EMORY UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION TO RUSSIAN AREA STUDIES

REES 200W-000/HIST 285W-001
Candler Library TBA
MoWeFr: 10:00-10:50
Office Hrs: Weds., 2:00-3:30

Professor Payne
119 Bowden Hall
Ph. 727-4466
email: mpayn01
COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to the vast sweep of history, society, politics and culture of Russia in its varied boundaries and complex relations with its neighbors. As such, it takes an interdisciplinary approach to answering the fundamental questions that have been debated for centuries: What is Russia? Where is Russia? Where is Russia going? Along the way, the course examines the essential components of Russia’s national identity, as well as the question of how this identity has been understood by both the Russians themselves and by the other peoples of the region. These issues are approached from a number of perspectives, including historical, political, legal, economic, cultural and artistic. The class relies less on overarching textbook approaches and more on close readings of short and varied texts that illuminate Russia’s past, present, and, hopefully, its future. Proceeding from the fixities of geography and climate, the course explores the weight of history, the power of the state, the constitution of culture, the importance of religion and art, and the exigencies of everyday life. The course highlights continuities in the historical experience while addressing the causes of powerful and violent ruptures in culture and society that, throughout history, have affected Russia itself, its neighbors, and the world at large. We hope that, through this course, students will receive not simply an introduction to the fascinating riddle that is Russia, but also an understanding of the complexities and multiple interpretive approaches that should animate the study of any nation.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Writing Assignments:
Assignments will be split between unit response papers of one to two pages and one long research paper. At the end of every unit, each student will submit a short paper responding to one of the previous week’s texts or the unit film (which will be watched individually in the Media Library) via Safe-Assign to the course Blackboard website. At least three of these papers will respond to the films offered in connection with the course. This regular feedback will act not only as a vehicle to evaluate and improve students’ writing skills, but it will also hone their interpretation of class materials and prepare them for the task of writing the research paper. Discussion responses will be due on Blackboard by 9:00 pm on evening prior to class discussion at the end of each unit (noted). Research assignments will be due similarly at 6:00 pm on the evening of the dated noted (usually on the last class date of a unit).

The final written assignment will consist of a research paper or interpretive essay of not less than 15 pages, which will permit students to explore in-depth a particular topic discussed in class. Mid-way into the semester, each student will submit a short paper proposal consisting of a thesis statement and bibliography. I will in turn consult personally with each student on the feasibility of their topic. This topic will be determined and executed in close consultation with the class instructor. A draft of the final paper will be required at least two weeks before the due date. The draft, which will be returned to students with comments, as well as the weekly and mid-term feedback, will allow ample opportunity to improve students’ writing skills. Completed papers will be submitted to Blackboard via Safe-Assign by 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 8th, the day of our final (please, for your own protection—retain all notes and at least one copy of the final paper until the final grade is registered). These writing requirements are quite heavy—at least 50 pages in total—but were required from the college to receive certification as meeting the College’s post-freshman writing requirement. The instructor will do everything within reason to facilitate the meeting of these requirements

Examinations
There will be a mid-term take home exam—it will be due via “Safe-Assign” on the class Blackboard website by 1:00 pm on Wednesday October 14th
There will be no final exam—the course research paper will serve as our final exam

Participation
Active and informed participation in class discussions will be expected of all students and will constitute an important part of the final grade.
GRADING:

Grading
The breakdown of grading is as follows:

- Unit Reaction Papers: 20%
- Mid-Term Exam: 25%
- Final Research Paper: 40%
- Participation Grade: 15%

In other words, **85% of the grade will be based on written proficiency**. Late work will be penalized unless arrangements are made prior to the due date with the instructor for an extension.

Honor Code
The strictures of the Emory honor code apply in this class and any infringement of them will be brought to honor council. All work must be the student’s own and plagiarism of any kind (including unattributed paraphrasing or using completed “web-papers” as a model) will be considered an infringement of the honor code.

Extra-credit
There will be opportunities for extra-credit and it is hoped that students will avail themselves to these opportunities.
BOOKS TO BUY (AT EMORY BOOKSTORE)


CLASS SCHEDULE & READINGS

Unit 1: Introduction (1 Session)

Weds. 8/24: Class Introduction
Unit 2: Boundaries (4 Sessions)
Film for Unit: Alexander Sokurov’s Elegy of the Land
(“Maria” Section)
Fri. 8/26: Lecture—The Land and People of Russia
Readings:

Mon. 8/29: Geography
Readings:
   Denis Shaw, “Russia: A Geographic Preface,” in Understanding Contemporary Russia, pp. 7-32.

Weds. 8/31: The People
Readings:
   “The Primary Chronicle on the Early Settlers of Rus (ca. 600-860s),” in Daniel Kaiser and Gary Marker, Reinterpreting Russian History, pp. 9-11.

Fri. 9/2: Health and Demography
Readings:

Reaction Paper Due 9:00 p.m. on Thurs, 9/1.
Research Assignment (due on 6:00 pm of Fri, 9/2):
Please identify three articles in the Modern Encyclopedia of Russian and Soviet History [DK14 .M6], it supplement or the The Modern Encyclopedia of East Slavic, Baltic and Eurasian Literatures [PG2940 .M6 INDEX V.1-10] that discuss topics of interest to you (on any subject or time period). Submit a short summary of whether you believe this is a workable topic for you. The form of your submission should be the citation and then one or two sentences on the topics feasibility. In other words, “Peter the Great: The subject is fascinating to me but seeing the vast amount of scholarly literature on the topic, I think I need to narrow down the topic. His Most Holy Synod of Drunken Fools seem interesting to me.” Or, “I really like Dostoevsky but I think I’ll have to pick one text or era, like his exile or Crime and Punishment.”
Mon. 9/5: NO CLASS—LABOR DAY
Unit 3: History—Eternal Russia? (4 sessions)

Film: Andrei Deryab
in, The Russian Ark

Weds. 9/7: Lecture—Russia’s Historical Inheritance
Readings: Robin, Milner-Gulland, The Russians, ch. 2, “Rus as People and
State,” 37-82

Fri. 9/9: Origins and Otherness; Medieval Russia (860-1689)
Readings:
In Barker and Grant, The Russian Reader:
George P. Fedotov, “Slavic Byzantium,” pp. 70-74;

Mon. 9/12: Order Out of Chaos?: Imperial Russia (1689-1917)
Readings:
In Barker and Grant, The Russian Reader:
Aleksandr Pushkin, “The Bronze Horseman,” pp. 97-100;
John Perry, “Peter’s Social Reforms,” pp. 101-109;

Weds. 9/14: The Soviet Experiment (1917-2005)
Readings:
In Barker and Grant, The Russian Reader:
305-309;
Anna Akhmatova, “Requiem,” pp. 456-464;
“Anecdotes of the Times,” pp. 658-660;
Alexander Dallin, “Causes of the Collapse of the USSR,” pp. 673-
683.

“Anecdotes” in von Geldern and Stites, eds., Mass Culture in Soviet
Russia, pp.118-20, 212-13, 283-85, 328-30, 407, 486-89.
Yevgeny Yevtushenko, “Heirs of Stalin.”

Reaction Paper Due 9:00 p.m. Tues. 9/13.

Research Assignment (due on 6:00 pm of Weds. 9/14):
Using Discover-E, identify three scholarly monographs that represent a good,
scholarly resource for studying your topic of interest. A monograph is a
scholarly, peer-reviewed book (usually put out by a major university press) that
focuses on one subject rather than trying to create a syncretic overview of a
subject, such as a textbook. Thus, Nicholas Riasanovsky’s A History of Russia
would not be appropriate (it’s a textbook) but his The Image of Peter the Great in
Russian History and Thought would be an excellent choice. Tvetaeva’s My
Pushkin would not be the right choice, since this is an essayistic memoir by a
fellow poet but Sandler’s Commemorating Pushkin would be appropriate.
Memoirs, letters, etc., since they are primary sources, would also not apply.
Please physically examine the monograph by going to Woodruff stacks and write
up your observations of each based on a quick skim. For example, “John Bowlt, A
Feast of Wonders: I had thought this book had very little to do with my interest in
Russian dance but it is a very detailed and comprehensive study of the Ballet
Russe—I think this book is really all I need for that aspect of my topic on Russian
dance.”
Unit 4: Politics from Above: State and Power (4 Sessions)

Film; Sergei Eisenstein *Ivan Grozny*, Part 1

Fri. 9/16: Lecture: The Russian State

Readings:

Mon. 9/19: Rulership

Readings:
In Barker and Grant, *The Russian Reader*:
Ivan IV, “My Early Life,” pp. 85-90;
The Correspondence of Catherine II and Grigory Potemkin,” pp. 110-114;
The Correspondence of Nicholas II and Empress Aleksandra,
“Dear Nicky, Dear Sunny,” pp. 140-145;
Vladimir Lenin, “Lenin’s Last Testament,” pp. 401-405;
Yevgeny Yevtushenko, “March 5th, 1953,” pp. 537-539;
Mikhail Gorbachev, “The Most Responsible Phase of Perestroika,” 667-672;
Weds. 9/21: The Crucible of War
Readings:
   In Barker and Grant, *The Russian Reader*:
       Anonymous, “The Igor Tale,” pp. 61-65;
       A.I. Vinokurov, “The Blockage Diary of A. I. Vinokurov,” 513-517;
       Ol’ga Verbitskaia, “Tragic Numbers: The Lives Taken by War,” 520-522;

Fri. 9/23: The Limits of Power


   Boris Yeltsin, *Resignation Statement*.

Reaction Paper Due 9:00 p.m. on Thursday, 9/22

Research Assignment (due 6:00 pm on Friday, 9/23):
Using the database function of the library, use three data bases to search for scholarly articles appropriate for your topic. The three should be the American Bibliography of Slavic and East European Studies (ABSEES), JSTOR, and Historical Abstracts. Cull three good articles from each and examine them. For each data base give me a sentence or two on its advantages and disadvantages for your research agenda. Identify a useful database on your own. (HINT: Google would be a bad choice. On the other hand, Google Scholar would be quite appropriate.)
Unit 5: Law and Legality

Film for Unit: Nikita Mikhalkov, 12 (2007) or Andrei Zvyagintsev, Leviathan (2014)

Mon. 9/26: Lecture—Russian Justice and Russia Law (Pravda and Zakon)
Readings:

Weds. 9/28: The Idea (and Reality) of Law
Readings:
In Barker and Grant, The Russian Reader:
Vladimir Lenin, “The Withering Away of the State,” pp. 331-335;
“Trial of a Young Poet: The Case of Joseph Brodsky,” pp. 621-632

Fri. 9/30: Constitutional Government (?)
Readings:
In Barker and Grant, The Russian Reader:

Reaction Paper Due 9:00 p.m. on Thursday, 9/29
Research Assignment (due 6:00 pm on Friday, 9/23):
Identify three primary sources or pieces of evidence that would aid in your research project. List them and give a line each on how well they serve your research needs. For instance, someone interested in Stalin’s purges might want to pair a work of fiction such as Solzhenitsyn’s One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich with memoirs such as Ginzburg’s Into the Whirlwind and Mochulsky’s Gulag Boss. A student looking into the contemporary Russian economy might want to identify statistical sources from the World Bank and IMF and pair them with President Putin’s speeches on economic issues.
Unit 6: Politics from Below: The People and Power (3 Sessions)

Film for Unit: Sergei Eisenstein Battleship Potemkin

Mon. 10/3: Bunt and Revolution

Readings:


Assignments:

Mid-term Essay Questions handed out.

Weds. 10/5: Dissent and Petition

Readings:

Leo Tolstoy, “I cannot be silent” in The Portable Tolstoy, 732-746;


Assignments:

Reaction Paper Due 9:00 p.m. on Sunday, 10/6.

Fri. 10/7: No Class—Work Day on Mid-term

Reaction Paper Due 9:00 p.m. on Tuesday, 10/4

Research Assignment: None (Work on Mid-term take-home essay):
Mon. 10/10: FALL BREAK
Weds. 10/12: A Petrostate?
   Readings:

Assignments:
   **TAKE-HOME MID-TERM ESSAY DUE VIA SAFE-ASSIGN BY 1:00 ON FRIDAY OCTOBER 14TH**

Fri. 10/14: The Cost of Empire—Interventions and Sanctions
   Readings:
**Unit 8: Religion (3 Sessions)**

Film: Andrei Tarkovsky, *Andrei Rublev*.

**Mon. 10/17: Lecture—Holy Rus’**

Readings:
- Robin Milner-Gulland, *The Russians*, ch. 3

**Weds. 10/19: Orthodoxy**

Readings:
- Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (The Grand Inquisitor scene).
- In Barker and Grant, *The Russian Reader*: I. S. Belliustin, “Description of the Clergy in Rural Russia,” pp. 120-124;

**Fri., 10/21: Symphonia?**

Readings:

**Assignments:**
- Reaction Paper Due 9:00 p.m. on Sunday, 10/20.
- Research Assignment Due 6:00 pm Fri 10/21:
  Prepare a working bibliography of primary sources, monographs and scholarly articles (as well as other resources) you have identified as critical for your research project. Please use Turabian’s *Manual of Style* format for this bibliography, NOT social science citation.
Unit 9: Social Foundations (3 sessions)

Film for Unit: Andrei Mikhailov-Mikhalkovskiî, The Nest of the Gentry

Mon. 10/24: Lecture: Russian Society
Weds. 10/26: Serf and Master

Readings:
- Turgenev, “Mumu” in Ivan Turgenev, First Love and Other Stories, pp. 49-84.
In Barker and Grant, The Russian Reader:
- Petr Kropotkin, “Emancipating the Serfs,” pp. 125-127;
- Elizaveta Vodovozova, “The Challenged Gentry,” 134-139;

Fri. 10/28: The Commune

Readings:

Mon. 10/31: Winners and Losers

Readings:

Reaction Paper Due 9:00 p.m. on Sunday, 10/30.

Research Assignment: No Assignment (work on proposals)
Unit 10: The Toils of Everyday Life (byr’) (2 Sessions)

Film: Aleksei Batalov, Gogol’s The Overcoat

Weds. 11/2: “The Kingdom of Darkness”
Readings:
Maxim Gorky, My Childhood, ch. 3, pp. 40-59;

Fri. 11/4: “The Post-Soviet Russian Soul”
Readings:

Reaction Paper Due 9:00 p.m. on Thurs. 11/3.
Research Assignment (due 6:00 p.m. on Friday 11/4): Hand in your paper proposals. Each proposal should include a topic, a working thesis and a discussion of the methodology you plan to use and its appropriateness. For instance, a proposal on “Russian Ballet” might have a working thesis such as “having its origins in brutal and humiliating conditions of serf dancers under Anna Ivanovna, the Russian ballet went from an aristocratic pastime to a brilliant, avant-garde art under such impresarios as Diaghelev.” Here you would most likely concentrate on cultural historical approaches but might chose to do a social history of the profession of dancer. Or you might propose “The Great Patriotic War from Below” with a working thesis that “despite the ineptitude and cataclysmic failures of the Soviet military and political, the Soviet soldier fought with such tenacity and courage that the Wehrmacht went down to defeat. Here you might, again, write in a military historical approach or a social history of the Soviet soldier. Include a detailed bibliography.
Unit 11: Social Identities; Women, Ethnicity, and Generation (3 Sessions)

Film for Unit: Vasilii Pichul, *Little Vera*

**Mon. 11/7: Women**

Readings:
- In Barker and Grant, *The Russian Reader*:
  - Joyce Toomer and Elena Molokhovets, “Classic Russian Cooking,” pp. 128-133;
  - Masha Lipman, “Fade to Red?” pp. 721-728;

**Wed. 11/9: Ethnicity**

Readings:
- In Barker and Grant, *The Russian Reader*:
  - Susan Buck-Morss, “A Cosmopolitan Project,” pp. 80-84;

**Mon. 11/11: Generation**

Readings:

Assignments:
- Reaction Paper Due 9:00 p.m. on Sunday, 11/10.
Unit 12 Popular Culture (2 Sessions)

Film: Grigorii Aleksandrov *Circus*

Weds. 11/14: Lecture—Russia’s People Art
    Robin, Milner-Gulland, *The Russians*, ch. 5

Friday 11/16: Folk Art
    Readings:
    “The Indiscreet Wife,” “The Wise Little Girl,” “Vasilisa the Beautiful,”

Mon. 11/18: Low Art
    Verbitskaya, *Keys of Happiness*, (excerpt)
    Mikail Isakovsky, “Katyusha,” in *Mass Culture in Soviet Russia*, edited by
    James von Geldern and Richard Stites

Reaction Paper Due 9:00 p.m. on Sunday, 11/17.

Research Assignment: None—work on papers.
Unit 13: High Culture (3 Sessions)

Film: David Lean, *Dr. Zhivago*

Mon. 11/21: Lecture—Russian High Art
Adele Barker, “Literature and Film,” in *Understanding Contemporary Russia*, pp. 353-394

**Tues. 11/22 DRAFT RESEARCH PAPER DUE BY 5:30 pm!!!!**

Weds. 11/23: THANKSGIVING RECESS
Fri.  11/15: THANKSGIVING RECESS
Mon. 11/28: Art as Liberation
Readings:

Weds. 11/30: Art and Power
Readings:
  Osip Mandelshtam, “*The Stalin Epigram.*”

Reaction Paper Due 9:00 p.m. on Tuesday, 11/3.
Research Assignment (due 6:00 pm on Tues., 11/12):
  Hand in draft paper. Drafts will be returned to you by Wednesday, 11/30
Unit 14: Whither Russia? (1 Sessions)
Film for Unit: Aleksei Balabanov, Brother (Brat’)
Fri. 12/2: Russia at the Crossroads
Readings:
Unit 15: Conclusion—Summing Up Russia (1 Sessions)

Mon. 12/5:
Readings:
Robin, Milner-Gulland, *The Russians*, conclusion

**Thurs. 12/8 RESEARCH PAPER DUE BY 5:30 pm!!!!**