

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

The Russian Revolution was a pivotal event in the history of the twentieth century. It ushered in an era of ideological conflict culminating in the Cold War and provided a model for liberation movements from China to Cuba. The years of perestroika and the ultimate collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 would finally transform the Russian Revolution into an historical fact: one could say that the Revolution itself had come to an abrupt and uncertain end. These events combined with the recent opening of archives in the former Soviet Union have energized debate among historians, and a re-evaluation of the Russian Revolution is currently occurring. This course allows students to study the political, social, and cultural processes of the Russian Revolution from 1917 through the early 1930s.

The course begins with the February Revolution of 1917 and examines the revolutionary year in some detail. Attention will be paid to both the social revolution "from below" and the role of Lenin and the Bolshevik Party. The course will then turn to the Bolshevik Revolution and the evolution of Soviet power through the civil war and the New Economic Policy. In the second term, the course will first move away from a chronological approach and examine several themes in detail, including the new man, women's liberation, and the war against religion. It will then examine how the Great Break of 1928-32 laid the economic, social, and political foundations for the further development of the Soviet Union. The term will conclude with a consideration of the Stalinist end to the Revolution with a discussion on the character of the revolutionary process as a whole.

PRELIMINARY READING

Recommended Textbooks

Orlando Figes, A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution, 1891-1924, (1996).
 Geoffrey Hosking, The First Socialist Society: A History of the Soviet Union (1994)
 Ronald Gregor Suny, The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States (1998)

Recommended Reading

Shelia Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution (2nd ed 1994)
 Steve Smith, The Russian Revolution: A Very Short Introduction (2002)

Recommended Fiction

Mikhail Bulgakov, Heart of a Dog

Recommended Websites

Seventeen Moments in Soviet History: www.soviethistory.org

Title: The Russian Revolution
Course Code: SEHI3005/SEHI9005
Course-unit value: 2.0
Level: Advanced

Availability: TBC
Open to: All final year undergraduates
Prerequisites: All participants should have passed a full Intermediate Level course in History

Course leader: 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 Russia between 1917 and 1934;
2. To acquire a deeper understanding of the complex issues and debates surrounding the Russian Revolution, 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.

Teaching & Learning Methods:

Number of Hours:

Classes

60 hours

Private Study

Approximately 250-300 hours for each course unit
(although this will vary according to individual needs)

Assessment:

Course Unit 1

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 eight 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.

Course Unit 2

Coursework: One extended essay ('dissertation') of 10,000 words, with full bibliography and footnotes, to be submitted on the first day of the third term.

AFFILIATE STUDENTS:

See regulations posted elsewhere.

100% fulfillment of coursework by the History Department's final coursework deadlines is required for the successful completion of this course.