

## **Modern Russia and the Soviet Union**

History 329, Section 001, 3 credit hours

Fall 2015

Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:00-1:15 p.m., Music/Theater Building 1005

Prof. Steven A. Barnes

Robinson B377A

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Office Hours: Mondays 1:30-2:30 p.m. and by appointment.

### **Course Description:**

This course explores the history of the lands and peoples that made up the Russian Empire from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, through the collapse of tsarist system, the rise and fall of the Soviet Union's communism, to the emergence of new systems after the Soviet collapse. The course will place special focus on what is today Russia and Ukraine.

This course satisfies the Mason Core requirement in global understanding and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences requirement in non-Western culture.

### **Learning Outcomes and Assessment:**

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

Demonstrate familiarity with the main themes in modern Russian, Soviet, and Ukrainian history.

Explain the social tensions and political movements that brought about the Russian Revolution.

Explain the basic foundations of the Soviet socialist system in the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres.

Explain the sources of stability and instability within the Soviet system.

Explain the attempts to construct a non-socialist society in the wake of the Soviet collapse.

Explain the tensions and challenges in historical and contemporary Ukraine.

Practice critical reading and proper citation of primary and secondary sources, including texts, images, music, films, and websites.

## Course Assignments:

PAPER 1: (3-4 pages): 200 points On the memoir *Yashka: My Life as Peasant, Officer and Exile*. Due at the beginning of class on September 28.

EXAMINATION 1: 200 points In class on October 26.

PAPER 2: (3-4 pages): 200 points On the novel *Generations of Winter*. Due at the beginning of class on November 16.

PAPER 3: (3-4 pages): 200 points On the novel *Moscow to the End of the Line*, Due at the beginning of class on December 9.

EXAMINATION 2: 200 points In class on Monday, December 14, 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Total 1,000

GRADE SCALE:	980-1,000	A+
	930-979	A
	900-929	A-
	870-899	B+
	830-869	B
	800-829	B-
	770-799	C+
	730-769	C
	700-729	C-
	600-699	D
	0-599	F

## Course Policies – READ CAREFULLY:

Attendance: Our class meetings are the foundation of everything we do during the term. You cannot afford to miss them. Although attending class is not mandatory, I will take attendance. If you have two or fewer absences during the term, I will add ten points to your final grade for the semester. Late arrivals will be marked as absent for purposes of this policy.

Enrollment: It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they are officially enrolled in the course. Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadlines published in the Schedule of Classes. (Deadlines each semester are published in the Schedule of Classes available from the Registrar's Website <http://registrar.gmu.edu>.)

Please note that the instructor has no authority to add or drop students after the deadlines. After the last day to drop a class, withdrawing from this class requires the approval of the

dean and is only allowed for nonacademic reasons.

Undergraduate students may choose to exercise a selective withdrawal. See the Schedule of Classes for selective withdrawal procedures.

*Policy on Late Work:* Papers are due at the beginning of class on their due date. Grades on assignments will be reduced by 5 percent for each day of lateness.

*Email Addresses:* Mason and the professor use only Mason e-mail accounts to communicate with enrolled students. Students must activate their Mason e-mail account, use it to communicate with their instructor, department and other administrative units, and check it regularly for important university information including messages related to this class.

*Students with Disabilities:* If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the [Office of Disability Services](http://ods.gmu.edu) at 703.993.2474 or [ods.gmu.edu](http://ods.gmu.edu). All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

*Cheating and Plagiarism:* All work in this class must be your own unless otherwise directed by the professor. In addition, all work submitted in this class must be unique to this class (i.e. no “double submission” of the same or substantially the same work to this class and another class whether this semester or prior to this semester). For purposes of this course, cheating and plagiarism are defined as follows:

- Cheating encompasses the following:
  1. The willful giving or receiving of an unauthorized, unfair, dishonest, or unscrupulous advantage in academic work over other students.
  2. The above may be accomplished by any means whatsoever, including but not limited to the following: fraud; duress; deception; theft; trick; talking; signs; gestures; copying from another student; and the unauthorized use of study aids, memoranda, books, data, or other information.
  3. Attempted cheating.
- Plagiarism encompasses the following:
  1. Presenting as one's own the words, the work, or the opinions of someone else without proper acknowledgment.
  2. Borrowing the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgment.

All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code. You can find a copy of the Honor Code at <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu>. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to

the Honor Committee for review. For first time violations of the Honor Code, I always recommend failure of the course. If you have any questions on what constitutes cheating or plagiarism after reviewing these materials, please talk to me. If you are unsure when completing an assignment, ask me. Do not take a chance of your case winding up before the Honor Board.

Laptops, cell phones: Recent research has revealed that students learn and perform better when taking notes long-hand without use of a laptop. Accordingly and because they are invariably a distraction not only to their user but also to those around them, laptops are strongly discouraged and may only be used in the back two rows. (For those with a need to use a laptop to accommodate a disability, please see me immediately after class and read the section below on students with disabilities.) In addition, texting or other activities using phones or other electronic devices are forbidden. (If there is an emergency need to have your phone available during class, please let me know before the particular class session.) Each time you engage in texting or similar activities during class, five points will be deducted from your final class grade.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): George Mason University's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) provides a wide range of services to students, faculty, and staff. Services are provided by a staff of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors. The Center provides individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs -- experiences to enhance a student's personal experience and academic performance. If you are in a crisis, please contact them via <http://caps.gmu.edu/> or 703-993-2380 or at their new office SUB I, Room 3129.

### **Required Materials:**

The following books are required and available for purchase at the GMU Bookstore or from your favorite online booksellers:

Robert Service, *A History of Modern Russia: From Tsarism to the Twentieth Century*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition

Vassily Aksyonov, *Generations of Winter*

Venedikt Erofeev, *Moscow to the End of the Line*

In addition, you will be reading the memoir of Mariia Bochkareva (Maria Botchkareva), *Yashka: My Life as Peasant, Officer, and Exile*, available for free via University of Michigan and the Google Books project. The book can be downloaded here and is available under the Course Content tab on Blackboard:

<https://books.google.com/books?id=7f0DAAAAYAAJ&dq=yashka&pg=PR3#v=onepage&q=yashka&f=false>

The Service textbook is intended primarily to be a resource to enhance and deepen your knowledge of things covered in lectures. It is also a good reference source when writing papers.

Students are also advised of the availability of an incredibly useful online sourcebook *Seventeen Moments in Soviet History* at <http://soviethistory.msu.edu>

**Exams and paper assignments will draw on all course material, and you should expect specific questions covering the required readings and/or films.**

### **Schedule of Classes:**

Due to the size of the class and the introductory nature of the subject material, the course will operate primarily in the form of lecture. However, students are strongly encouraged to ask questions whenever they arise and to come to class prepared to be active participants in the educational process.

### **PART 1 (August 31-September 16) Russia and Ukraine: Land and Peoples to World War I**

**Note: Labor Day, No Class on September 7**

Readings: Read Maria Botchkareva, *Yashka: My Life as Peasant, Officer, Exile*.  
Read Robert Service, *A History of Modern Russia*, pp. 1-44.

### **PART 2 (September 21 – September 30) Russia and Ukraine: Revolution, Civil War, and Leninism**

Writing: Paper #1 due at the beginning of class on September 28

Reading: Read Robert Service, *A History of Modern Russia*, pp. 45-168  
Begin reading Vassily Aksyonov, *Generations of Winter*

Film: Watch *October*, dir. Sergei Eisenstein, 1927  
<https://youtu.be/iyme-uwgrRw> (Also available in Johnson Center Library)

### **PART 3 (October 5-October 21) The Soviet Union under Stalin – Building Socialism and World War II**

Exam: Examination #1 immediately following this section on October 26, 2015

Reading: Read Robert Service, *A History of Modern Russia*, pp. 169-292  
Finish reading Vassily Aksyonov, *Generations of Winter*

Film: *Jolly Fellows*, dir. Grigorii Aleksandrov, 1934  
<https://youtu.be/chDRXQ77IgA?list=PL37OROGR5PDtQAIBINQtXmeYzQtnnjXzi>

**NOTE: NO CLASS ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 12 – Columbus Day**

**CLASS MEETS INSTEAD ON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13 AT OUR REGULAR TIME. YOUR TUESDAY CLASSES DO NOT MEET THIS WEEK.**

**EXAMINATION 1 In Class on Monday, October 26. Bring Bluebooks.**

**PART 4 (October 28-November 16) The Soviet Union after Stalin – Reform, Stagnation, Collapse**

Writing: Paper #2 due at the beginning of class on November 16.

Reading: Read Robert Service, *A History of Modern Russia*, pp. 293-508  
Read Venedikt Erofeev, *Moscow to the End of the Line*

Film: Watch *Office Romance*, dir. El'dar Riazanov, 1977

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cmylNwnR9qQ&list=PLkD84v189LdEPmROsXR-L1A04gvxq2vfx&index=17>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JPjr65ncLL8&index=18&list=PLkD84v189LdEPmROsXR-L1A04gvxq2vfx>

**PART 5 (November 18-December 9) Russia and Ukraine Since Independence 1991-present**

Writing: Paper #3 due at beginning of class on December 9

Reading: Read Robert Service, *A History of Modern Russia*, pp. 509-574

Exam: Examination #2 in class on Monday, December 14, 10:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Film: *Leviathan*, dir. Andrei Zvyagintsev. A group showing of the film will be scheduled for the class.

**EXAMINATION 2: In class, December 14 10:30am-12:00pm. Bring Bluebooks**