

Modern Russia and the Soviet Union

History 329, Section 001, 3 credit hours

Fall 2019

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:00-10:15am, Innovation Hall 204

Prof. Steven A. Barnes

Robinson B349

sbarnes3@gmu.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:30am-12:00pm or by appointment

Open Lunches: Johnson Center Food Court, Rotating Weekly at noon on Wednesdays/Thursdays/Fridays—starting this week on Thursday, then Wednesday next week begins the rotation (See schedule on last page of syllabus. I'll also announce each week in class.)

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 historical developments, social tensions, and political movements that brought about the Russian Revolution.

Explain the basic foundations of the Soviet 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 via Blackboard at noon on September 30. (Separate writing prompts will be provided for each paper.)

EXAMINATION 1: 150 points In class on October 17. Bring bluebooks. Format to be discussed in class.

PAPER 2: (5-6 pages): 300 points On the novel *Generations of Winter*. Due via Blackboard at noon on November 10.

PAPER 3: (3-4 pages): 150 points On the novel *The Queue*, Due via Blackboard at noon on December 7.

EXAMINATION 2: 200 points In class on Thursday, December 12, 7:30-10:15am

NOTE: Per university and department policy, an alternate final exam date and time can only be arranged if you have more than two final exams scheduled on the same day. Block this day/time in your calendar. Do not come to me later asking to change the date.

5 FILM RESPONSES: 10 points each Due via Blackboard at noon on October 7, October 23, November 18, December 4, and December 6.

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. I do not assign a textbook that can be read to cover material from class. You are strongly advised to make a friend in the class with whom you could share notes if you miss a 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/Extension Bank: Papers are due on Blackboard at noon on their due date. Grades on late assignments will be reduced by 3 percent for each 24-hour period of lateness or portion thereof. **No papers will be accepted for a grade more than 14 calendar days after their assigned due date** absent truly exceptional circumstances.

Students will each have a 48-hour extension bank that can be used at any time during the semester. If you wish to use a portion of your extension bank on any assignment, please add a comment on Blackboard when submitting the assignment. No extensions beyond the 48-hour extension bank will be granted 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. If a class session is canceled, an announcement will be sent to your Mason e-mail account. This will be the only notice that you will receive of a class cancellation.

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://ds.gmu.edu) at 703.993.2474 or ds.gmu.edu. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Cheating and Plagiarism: While you are encouraged to discuss assignments with classmates and the professor, all work in this class must be your own unless otherwise directed. 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). All assignments submitted via Blackboard are checked via SafeAssign for similarities to content on the internet and student papers submitted this and prior semesters for this class.

No assignment in this course requires any additional research or reading beyond the works assigned. I am interested in your ideas and your reactions to the things you read and the films you watch. I do not want your distillation of someone else’s ideas about these materials. **When composing essays and film responses, no websites or printed resources beyond those assigned for the class are to be consulted** unless specifically instructed or authorized by the professor.

For purposes of this course and in accord with George Mason policies, 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. [Please note that using ideas you have found on the internet but rewriting them in your own words still constitutes plagiarism.]

It is expected that students adhere to the George Mason University Honor Code as it relates to integrity regarding coursework and grades. The Honor Code reads as follows: "To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the University Community have set forth this: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal and/or lie in matters related to academic work." More information about the Honor Code, including definitions of cheating, lying, and plagiarism, can be found at the Office of Academic Integrity website at <http://oai.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. In addition, texting or other activities using phones or other electronic devices are prohibited. (If there is an emergency need to have your phone available during class, please let me know and an exception can be made.)

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:

<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 Twenty-First 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 (August 27-September 10) 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 (September 12 – September 24) Russia and Ukraine: Revolution, Civil War, and Leninism

Writing: Paper #1 due via Blackboard at noon on September 30
Film Response Number 1 (*Battleship Potemkin*) due via Blackboard at noon on October 7

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> Press the “cc” button for English subtitles. (Also available in Johnson Center Library)

PART 3 (September 26 – October 24) The Soviet Union under Stalin – Building Socialism and World War II

NOTE: No class on Tuesday, October 15. If you have Monday classes, they will take place on Tuesday, October 15.

Exam: **Examination #1 in class on Thursday, October 17. Bring bluebooks**

Writing: Film Response Number 2 (*Tractor Drivers*) due via Blackboard at noon on October 23

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>

PART 4 (October 29 – November 14) The Soviet Union after Stalin – Reform, Stagnation, Collapse

Writing: Paper #2 due via Blackboard at noon on November 10.
Film Response Number 3 (*Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears*) due via Blackboard at noon on November 18.

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 (November 19 – December 5) Russia Since Independence 1991-present

NOTE: No class on Wednesday, November 21

Writing: Film Response Number 4 (*Brother*) due via Blackboard at noon on December 4

Film Response Number 5 (*Leviathan*) due via Blackboard at noon on December 6

Paper #3 due via Blackboard at noon on December 7

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. The film is also available for paid online streaming via Amazon Prime, Vudu, YouTube, iTunes, and Google Play.

Also available at Johnson Center Library

Exam: Examination #2 in class on Thursday, December 12, 7:30-10:15am, Bring bluebooks

Open Lunches – Come to discuss things academic and non-academic. Come to discuss Russia, football, television, pop culture, life. Come get to know your professor and your fellow students.

Lunches are at noon in the Johnson Center Food Court. Find Professor Barnes and pull up a chair.

Thursday, August 29

Wednesday, September 4

Thursday, September 12

Friday, September 20

Wednesday, September 25

Thursday, October 3

Friday, October 11

Wednesday, October 16

Thursday, October 24

Friday, November 1

Wednesday, November 6

Thursday, November 14

Friday, November 22

Happy Thanksgiving!

Wednesday, December 4