Cultures;
-requirements and structure;
-West and East: Representations of Kiev and the Mongols, Ivan the Terrible.

Riasanovsky, pt.II and chs.8-9, ch.15
Edward Said, *Orientalism*, introduction and ch.1
Joan Neuberger, *Ivan the Terrible*, excerpts.
Yuri Tsivian, *Ivan the Terrible*, excerpts

Viewing of excerpts of Sergei Eisenshtein’s “Ivan the Terrible, pts 1 and 2”

**Session 2: Thursday, 22 May:**
-Invented Traditions: The Sources of Autocracy, The Time of Troubles and the Rise of the Romanovs;
-Architecture
  Riasanovsky, chs.16-19
Alef, “The Adoption of the Muscovite Two-Headed Eagle.”

Artefacts: Russian architectures to the Eighteenth Century

**Session 3: Tuesday, 27 May**  
Russia as a Laboratory, pt. I: Peter and Catherine

Riasanovsky, chs.20-24  
Please print and bring to class: Catherine's Instruction of 1767.  
Please print and bring to class Pushkin’s “Bronze Horseman”:  
http://web.ku.edu/~russcult/culture/handouts/bronze_horseman.html

Artefacts: The Bronze Horseman in St. Petersburg;

**Session 4: Thursday, 29 May**  
Russia in Europe, Russia in Asia

Riasanovsky, chs.25-28  
Print and bring to class: Speranskii, “Introduction to the Codification of State Laws”  
Slezkine, “Naturalists versus Nations.”  
Print and bring to class: Pushkin, *Journey to Arzrum*

Artefacts: from the Kunst-kamera; Ermak in Siberia.

**Session 5: Tuesday, 3 June:**  
**ONE-HOUR IN-CLASS ESSAY.**  
What Art Can Tell Us: Culture, Society and the Self in the Nineteenth Century

Riasanovsky, ch. 26-27  
Gogol, “The Nose” and “The Overcoat”

Artefacts: Russian painting: peasants and noblemen.

**Session 6: Thursday, 5 June:**  
-Russia as a Laboratory, pt.2: The Great Reforms and the Counterreforms;  
-On Liberalism;  
-From the Crimean War to the Russo-Japanese War

Riasanovsky, chs 29, 32  
Print and bring to class: “The Valuev Rescript”  

**Session 7: Tuesday, 10 June:**
-The Rise of Ideological Radicalism;
-Who Are “The People”?
-Lessons of the 1905 Revolution

Riasanovsky, chs.30-31, 33
Dostoyevskii, Notes from the Underground
Martin Malia, The Soviet Tragedy, ch.2.

Session 8: Thursday, 12 June:
ONE-HOUR IN-CLASS ESSAY
-Music and Empire: Rimskii-Korsakov, Borodin, Mussorgskii;
-Music and Class: Chaikovskii

Kurban Said, Ali and Nino

Artefacts: Painting and the Self: The Avant-Garde

Session 9: Tuesday, 17 June:
-Russia as a Laboratory, pt.3: Stolypin, Property, and Constitutions, 1906-1914;
-The First World War;
-The February Revolution

Riasanovsky, ch.31, 34
Manifesto of October 17, 1905
Fundamental Laws
Decree of 3 June 1907

Session 10: Thursday, 19 June
-The Bolshevik Seizure of Power and the Civil War;
-How We Remember Things;

Riasanovsky, ch.35-36
Zamiatin, We
Lenin, The State and Revolution

Film: Eisenshtein's October

Session 11: Tuesday, 24 June:
Russia as Laboratory, 4: Socialism, Subjectivity, Stalinism, Cynicism

Riasanovsky, chs 37-39
Hellbeck, “Self-realization in the Stalinist System.”
Katrina Clark, The Soviet Novel, chs 2, 4
Ilf and Petrov, The Twelve Chairs
Mikhail Bulgakov, Heart of a Dog
Artefacts: Soviet Architecture; Soviet Monuments; Russian and Soviet and Russian Hymns.

**Session 12: Thursday, 26 June:**
**ONE-HOUR IN-CLASS ESSAY**
From Late Soviet to Post-Soviet

Riasanovsky, chs. 40-44.
Politkovskaia, *Akaky Akakievich Putin II*.

Films: *Little Vera; Burnt by the Sun; Brother II.*