

HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE AND THE SOVIET UNION SINCE 1856

This course examines the history of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union from 1856 to the collapse of the Soviet Union 1991. It takes a broadly chronological approach, surveying key themes and developments over this period. In the first term, the course opens with Russia's defeat in the Crimean War, examining the era of the Great Reforms from the perspective of both governmental policy and socio-cultural change. The course then traces the emergence of the revolutionary challenge, the ruling strategies of the tsars, as well as social change through to the collapse of the Romanov Dynasty and Bolshevik seizure of power during the revolutionary year, 1917. In the second term, the course surveys the major themes of Soviet history, including Stalinism, the Soviet experience of World War II, destalinization under Khrushchev, and the so-called "period of stagnation" under Brezhnev. It concludes by considering the rise of national politics and Gorbachev's attempts at reform, which culminated in the end of the Soviet empire, both in Eastern Europe and within the Soviet Union itself.

This course focuses on political, social, and cultural processes within Russia and the Soviet Union.

PRELIMINARY READING

Recommended Textbooks

C. Evtuhov, D. Goldfrank, L. Hughes, and R. Stites, A History of Russia: Peoples, Legends, Events, Forces (2004). A short version, 'since 1800' is also available.

Alternatives include:

G. Hosking, Russia and the Russians: People and Empire, 1552-1917 (1997)

D. Saunders, Russia in the Age of Reaction and Reform, 1801-1881 (1992)

H. Rogger, Russia in the Age of Modernisation and Revolution, 1881-1917 (1983)

R.G. Suny, The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States (1998)

Geoffrey Hosking, A History of the Soviet Union (3rd edition, 1992)

Recommended Reading

Shelia Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution [revised edition: 1994, 2001].

Richard Wortman, Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy (2000)

Stephen Kotkin, Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970-2000 (2003).

Recommended Websites

Seventeen Moments in Soviet History: www.soviethistory.org

Title: History of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union since 1856
Course Code: SEHI6010
Course-unit value: 1.0
Level: Intermediate

Availability: 2009-10
Open to: All second and final year undergraduates
Prerequisites: None

Course leaders: Susan Morrissey, Rm 420, SSEES Taviton Street
Other participants:

Aims:

1. To acquire fluency in a body of historical knowledge relating to the history of the Russian empire and the Soviet Union between 1856 and 1991;
2. To acquire a deeper understanding of the complex issues and debates surrounding Russia history, including broader concepts and explanatory tools.

Objectives: By the end of the course, you will have acquired:

1. Enhanced ability to understand and to appreciate how people have existed, acted and thought in the past in the context of the complexity and diversity of historical situations, events and intellectual outlooks.
 2. Enhanced ability to use and evaluate texts and other source materials both critically and empathetically, as well as appreciating the limits and challenges of the extant record. The critical evaluation of texts should include an understanding of the questions which historians ask and why they do so. By the end of the course students will have read and mastered a wide selection of historical works and primary sources drawn from the historiography on this period.
 3. Enhanced ability to frame an argument in a sustained manner both orally and in writing. Arguments should be structured, coherent, relevant, and concise, and should take into account all aspects of a given problem.
 4. Enhanced generic skills: these may be defined as –
 - (i) self-direction and self-discipline
 - (ii) independence of mind, and initiative
 - (iii) the ability to work with others and to have respect for the reasoned views of others
 - (iv) the ability to identify, gather, deploy and organize evidence, data and information; and familiarity with appropriate means of achieving this
 - (v) analytical ability and the capacity to consider and solve problems, including complex problems
 - (vi) structure, clarity and fluency of expression, both written and oral
 - (vii) intellectual maturity and integrity
 - (viii) empathy and imaginative insight
 - (ix) ability to organize time, work and personal resources to optimal effect.
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Teaching & Learning Methods:

Number of Hours:

Lectures	20 hours
Classes	10 hours
Private Study	Approximately 270 hours (although this will vary according to individual needs)

Assessment:

Coursework: Two essays of 2,500 words, with full bibliography and footnotes, to be submitted according to a fixed deadline. The aggregate mark for the two essays will count for **25%** of the total mark for the course.

Examination: A three-hour written examination of twelve questions, of which three must be answered. All questions carry equal weight and the aggregate mark counts for **75%** of the total mark for the course.

AFFILIATE STUDENTS:

See regulations posted elsewhere.

100% fulfillment of coursework is required by the final departmental deadline for the successful completion of this course.