Modern Russia and the Soviet Union

History 329, Section 001, 3 credit hours
Spring 2019
Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:00-10:15am, James Buchanan Hall D005

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Office Hours: Mondays 10:30-11:45am

Course Description:

This course explores the history of the lands and peoples that made up the Russian Empire under the tsars at the beginning of the 20th century, through the Russian Revolution, the establishment of a communist regime under Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin, the collapse of the Soviet system, the emergence of new systems after the Soviet collapse and up to the rise of Vladimir Putin.

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

Learning Outcomes for the Global Understanding Mason Core Requirement:

The goal of the Mason Core global understanding category is to help students see the world from multiple perspectives, reflect upon their positions in a global society, and be prepared for future engagement as global citizens. While it may include historical perspective, global understanding courses focus primarily on contemporary understanding of one's place in a global society.

Courses in this category must meet a minimum of three of the following learning outcomes.

1. Identify and articulate one's own values and how those values influence their interactions and relationships with others, both locally and globally.

2. Demonstrate understanding of how the patterns and processes of globalization make visible the interconnections and differences among and within contemporary global societies.

3. Demonstrate the development of intercultural competencies.

4. Explore individual and collective responsibilities within a global society through analytical, practical, or creative responses to problems or issues, using resources appropriate to the field.

Learning Outcomes for History 329:

At the end of this course, students will exhibit the following skills which relate to the first three global understanding learning outcomes:

Demonstrate familiarity with the main themes in modern Russian and Soviet history and show how historical and cultural particularities interact with global trends to develop specific social, cultural, economic, and political regimes.

Explain the particular local and larger global 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 and how those foundations arise from and yet differ from historical and modern American and global systems.

Explain the sources of stability and instability within the Soviet system and an understanding of its applicability to the contemporary global order.

Explain the attempts to construct a non-socialist society in the wake of the Soviet collapse, the successes and failures of the integration of Russia into the global system, and the tensions those successes and failures reveal about the global political, economic, cultural, and social environment.

Practice critical reading and proper citation of primary and secondary sources, including texts, images, music, films, and websites, understanding the particular social, cultural, historical, and political context within which those sources were created.

Course Assignments:

> *PAPER 1: (3-4 pages):* ***150 points*** On the memoir *Yashka: My Life as Peasant, Officer and Exile*. Due at via Blackboard at noon on February 25. (Separate writing prompts will be provided for each paper.)
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> *EXAMINATION 1*: ***150 points*** In class on March 25. Bring bluebooks. Format to be discussed in class.
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> *PAPER 2: (5-6 pages):* ***300 points*** On the novel *Generations of Winter*. Due via Blackboard at noon on April 10.
>
> *PAPER 3: (3-4 pages):* ***150 points*** On the novel *The Queue*, Due via Blackboard at noon on May 6.
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> *EXAMINATION 2:* ***200 points*** In class on Monday, May 13, 7:30-10:15am

5 FILM RESPONSES: ***10 points each*** Due via Blackboard at noon on February 27, March 20, April 17, May 3, and May 6
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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

Please note that grades are not rounded. A final score of 869 will not be rounded up to 870 but will be assigned a grade of B.

Course Policies – READ CAREFULLY:

Attendance: Our class meetings are the foundation of everything we do during the term. You cannot afford to miss them. I do not assign a textbook that can be read to cover material from class. Grades in the course strongly correlate with attendance. Although no grade penalties result directly from failure to attend class, 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. **For purposes of the attendance extra credit, no absence counts as "excused" and late arrivals are considered the same as an absence.**

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 on Blackboard at noon on their due date. Grades on late assignments will be reduced by 5 percent for each 24 hours of lateness or portion

thereof. **No papers will be accepted for a grade more than 10 calendar days after their assigned due date** absent truly exceptional circumstances.

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 at 703.993.2474 or ds.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.

Do note that all submitted papers are subjected to a review using the SafeAssign system.

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 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 may 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 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:

Vassily Aksyonov, *Generations of Winter*
Vladimir Sorokin, *The Queue*

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

In addition, it is recommended but not required that you acquire a textbook of modern Russian history. The basic narrative of Russian history required in this course will be covered through lectures, but it is of necessity abridged and simplified. A textbook can help you enhance and deepen your knowledge of things covered in lectures. It is also a good reference source when writing papers. I recommend the following textbook which you can acquire via your favorite online book seller. I have provided page numbers in the syllabus to indicate which portions of this textbook correspond to the material covered in class. However, you are welcome to acquire a different textbook if you wish.

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

Students are also advised of the availability of an incredibly useful online sourcebook which can similarly provide additional context for subjects covered in class: *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 (January 23-February 6) The Russian Empire: Land and Peoples to World War I

Readings: Read Maria Botchkareva, *Yashka: My Life as Peasant, Officer, Exile*. (Via link above or via Course Content on Blackboard.)
Recommended: Robert Service, *A History of Modern Russia*, pp. 1-44.

PART 2 (February 11-February 20) Russia through Revolution, Civil War, and the Early Development of the Soviet System

Writing: Paper #1 due via Blackboard at noon on February 25
Film Response Number 1 (*Battleship Potemkin)* due via Blackboard at noon on February 27

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

Film: Watch *Battleship Potemkin*, dir. Sergei Eisenstein, 1925
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_4Qfuzn25sI (Also available in Johnson Center Library)

PART 3 (February 25 – March 20) The Soviet Union under Stalin – Building Socialism and World War II

NOTE: No class on Monday, March 11 or Wednesday, March 13 due to spring break.

Writing: Film Response Number 2 (*Tractor Drivers*) due via Blackboard at noon on March 20

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

Film: *Tractor Drivers*, dir. Ivan Pyryev, 1939
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z7LglSy4B3w

Exam: **Examination #1 in class immediately after this section on Monday, March 25. Bring bluebooks**

PART 4 (March 27 – April 17) The Soviet Union after Stalin – Reform, Stagnation, Collapse

Writing: Paper #2 due via Blackboard at noon on April 10.
Film Response Number 3 (*Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears*) due via Blackboard at noon on April 17.

Reading: Read Vladimir Sorokin, *The Queue*
Recommended: Robert Service, *A History of Modern Russia*, pp. 293-508

Film: Watch *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears*, dir. Vladimir Menshov, 1980
http://cinema.mosfilm.ru/films/film/Moskva-slezam-ne-verit/moskva-slezam-ne-verit/ (Note that the film is in two parts—you must watch both. To watch the film, press the button to the right of the image that says Смотреть or click on the two cover images below the Russian word Серии which will bring up the two separate parts of the film.)

Also available at the Johnson Center Library

PART 5 (April 22-May 6) Russia Since Independence 1991-present

Writing: Film Response Number 4 (*Brother*) due via Blackboard at noon on May 3
Film Response Number 5 (*Leviathan*) due via Blackboard at noon May 6
Paper #3 due via Blackboard at noon on May 6

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

Films: *Brother*, dir. Aleksei Balabanov, 1997

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iw6cDYEd8Dw Part 1 of 8.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pbR2nGphkZM Part 2 of 8.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nrzbk9-tumU Part 3 of 8.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36xOOiKcb8c Part 4 of 8.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4oTfFiPZCGM Part 5 of 8.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SMH7J3YUhBA Part 6 of 8.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJ2yhlK6hG0 Part 7 of 8.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PyG_xypLe4U Part 8 of 8.

Also available at Johnson Center Library

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

Also available at Johnson Center Library

Exam: Examination #2 in class on Monday, May 13, 7:30-10:15am, Bring bluebooks