

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
Department of Russian and Slavic Studies
MAP: World Cultures

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Russia Since 1917
(V55.0528)

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 actually 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 perhaps democratization. Given this extraordinary range of experiences, Russia provides an opportunity to identify and evaluate various factors commonly used to explain major events in history more generally – factors such as historical tradition, ideology, political 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 majority of Russians even 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 called Eurasia? And does it matter? (Russians have themselves 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 and world in which you now live.

You should understand, however, that even though I have strong opinions,

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 agree with answers that may be given by the course lectures, readings, or preceptors, who have their own different points of view. We ask you instead to read carefully and think critically about everything presented in the course and then reach your own conclusions. The best place to think aloud and argue about these questions is, of course, your weekly recitation session, which we expect to be a regular occasion for discussion informed by your reading. (Recitations begin on Friday, January 25, and end on Monday, May 5.)

The following required paperback titles are available for purchase at the NYU Book Center and, for students who do not want to buy them, are on reserve at Bobst Library:

Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution
Cohen, Rethinking the Soviet Experience
Course Reader, Russia Since 1917 (Spring 2008 edition)
Tucker, The Soviet Political Mind
Cohen, Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution
Strayer, Why Did the Soviet Union Collapse?

In addition, students are asked to read daily news reports about Russia. This is important because one aspect of the course is trying to understand current events and ongoing developments in historical context. Such news reports can be found regularly in the New York Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, Financial Times, and in AP, Reuters, BBC and other dispatches on the Internet.

For students who may want to read more than the assigned readings on various periods and subjects, there is a selected list of books at the end of the syllabus. It is only a partial bibliography of the enormous literature on Russia since 1917.

Regarding your final grade in the course, it will be based on the following requirements, with the relative weight of each in parentheses: three short essays not to exceed 750 words, or approximately three double-spaced pages, each (total 25%); a midterm examination asking you to identify and explain the significance of five items from a list of eight (25%); well-informed participation in the weekly recitation discussions (20%); and two final essays, not to exceed five double-spaced pages each, on your choice of questions from a list of at least six (30%).

It is essential that you complete all of these requirements as scheduled. The short essays are to be given to your preceptor no later than Friday of the weeks of Feb. 18, March 24, and April 14. The midterm exam will be held on March 11 in the lecture hall during the regular lecture time. The list of final essay questions will be handed out on April 15, and your two final essays will be due no later than May 12.

Here is the topic for your first short essay, which is due the week of Feb. 18 (the other two topics will be announced later):

-- Looking back on 1917 and the events that followed, Solzhenitsyn argued (in a text not used in the course) that a true Russian patriot could never have been a Communist. Based on your understanding of relevant course readings assigned through February 5-7, write an essay agreeing or disagreeing with Solzhenitsyn's argument and giving your reasons and evidence. You may want to consider, for example, one or more of the following: the issues debated by Solzhenitsyn and Tucker; Strayer and Tucker on the intelligentsia; Tucker's article on Lenin; Fitzpatrick on the revolutionary period; etc. As always, however, be sure to attribute any language, formulations, or ideas you borrow from the 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 Tuesdays, from 3:30 to 5:00 pm. If necessary, you can arrange to see me at another time. The university has given me an e-mail address, but you should not use it because I do not use a computer. Instead, you can contact me by telephone at 998-8289 or by fax at (212) 865-3873.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

Jan. 22 **Introduction, Themes, Different Viewpoints**

Readings:

1. Cohen, Rethinking the Soviet Experience, pp. 3-19.
2. Bova, Introduction to Russia and Western Civilization, Reader, pp. 1-18.
3. Solzhenitsyn and Tucker: Two Views of Russian History, Reader, pp. 19-35.
4. Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution, pp. 1-14.
5. Strayer, Why Did the Soviet Union Collapse?, pp. 18-25.

Jan. 29-31 **Tsarist Russia and the Origins of Russian Communism**

Readings:

1. Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution, chap. 1.
2. Tucker, The Soviet Political Mind, chap. 6.
3. Marx's Summary of Marxism, Reader, p. 37.
4. Lenin, "What Is To Be Done?" (excerpt), Reader, pp. 40-42.
5. Tucker, "Lenin and Revolution," Reader, pp. 51-61.

Feb. 5-7 **Revolution, Civil War, and the Birth of the Soviet Party-State**

Readings:

1. Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution, chaps.2-3.
2. Lenin, "State and Revolution" (excerpt), Reader, pp. 43-46.
3. Tucker, "Lenin and Revolution," Reader, pp. 61-66.
4. Tucker, The Soviet Political Mind, chap. 1.

Feb. 12-19 **NEP and the Leninist Tradition: Politics and Society**

Readings:

1. Lenin, Last Writings (1922-23), Reader, pp. 67-75.
2. Cohen, Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution, chaps. 5-6, pp. 213-227, chap. 9.

Feb. 21-
March 4 **Revolution From Above and the Stalinist Experience**

Readings:

1. Cohen, Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution, chap. 10.
2. Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution, pp. 141-163.
3. Conquest, The Great Terror (two chaps.), Reader, pp. 77-115.
4. Tucker, The Soviet Political Mind, chaps. 2, 5.
5. Riasanovsky, "The Soviet Union in World War II," Reader, pp. 117-124.

March 6-13
and 25-27

Post-Stalin Reform and Conservatism: From Khrushchev to Brezhnev

Readings:

1. Cohen, Rethinking the Soviet Experience, chaps. 4-5.
2. Khrushchev, "Secret Speech" (excerpt), Reader, pp. 47-49.
3. Lowe, "The Khrushchev Era," Reader, pp. 125-155.
4. Lowe, "The Brezhnev Years," Reader, pp. 157-176.
5. Strayer, Why Did the Soviet Union Collapse?, pp. 56 -78.

April 1-17

Gorbachev's Perestroika: Was the Soviet System Reformable?

Readings:

1. Strayer, Why Did the Soviet Union Collapse?, pp. 3 -18, chaps. 3-5.
2. Aslund and Brown: Two Views of Gorbachev's Leadership, Reader, pp. 177-192.

April 22-
May 1

Russia's "Transition" Under Yeltsin and Putin

Readings:

1. Shevtsova, Russia – Lost in Transition (several chaps.), Reader, pp. 193-239.
2. Different Views of Putin and Russia Today (handout).

Russia Since 1917
A List of Other Books*

General Histories and Interpretations

- G. Hosking, The First Socialist Society
J. Keep, Last of the Empires
D. Treadgold, Twentieth Century Russia
R. Service, A History of 20th Century Russia
R. Suny, The Soviet Experiment
T. Taranovsky (ed.), Reform in Modern Russian History
R. Crummey (ed.), Reform in Russia and the USSR
N. Berdyaev, The Origin of Russian Communism
A. Nove, An Economic History of the USSR
R. Stites, Soviet Popular Culture
M. Lewin, Russia/USSR/Russia
M. Malia, The Soviet Tragedy
A. Sinyavsky, Soviet Civilization
Y. Yevtushenko (compiler), 20th Century Russian Poetry
M. Cox (ed.), Rethinking the Soviet Collapse
A. Shlapentokh, A Normal Totalitarian Society
W. Laqueur, The Fate of the Revolution
T. McDaniel, The Agony of the Russian Idea
T. Von Laue, Why Lenin? Why Stalin?
J. Gooden, Socialism in Russia
R. English, Russia and the Idea of the West
R. Daniels, Rise and fall of Communism in Russia
V. Zubok, A Failed Empire: From Stalin to Gorbachev

Revolution, Civil War, and the Emergence of the Party-State

- I. Deutscher, The Prophet Armed
E.H. Carr, The Bolshevik Revolution
L. Schapiro, The Origins of the Communist Autocracy
R. Pipes, The Formation of the Soviet Union
A. Rabinowitch, The Bolsheviks Come to Power and The Bolsheviks in Power
D. Koenker, et.al. (eds.), Party, State, and Society in the Russian Civil War
W. H. Chamberlin, The Russian Revolution, 2 vols.
R. Service, Lenin
B. Pasternak, Dr. Zhivago
O. Figes, A People's Tragedy

The Structure of Communist Rule Prior to Gorbachev's Reforms

* This list omits literature on Russia in world affairs.

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
J. Hazard, The Soviet System of Government (5th ed.)

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
A. Ball, Russia's Last Capitalists: The Nepmen

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
C. Merridale, Ivan's 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
D. Hoffmann (ed.), Stalinism
A. Applebaum, Gulag: A History
O. Khelvnjuk, History of the Gulag
S. Montefiore, Stalin

R. Medvedev & Z. Medvedev, The Unknown Stalin
M. Jansen & N. Petrov, Stalin's Loyal Executioner: Yezhov
J. Getty and O. Naumov, The Road to Terror
C. Ward, Stalin's Russia
L. Viola (ed.), Contending With Stalinism
S. Davies, Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia
J. Getty and R. Manning (eds.), Stalinist Terror
L. Siegelbaum (ed.), Stalinism as A Way of Life
J. Rubenstein and V. Naumov (eds.), Stalin's Secret Pogrom
L. Viola, The Unknown Gulag
O. Figes, The Whisperers
S. Davis and J. Harris (eds.), Stalin: A New History
J. Furst (ed.), Late Stalinist Russia

Politics, Policy, & Change During the Khrushchev Years

M. Lewin, Political Undercurrents in Soviet Economic Debates
W. Tompson, Khrushchev
M. McCauley (ed.), Khrushchev and Khrushchevism
C. Linden, Khrushchev and the Soviet Leadership
D. Kelley, et.al. (eds.), The Sons of Sergei: Khrushchev and Gorbachev
W. Taubman, et. al. (eds.), Nikita Khrushchev
N. Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers (3 vols.)
S. Khrushchev, Khrushchev on Khrushchev
N. Adler, The Gulag Survivor
V. Kozlov, Mass Uprisings in the USSR
N. Heer, Politics and History in the Soviet Union
R. Markwick, Rewriting History in Soviet Russia
W. Taubman, Khrushchev: The Man and His Era
P. Jones (ed.), Dilemmas of Destalinization

Politics and Society During the Brezhnev Era

H. Smith, The Russians
D. Shipler, Russia: Broken Idols, Solemn Dreams
M. Tatu, Power in the Kremlin
M. Lewin, The Gorbachev Phenomenon
A. Rothberg, The Heirs of Stalin: Dissidence and the Soviet Regime
S. Cohen, (ed.), An End to Silence: Uncensored Opinion in the Soviet Union
G. Breslauer, Khrushchev and Brezhnev as Leaders
L. Alexeyeva, Soviet Dissent
M. Voslensky, Nomenklatura
S. Cohen, Sovieticus: American Perceptions and Soviet Realities
Y. Brudny, Reinventing Russia: Russian Nationalism
K. Simis, USSR: The Corrupt Society

S. Bialer, Stalin's Successors
E. Bacon and M. Sandle (eds.), Brezhnev Reconsidered

From Andropov to Gorbachev

J. Steele & E. Abraham, Andropov in Power
J. Hough, Soviet Leadership in Transition
B. Hazan, From Brezhnev to Gorbachev

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. Wiczynski (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
S. White, Gorbachev and After
A. Brown, The Gorbachev Factor
A. Brown, Seven Years That Shook the World
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

C. Xenakis, What Happened to the Soviet Union?

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. Medvedev, Post-Soviet Russia
C. Freeland, Sale of the Century
L. Nelson and I. Kuzes, Radical Reform in Yeltsin's Russia
B. Silverman and M. Yanowitch, New Rich, New Poor (exp. ed.)
S. White, Russia's New Politics
L. Aron, Boris Yeltsin
T. Colton, Yeltsin
V. Putin, First Person
M. McFaul, Russia's Unfinished Revolution
T. Remington, The Russian Parliament
P. Reddaway and D. Glinski, The Tragedy of Russia's Reforms
A. Brown and L. Shevtsova (eds.), Gorbachev, Yeltsin, and Putin
M. Wyman, Public Opinion in Post-Communist Russia
M. Field & J. Twigg (eds.), Russia's Torn Safety Nets
A. Politkovskaya, Putin's Russia
M. Evangelista, The Chechen Wars
Z. Barany & R. Moser (eds.), Russian Politics: Democratization
G. Breslauer, Gorbachev and Yeltsin as Leaders
D. Herspring (ed.), Putin's Russia (3rd ed.)
L. Shevtsova, Yeltsin's Russia and Putin's Russia
G. Hahn, Russia's Revolution From Above
D. Hoffman, The Oligarchs
J. Hahn (ed.), Regional Russia in Transition
K. Smith, Mythmaking in the New Russia
C. Humphrey, The Unmaking of Soviet Life
L. March, The Communist Party in Post-Soviet Russia
R. Service, Russia
T. Colton & M. McFaul, Popular Choice & Managed Democracy
S. Cohen, Failed Crusade
A. Kuchins (ed.) After the Fall
M. Goldman, The Piratization of Russia
A. Jack, Inside Putin's Russia
M.S. Fish, Democracy Declared in Russia
P. Baker and S. Glasser, Kremlin Rising