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History 366: Late Imperial & Revolutionary Russia

Meeting Time and Place

MWF 11:00-11:50am
Bishop Hall 112

Course Description

This course examines the major developments of Russian history from the late-19th century to the foundation of the Soviet Union in the early 1920s, emphasizing the origins and culmination of the Russian Revolution. During this period, the Russian Empire embarked on a long and difficult process of economic, social and cultural development: During the 1860s, Russia became the last European country to abolish the institution of serfdom. Along with this major reform of social relations came concerted efforts at industrialization and a partial liberalization of the political system. Nonetheless, major resistance to the imperial Russian state also emerged during this time. Students and intellectuals, and later, industrial workers and peasants, protested the maintenance of a repressive state, along with the consequences of the country's rapid movement toward modernity. By the early 20th century, the Russian autocracy proved unable to resist the social forces that its own desperate attempts at modernization had helped create.

In order to understand this era on its own terms as well as in light of the revolution that would bring it to a cataclysmic end, we will study the swirling currents of Russian and Western thought that clashed and combined to form a uniquely Russian cultural mix in the waning years of the Russian Empire and the dawn of the Soviet Union. We will examine the problems of economic development, imperial expansion (and contraction), religious and secular culture, and the successive periods of war, reform and revolution that characterized this fascinating era of Russian history.

Required Books

The following books are available at the campus bookstore. You may also purchase new/used copies online if you find this to be a more affordable option. Please be sure to purchase the correct edition if mentioned below.

Orlando Figes, *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution, 1891-1924*
Olga Semyonova Tian-Shanskaia, *Village Life in Late Tsarist Russia*
Vera Figner, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*
Evgenii Zamiatin, *We*

There are also additional short readings posted on the course's Blackboard site, which are identified with a "BB" on the calendar below. You will have the option to purchase this group of readings as a course pack.

Course Policies

- You must **read** this entire syllabus. If you do not understand everything on this syllabus, I expect you to ask questions.
- You must **participate** actively in discussion. You should also become comfortable asking questions in class, and restrict email to questions and concerns of a more individual nature.
- **Attendance** for each scheduled meeting is mandatory. Your absence will result in a lower participation grade. Note, however, that attendance alone does not guarantee you a good participation grade. If you miss class, you are responsible for the consequences (missed lectures, quizzes, exams, etc.).
- You are responsible for all **readings** listed on the calendar. You must also bring your readings to class during our discussions of them.
- **Plagiarism** will not be tolerated, and you will fail this course if caught violating established university policies regarding academic dishonesty. You are required to view the following video regarding the definitions of plagiarism and University of Mississippi policies:
http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/general_library/instruction/resources/plagiarism_ac_honest/plagiarism_academic_honesty.html (you must have Flash Player to render this video properly). I recommend that you also read the official statement in the university's policy handbook:
<http://secure4.olemiss.edu/umpolicyopen/ShowDetails.jsp?istatPara=1&policyObjidP ara=10817696> (download the pdf file)
- You must **proofread** all of your written work. Sloppy writing will result in a lower grade for the assignment.
- You must **act** in a respectful and honest manner toward your fellow students and your professor, and you should expect the same in return.
- As a general rule, **grades** are not negotiable. I will spend considerable time reading and offering comments on your work. If you would like to discuss further why you received the grade that you did, you are encouraged to do so. If, however, you believe that I graded your work incorrectly, unfairly or inconsistently, you have the right to an appeal according to the following policy:
<http://secure4.olemiss.edu/umpolicyopen/ShowDetails.jsp?istatPara=1&policyObjidP ara=10818079> (download the pdf file)
- You should avoid using your **cell phone** in class. I realize that accidents happen, but please remember to turn your phone off upon entering the classroom. I will not tolerate, however, either answering a phone call or texting in class. You will be asked to leave if such an incident occurs.
- If you require **special considerations** based on a disability, religious observance, or participation in sanctioned extracurricular activities, you must inform me of them immediately.

Assignments

Quizzes

There will be eight quizzes during the semester (listed on the calendar), which address primarily the course readings (although questions about the lecture are also fair game). You will be required to demonstrate not only that you completed the readings, but also that you considered the analytical questions addressed therein. Quizzes will consist of short answer questions. They should take you no longer than 15 minutes each, and you may use your books and notes to help you. Discussion questions, from which the quizzes will be drawn, will be posted on Blackboard at least a few days before the quiz.

In-Class Exams

You will take two closed-book exams that integrate material from lecture and the readings. The mid-term should take you only 50 minutes and will take place during a normal class period. The final exam is on **Monday, Dec. 5, 12-3pm**. This exam is cumulative but should take you only 90 minutes.

Take-Home Essays

You will write two longer essays (3-5 pages) on questions that require you to synthesize course materials.

Research Paper Option

If, after the mid-term, you have a B+ average or higher, you may choose to write a longer research paper (10-12 pages) based on primary source research, in place of the remaining quizzes, the second in-class exam, and the second take-home essay. You should notify me of this decision as soon as possible. After deciding to undertake the research paper, you must prepare a proposal (1/2 page + list of sources) and meet with me about the project.

Grade Breakdown

Note: I will be using the "plus-minus" system in this course: A "C-" or below will not count toward a History major or minor.

Quizzes (8):	30%		Quizzes (first 4):	15%
Exams:	30%	OR—	Mid-Term Exam:	10%
Take-Home Essays:	30%		Mid-Term Essay:	15%
Participation:	10%		Participation:	10%
			Research Paper:	50%

Grading Criteria (in hierarchical order) for Your Take-Home Essays and/or Research Papers

1. Clear **thesis** statement and introduction
2. Clear **organization**, sentence structure, transitions
3. Use of relevant **evidence** (both the quantity AND quality of the evidence are essential)
4. **Clearly** developed arguments that support the thesis
5. Proper **form** and **style** (this includes the mechanics of grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc.)

An "A" paper shows excellent command of all five aspects with few distracting errors in style. A "B" paper satisfies points 1-4, but the form and style will sometimes distract the reader's attention.

A "C" paper meets the requirements of points 1-3, but its organization and style leave the reader confused about the intent and/or direction of the argument.

A "D" paper is a "C" that does not use enough evidence (or relies on inappropriate or incorrect evidence (i.e., factual errors)) to support the thesis.

An "F" paper is seriously flawed and lacks a developed argument.

Grading Criteria for Class Participation (individually and within groups)

"A" – active participation

"B" – sporadic, but valuable, participation

"C" – inactive participation

"D" – refusal to participate

"F" – more than 4 absences during the semester

How to Read Academic Texts

In this course, you will be reading both for two separate but related purposes: First, you will examine how historians and other scholars construct their arguments and evidence, and second, you will pay attention to what these writers are saying about Russian society, culture, politics and history. As such, you should pay attention to the structure of the texts, their rhetoric, in addition to the "information" contained therein. In a work of historiography, you should be able to identify the argument of a short article within its first two pages, and of a book within the introduction or first chapter. When you find the argument, make sure to write it down in your own words in the margins of the text. If you cannot identify the argument, keep reading. If you are still confused about the argument after completing the text, you should read over the beginning to see if you can find it the second time. Read the body of the text quickly, and try to underline and take notes in the margin on what you believe the major pieces of evidence and analysis are that support the text's argument. When reading a book, you will also have to identify the specific arguments in each of the chapters, in addition to the over-arching argument of the work. Also take notes on what you believe the text did successfully, and what questions still linger after reading it. What significant problems with the text exist, and how might the author/s have addressed their research questions differently?

Calendar (These dates are subject to change. Please listen closely for any modifications to the calendar, and write them into your copy of the syllabus.)

Section 1: Introduction and Historical Background

Week 1 – Introduction: The European Enlightenment, Imperial Russia and (Im)Possibilities for Reform

Monday, Aug 22: Syllabus, Geography, and Major Problems

Wednesday, Aug 24: Russia, Europe and the Legacy of Peter the Great

Friday, Aug 26: Rural Russia and the Institution of Serfdom

Readings:

- Nicholas Riasanovsky and Mark Steinberg, “A Geographical Note” (BB)
- Orlando Figes, *A People’s Tragedy*, preface, only pp. xv-xvii.
- Document: “Notes of a Serf Woman by M. E. Vasilieva” (BB)

Week 2 – The Great Reforms

Monday, Aug 29: From War to Reform

Wednesday, Aug 31: The Abolition of Serfdom

Friday, Sept 2: **Quiz 1** (map quiz, Riasanovsky/Steinberg, “Notes of a Serf Woman,” Emancipation Manifesto); discussion

Readings:

- Figes, Chapter 1, “The Dynasty,” pp. 3-34
- Document: Alexander II’s Emancipation Manifesto of 1861 (Access online: [http://academic.shu.edu/russianhistory/index.php/Alexander II%2C Emancipation Manifesto%2C 1861](http://academic.shu.edu/russianhistory/index.php/Alexander%20II%20Emancipation%20Manifesto%201861))

Week 3 – The Great Reforms 2

Monday, Sept 5 – LABOR DAY

Wednesday, Sept 7: Toward Citizenship in the Russian Empire

Friday, Sept 9: Great Reforms – Great Expectations

Readings:

- Figes, Chapter 2, “Unstable Pillars,” pp. 35-83.
- Document: “Letter to Teachers’ Paper: On the Rights of Teachers, March 1863” (BB)

Section 2: Politics and Society in Late Imperial Russia

Week 4 – Alexander III and the “Counter-Reforms”

Monday, Sept 12: **Quiz 2** (Figes, preface and chapters 1-2; Teachers’ Letter); discussion

Wednesday, Sept 14: The Ruling Class during the Post-Reform Era

Friday, Sept 16: Reform and Counter-Reform

Readings:

- Figes, Chapter 3, "Icons and Cockroaches," pp. 84-121
- Document: "Manifesto of Alexander III Affirming Autocracy, 1881" (BB)

Week 5 – Empire and Nationalism

Monday, Sept 19: Managing and Expanding the Empire

Wednesday, Sept 21: Non-Russian Nationalism and Problems of Empire

Friday, Sept 23: **Quiz 3** (Alexander III's manifesto, Ukhtomskii, Figes, chapters 3-4); discussion

Readings:

- Figes, Chapter 4, "Red Ink," pp. 122-156.
- Document: Prince Ukhtomskii: "Russia's Imperial Destiny, 1891" (Access online: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1891ukhtomskii.asp>)
- Start readings Semyonova, *Village Life in Late Tsarist Russia*

Week 6 - Rural Russia at the Turn of the Century

Monday, Sept 26: Between Tradition and Modernity: The Rural Economy and Peasant / Gentry Relations

Wednesday, Sept 28: From Peasant to Worker

Friday, Sept 30: **Quiz 4** (Semyonova, Figes, chapter 5); discussion

Readings:

- Figes, Chapter 5, "First Blood," pp. 157-212.
- Document: Semyonova, *Village Life in Late Tsarist Russia*

Essay 1 distributed

Week 7 – Industry and Capitalism in the Russian Empire

Monday, Oct 3: Fiscal Policy and the Development of a Modern Economy

Wednesday, Oct 5: The Emergence of a Russian Bourgeoisie

Friday, Oct 7: **Exam 1**

- Start reading Figner, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*

Section 3: The Theory and Practice of Revolution

Week 8 – Populism, Terrorism, and Russian Culture

Monday, Oct 11: Political Ideologies after the Great Reforms

Wednesday, Oct 13: Political Violence, from the Left and the Right

Friday, Oct 15: Russian Art and Literature in the Silver Age

Readings:

- Figes, Chapter 6, "Last Hopes," pp. 213-252
- Document: Sergei Nechaev, "Catechism of a Revolutionary," 1869 (Access online: <http://www.marxists.org/subject/anarchism/nechayev/catechism.htm>)

Week 9 – Everyday Life in Urban Russia

Monday, Oct 18: **Quiz 5** (Figes, chapter 6, Gorky); discussion

Wednesday, Oct 20: St. Petersburg: The Modern European City

Friday, Oct 22: Evgenii Bauer's Cinematic Vision

Readings:

- Continue Reading Figner
- Document: Maxim Gorky, "Twenty-Six Men and a Girl" (1899) (BB)

Week 10 – Revolutions in 1905

Monday, Oct 25: The Emergence of Russian Marxism

Wednesday, Oct 27: Urban Russia, Liberal and Radical

Friday, Oct 29: Peasants and Nationalists in 1905

Readings:

- Document: Figner, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*
- Document: Lenin, selections from *What Is To Be Done?* (1902) (BB)

Week 11 – Politics between Two Revolutions

Monday, Nov 1: **Quiz 6** (Figner, Lenin); discussion

Wednesday, Nov 3: The Experiment with Parliamentary Democracy

Friday, Nov 5: Petr Stolypin and the Return to *Zakonnost'*

Readings:

- Figes, Chapter 7, "A War on Three Fronts," Chapter 8, "Glorious February," pp. 253-353.
- Document: Stolypin Agrarian Reform: Ukaz of November 9, 1906 (Access online: <http://www.dur.ac.uk/a.k.harrington/stolypin.html>)

Week 12 – War and Revolution

Monday, Nov 8: War and the Limits of Russian Patriotism

Wednesday, Nov 10: The Crisis of Authority in 1917

Friday, Nov 12: **Quiz 7** (Figes, chapters 7-10; documents); discussion

Readings:

- Figes, Chapter 9, "The Freest Country in the World," Chapter 10, "The Agony of the Provisional Government," pp. 354-473
- Document: "Provisional Committee of the State Duma, Proclamation, March 3, 1917" (Access online: <http://www.soviethistory.org/index.php?page=article&ArticleID=1917formprov1&SubjectID=1917february&Year=1917> - you will have to register on this site to access the document)

Week 13 – The Bolsheviks Victorious?

Monday, Nov 15: “The Great October Socialist Revolution” and Its Aftermath

Wednesday, Nov 17: Red Terror and the Onset of Civil War

Friday, Nov 19: **Quiz 8** (Figes, chapters 11-12; “April Theses”)

Readings:

- Figes, Chapter 11, “Lenin’s Revolution,” Chapter 12, “Last Dreams of the Old World,” pp. 474-588.
- Document: Lenin: “April Theses” (Access online: <http://www.soviethistory.org/index.php?page=article&ArticleID=1917theses1&SubjectID=1917april&Year=1917> - you will have to register on this site to access the document)
- Start reading Zamiatin, *We*

Monday - Friday, Nov 22-26 – Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 14 – Disintegration and “Union”

Monday, Nov 29: From Civil War to the Soviet Union

Wednesday, Dec 1: Utopian Designs in an Era of Destruction

Friday, Dec 3: Revolution, Russia, and the World

Readings:

- Figes, Chapter 13, “The Revolution Goes to War,” Chapter 14, “The New Regime Triumphant,” pp. 589-720.
- Document: Zamiatin, *We*
- **Optional Reading:** Figes, Chapter 15, “Defeat in Victory,” Chapter 16, “Deaths and Departures,” Conclusion, pp. 721-824. **(there will be a significant extra credit question on the final exam addressing these chapters)**

Final Exam: Monday, Dec. 5, 12-3pm

Final Essay due on Wednesday, Dec. 7 before midnight (+3 points for turning it in on Monday, Dec. 5, before the exam)