

History 499, Section 004, Fall, 2015  
Wed, 4:30-7:10  
Robinson A101 (main classroom)

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**INTRODUCTION:** The purpose of this course is to develop more fully your ability to research and write history. You will sharpen your skills in defining a topic, gathering and critical analysis of sources, organization of materials, and writing. You will become a historian rather than just a student of history. We do this through the research and writing of a major research paper.

The class is structured in large part as an individual research project for each student. There will be a combination of formal group classes and individual one-on-one meetings in my office—see the schedule below. The individual meetings will be scheduled via Doodle and held in the professor’s office. Being at these meetings, on time and prepared, is essential. (Note: we may switch scheduling systems).

**SCHEDULE OF CLASS WORK & MAJOR DATES.** All individual meetings are in my office. All class meetings are as per the official scheduled time and room (above) except for the special Monday classes Oct. 20 and 27 for part of the class (who, and place, to be announced). Most weeks we do not have a class meeting, only individual meetings. Weeks with required individual meetings normally have Monday meeting times available as well. Wednesday meetings normally are between 12:00 - 7:00, and Monday meetings are early to mid afternoon. These are scheduled for 15-20 minutes each (varies by week). You are expected to be prompt because others will be coming behind you. This schedule is subject to change after I see the contours of the class and as things develop during the semester.

Sept 2 - Class meeting: Overview and introduction to course; attendance essential.

Sept 9 -- Class meeting: Focus on research techniques, taking notes. Individual meetings not required but strongly encouraged—topic selection needs to be done.

Sept 16 -- Class meeting at Fenwick Library Instruction Room (A-214); individual meetings strongly advised. Note: you must do either the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup>, and can do both.

Sept 23 -- Required individual meetings. Bring progress report, outline of paper, bibliography.

Sept 30 -- Required individual meetings--bring outline of paper, bibliography, progress report.

Oct. 7 -- Voluntary individual meetings.

Oct. 14 -- Required individual meetings.

Oct. 21 -- Class meeting. Discussion of presentations and critique procedures. Group One papers due for class distribution. Required individual meetings for Group Two (those whose papers are due Oct.29 & 31 for Nov. 5 & 7 in-class presentation). Voluntary meetings for others.

Oct. 26 & 28 -- Presentation and discussion of Group One papers; Group Two papers due for class distribution (those whose papers will be presented Nov. 5 or 7). Required individual meeting for Group Three, those scheduled for presentation on Nov. 12 & 14). Voluntary meetings can be scheduled by others.

Nov. 2 & 4 -- Presentation and discussion of Group Two papers. Group Three papers due for class distribution (those scheduled for Nov. 12 & 14 presentation). Voluntary meetings can be scheduled as well.

Nov. 11-- Presentation and discussion of Group Three papers. Voluntary meetings can be scheduled as well

Nov. 18 -- Required individual meetings to discuss revisions

Nov. 25 – Thanksgiving holiday --.

Dec. 2 -- Voluntary Individual Meetings, but encouraged

Dec. 9 ---ENTIRE CLASS MEETING – FINAL PAPERS DUE

## **COURSE CONTENT AND PROCESS**

Part I—Topic Selection. During the first two-three weeks we will focus on selecting topics, exploring their bibliographies, and discussing research methods and tools. An effort will be made to select topics with a range of types of sources and research problems so as to give you a broad, yet in depth, research experience. Almost always the final topic will be narrower and more focused than your initial idea. Some of you already have a quite specific research idea, some a general idea, others nothing in mind. In the latter cases it can be helpful to think about what interests you or what kind of history you like best: political, social, cultural, the arts, gender, international relations, military, economic, biography, etc. This can help you work toward a specific topic. As you do so, think in terms of a question, the answer to which you will provide in your paper, or a problem that you intend to solve. Do not, at this stage, worry overmuch about having a “thesis.” **ALL TOPICS MUST BE APPROVED BY THE PROFESSOR.**

All papers will deal with the revolutionary era in Russia, defined as approximately 1880 to about 1930. Students who have not had History 329 or equivalent should read the appropriate section of a good textbook or history of the period. A selection from Thompson, *Russia and the Soviet Union*, is available in three chronological parts on the course Blackboard site.

After selection of a topic, you will compose and submit by email a short written statement (one brief paragraph) laying out the topic as you understand it and what issues you think will need to be addressed. We will go over this at our next individual meeting.

Throughout this part and the rest of the course you will have numerous individual meetings with the professor. Schedule these via Doodle signup (or other).

Part II – Research and Writing. The second and largest part of the course is the research and writing of the first version of your paper. The emphasis will be on thorough research, careful use of sources, good organization, and clear presentation. During this stage you will work mostly on your own, scheduling individual conferences as needed or mandated. Note that the course puts an emphasis upon sustained independent work, but consultation with the instructor is available at any time and students are encouraged to contact me promptly whenever serious problems or doubts arise.

You should show progress each week in gathering your bibliography, collecting the raw data for your paper, organizing it, developing your thesis, beginning writing, etc. Bring a “Research Log” of your work and progress since the previous meeting to each of the required meetings and preferably for each voluntary meeting. This log allows both you and the professor to track progress and also helps identify problems that need addressing. A research log template is attached: photocopy or download copies.

Part III—Presentation and Critique. The third part of the course involves presenting your paper to the class, having it evaluated in class, and also evaluating others’ papers. Each paper will be presented to the class. All students in each group will read each paper and be prepared for class discussion. For each paper, one student will have primary responsibility to prepare a written and oral critique to begin class discussion. Further instructions on this will be distributed. For this part of the course we will have to divide into two groups, with part of the class meeting on Monday or Tuesday (same hour, place to be announced).

Part IV—Revision and final paper. The fourth and last part is the revision of the paper as per the critiques received and the submission of a final paper. How much revision will need to be done depends on the

quality of the first version submitted. It should be stressed that the first submitted paper is not a draft. It should be looked upon as a finished paper and will be evaluated as such. The second, final submitted paper should be viewed as a more polished, superior version.

**PAPERS ARE ABSOLUTELY DUE ON TIME, BOTH TIMES.**

**FORMAT OF PAPERS.** Papers will be approximately 20-25 typed, double-spaced, pages in length, plus annotated bibliography divided into primary and secondary sources. If that seems short, it is because they are also expected to be tightly organized and written. Papers should be prepared in conformity with Kate Turabian, a Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations, 8th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007 (often called the "Chicago" style manual, of which it is an abbreviated version). It also provides valuable information on all parts of writing a research paper. An online version is available at [http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian\\_citationguide.html](http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian_citationguide.html) Various online university sites give abridged versions or advice on using it, but using the original is best.

**LIBRARIES:** Expect to use multiple libraries and resources. Do not try to avoid that. Assume that you will use resources such as Aladdin and the George Washington University, Georgetown University, and American University libraries. You should expect to use the Library of Congress: In some cases specialized libraries may be necessary. Similarly, learn the interlibrary loan system (although any books ordered there may have to be done fairly early in the semester to insure their arrival). Also, learn the online journal access systems and their limitations. Web materials may be used, subject to the normal evaluation procedures, but are not adequate alone.

**GRADE:** 80% paper (bibliography, preparedness for meetings, first version, presentation, final paper); 10% critique; 10% class participation.

**NOTE ON PLAGIARISM:** Plagiarism is a serious matter and will be so treated—most commonly by an F for the course. Don't do it! Do your own research and writing.

**GETTING HELP:** If you have any problems with grammar or with producing good writing, go to the Writing Center and/or consult their web site for workshops: <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu> , phone 703-993-1200. Counseling and Psychological Services at <http://caps.gmu.edu> provides both Learning Services that include academic skills workshops, and also counseling via its Counseling and Psychological Services division. If you have a disability that needs academic accommodation, please see me early in the course and, if appropriate, also contact the Disability Resource Center at 703-993-2474. In fact, any problem that might affect your course work is better raised with me or the appropriate help resource earlier rather than later.

**HISTORY 499 is:** 1. Designated as a Research and Scholarship Intensive Course, in which students actively participate in the process of scholarship through an original research paper.

2. Designated as a Writing Intensive Course and fulfills the Writing Intensive requirement of the History major and the B.A. degree.

3. Designated as a Synthesis Course, which provides students the opportunity to synthesize the knowledge, skills and values gained from their general education and expands their ability to master new content, think critically, and develop life-long learning skills.

## HISTORY 499 – IDEAS FOR TOPICS

The following are not specific research paper topics, but rather are broad subjects from which a topic for your paper can be developed. Learning to select and define a viable research topic is part of the course. You probably will want to select a topic which is more narrowly defined than your first impulse suggests. You usually will be surprised at how much material is available: finding it is a significant part of research. Availability of sources, especially in English, will determine viability of a topic. **YOUR PAPER TOPIC MUST BE SELECTED IN CONSULTATION WITH THE PROFESSOR AND APPROVED BY HIM.**

### I. Situation in late Imperial Russia

- Problems of political and economic development
- Important political figures
- Social groups (working class, peasantry, women, gender, etc.)
- Social conditions (education, health, science, family)
- Nationality groups
- Literature, arts, culture
- Revolution of 1905
- Duma Era and issues

### II. Development of the Revolutionary Movement

- Bolsheviks, Socialist Revolutionaries, Mensheviks, Constitutional Democrats
- Structure, ideology, leaders, activities

### III. Foreign Relations

- With specific countries (U.S., Britain, France, etc.) during a certain period.
- Specific topics or periods (formation of the Entente, Russo-Japanese war, Balkan question, etc.).
- Soviet Foreign Relations in the 1920s
- Note: U.S.-Russian/Soviet relations has good source material availability

### IV. The Russian Revolution

- Policies of the Provisional Government
- Bolshevik Party during 1917, or other parties
- Army, military matters
- Workers, peasants, nationalities, etc.
- Social and Economic issues; Cultural issues.
- The revolution in a given region
- Foreign reporting on the revolution and international relations issues

### V. The Civil War Era

- Problems of the new government in establishing itself
- The Civil War (origins, course, participants); Social, cultural, and economic issues.
- Allied attitudes toward and Allied intervention

### VI. The Soviet Union during the 1920s

- NEP
- Struggle for Political Power in 1920s
- Bolshevik attempts to remake society: arts; education; social relationships;
- Nationality groups and policies
- Culture, Arts, literature; Economic issues

**Research Log Template**  
History 499, Revolutionary Russia

Name:

Date:

Approximate amount of time expended since the last meeting. Be honest—this information will be more helpful to you than it is important to me. There is no set number of hours of work per week required for this course, although one professor estimates that success in History 499 requires at least 10 hours per week. I realize that requirements in other courses and other factors will result in significant swings in the amount of time per week. However, you will find that working steadily through the term, rather than in jumps and starts of time, pays off.

List the kind of activities in which you were engaged since our last meeting: locating sources, reading, note taking, organizing materials, writing, whatever.

Name of sources (books, databases, library catalogues, archives, etc.) read or consulted. Use proper bibliographic citations.