

**DRAFT**

**(Readings may be subject to change.)**

***History of Russia II***

**HIST 1702-10**

June 2–July 3, 2025

MTWR 1:00–3:00 pm (ICC 204)

Instr. Anna Smelova ([as4412@georgetown.edu](mailto:as4412@georgetown.edu))



*Toward the Bright Future of a Communist Society of Universal Well-Being and Lasting Peace!*

**Course Description and Objectives:**

This lecture-based course is a survey of Russian and Eurasian history from 1801 to the present, covering key events as the Decembrist uprising, the Great Reforms, the 1905 and 1917 Revolutions, Stalinism, the Cold War, and the collapse of communism. Taking a global outlook on national history, one of the course’s central themes is Russian imperialism and colonial expansion. We will discuss the differing approaches of the tsarist and Bolshevik regimes to governing ethnic and religious minorities in the western borderlands, the Caucasus, Siberia, and Central Asia. Additionally, we will explore the extent to which the Soviet Union, often labeled the “evil empire,” developed a new form of imperialism. Through a historical lens, we will also try to understand how and why the current Russian regime uses its imperial and Soviet past to justify territorial claims and militarism against Georgia and Ukraine.

The course follows several key objectives: 1) to introduce students to Russian history and culture from the 19th century to the present, with the critical observation of its often controversial

legacies. 2) to develop students' skills in primary source analysis and interpretation of diverse historical narratives.

**Course Requirements:**

Although this is a lecture-based course, active *participation* in discussions makes an important per cent (**30%**) of the final grade. Students are expected to complete all weekly readings, engage in discussions, and submit written assignments.

To successfully meet course requirements, students must complete *a creative midterm assignment* (20% of the final grade), as well as *a final paper* (worth 30%) related to one of the course topics. The creative assignment involves a Soviet propaganda poster analysis and should be two pages long. The final paper should build a historical argument, incorporate at least three secondary and one primary sources, and be around 7-10 pages long without the bibliography. All essays should be formatted in Times New Roman 12 pt., double-spaced. Students must consult the Chicago citation style with footnotes.

Additionally, each student will be required to lead one in-class discussion. You will need to briefly summarize and critically analyze the assigned readings, prepare 5 thought-provoking questions, and engage classmates in a dialogue.

**Evaluation:**

Midterm Creative Assignments — 20%

Participation — 30 %

Final paper — 30 %

Discussion Leading — 20%

**University Policies:**

***Attendance Policy:***

Attendance of lectures is mandatory. Students are allowed to miss one class without prior notice or the need for make-up. If a class is missed for medical reasons, a medical excuse and documentation should be submitted to the program dean. For absences due to religious observance, please notify me in advance.

***Sexual Misconduct:***

The university and its staff are dedicated to providing a safe and comfortable environment for students as well as other members of the community. As it is stated in its code, “Georgetown University prohibits sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.”

According to the existing rules, course instructors, including teaching assistants, are obliged to inform the University about cases of violations and sexual misconduct.

On the University website, students can familiarize themselves with the existing policies and

resources:

<https://sexualassault.georgetown.edu/#:~:text=Georgetown%20University%20is%20committed%20to,all%20members%20of%20its%20community.&text=Georgetown%20University%20prohibits%20sexual%20misconduct,%2C%20dating%20violence%2C%20and%20stalking>

***Honor System:***

“Georgetown’s honor system governing students prohibits dishonest conduct and conduct lacking integrity of a variety of kinds, including (but not limited to) cheating on exams, plagiarism, using false citations, submitting work for multiple purposes, submitting false data, falsifying academic documentation, abuse of library privileges, and abuse of shared electronic media. All students are expected to adhere to the following pledge:

“In pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University honor system: To be honest in every academic endeavor and to conduct myself honorably as a responsible member of the Georgetown community as we live and work together.”

<https://commons.georgetown.edu/teaching/design/policies/>

**Grades Breakdown:**

A 100-94%

A- 93-90%

B+ 89-87%

B 86-83%

B- 82-80%

C+ 79-77%

C 76-73%

C- 72-70%

D 69-60%

F 59% and below

**Week 1: Modern Russian Empire (1800–1850s): Absolutism, Serfdom, and the Imperial Expansion**

- June 2 (Class 1): Introduction. The Era of Alexander I: Reforms, War, and the Imperial Order

Read: “Alexander’s Proclamations During the War of 1812,” *Imperial Russia: A Source Book*, 157-160.

Nadezhda Durova, *The Cavalry Maiden*

Listen: A Patriotic Song ‘The Prayer of Russians’

- June 3 (Class 2): Ideological Currents and the Birth of Russian Political Thought

Read: Petr Chaadaev, *Philosophical Letters*, Excerpts.

- June 4 (Class 3): Nicholas I’s ‘Well-Ordered Police State’

Read: “Project for a Constitution by Nikita M. Muraviev,” in *Imperial Russia: A Source Book*, 184-196.

Bruce Lincoln, “The Genesis of an ‘Enlightened’ Bureaucracy in Russia, 1825—1856.” *Jahrbücher Für Geschichte Osteuropas* 20, no. 3 (1972): 321–30.

- June 5 (Class 4): Russian Imperial Expansion and Colonial Encounters in the 19th Century

Read: Alexander Morrison, “Russian Settler Colonialism,” in *The Routledge Handbook of the History of Settler Colonialism*, edited by Edward Cavanagh, Lorenzo Veracini (Routledge, 2017), 313-322.

Muhammad Tahir al-Qarakhi, “The Shining of Daghestani Swords in Certain Campaigns of Shamil,” in *Russian-Muslim Confrontation in the Caucasus: Alternative Visions of the Conflict between Imam Shamil and the Russians, 1830-1859*,” edited by Thomas Sanders, Ernest Tucker, and Gary Hamburg (Routledge, 2004), Excerpts.

## **Week 2: *The Age of Reforms and Revolutions (1860s–1905)***

- June 9 (Class 5): Alexander II and the Era of the Great Reforms  
Read: “Emancipation Manifesto,” in *Imperial Russia: A Source Book*, 270-275.  
Daniel Field, *Rebels in the Name of the Tsar* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1976), Excerpts.
- June 10 (Class 6): Radicalism, Repression, and the Rise of Terrorism  
Read: Sergei Nechaev, *The Catechism of a Revolutionary*  
Vera Figner, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, Excerpts.
- June 11 (Class 7): Industrialization, Workers, and “Women’s Question”  
Read: *A Radical Worker in Tsarist Russia: The Autobiography of Semën Ivanovich Kanatchikov* (Stanford University Press, 1986), Excerpts.
- June 12 (Class 8): Turn-of-the-Century Crisis: the Russo-Japanese War, 1905 Revolution  
Read: “The Fundamental Laws of Imperial Russia, 1906,” in *Imperial Russia: A Source Book*, 386-393.  
*Within the Pale: The Story of Anti-Semitic Persecutions in Russia* (New York, 1903),  
207-217.

## **Week 3: *Revolutionary and Early Soviet Period (1900s–1930s)***

- June 16 (Class 9): World War I, Revolutions, and the Shaping of the New Social Order  
Read: *Decree on the Legalization of Abortions of November 18, 1920.*  
Alexandra Kollontai, *The Autobiography of a Sexually Emancipated Communist Woman*  
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/kollonta/1926/autobiography.htm>
- June 17 (Class 10): The Russian Civil War as a War of Information, Terror, and Propaganda  
Read: Vladimir Lenin, *Directives on the Film Business*, 1922  
<https://soviethistory.msu.edu/1924-2/socialist-cinema/socialist-cinema-texts/lenin-on-the-most-important-of-the-arts/>

Read: Peter Kenez, “The Political Use of Books, Films, and Posters,” *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917–1929* (Cambridge University Press, 1985), 95-118.

- June 18 (Class 11): The NEP and the Nationalities Question—Between Pragmatism, New Imperialism, and Soviet Modernity

Read: Joseph Stalin, “Marxism and the National Question,” 1913  
*Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia, 1917*

- June 19 (No Class – Juneteenth)

### Midterm Creative Assignment – Poster Analysis

#### Due June 20

For this assignment, select and analyze a Soviet propaganda poster from the revolutionary or early Soviet period. Your analysis should address the poster’s visual and textual aspects, ideological message, as well as how it reflects broader political, social, or economic themes of its time.

Format: 2 page-long, double-spaced. Please include an image of the selected poster.

You may use any database. Suggested resources:

[https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/collections/bdr:26152/?selected\\_facets=genre\\_aat%3Aposters&page=1](https://repository.library.brown.edu/studio/collections/bdr:26152/?selected_facets=genre_aat%3Aposters&page=1)

<https://www.posterplakat.com/>

### Week 4: *Stalinism and Everyday Life in the Age of Terror, “Great Patriotic War,” and Reconstruction*

- June 23 (Class 12): Collectivization, Industrialization, and the Great Terror

Read: *The Holodomor Reader: A Sourcebook on the Famine of 1932-1933 in Ukraine*  
(Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2012), Excerpts.

John Scott, *A Day in Magnitogorsk*, 1942

Video: *Happy Housewarming, Comrade Busygin!* (1936)

- June 24 (Class 13): Life and Death in the Gulag  
Shalamov, Varlam. *Kolyma Stories*. New York Review, 2018. (Any three “tales” of your choice)  
Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, Excerpts.
- June 25 (Class 14): World War II and the Home Front  
Read: Anna Krylova, “To Be a Woman Commander – That Was Great!” Remechanizing and Regendering in the Red Army, 1942–45.” In *Soviet Women in Combat: A History of Violence on the Eastern Front*, 204–35 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).  
Listen: The Soviet wartime song “*Katiusha*.”
- June 26 (Class 15): The Postwar Order and the Cold War  
Read: Kate Brown, *Plutopia: Nuclear Families, Atomic Cities, and the Great Soviet and American Plutonium Disasters* (Oxford University Press, 2013), Excerpts.

**Week 5: *The Cold War and ‘Mature’ Socialism and the Collapse of the USSR***

- June 30 (Class 16): The Khrushchev ‘Thaw’  
Read: *The Kitchen Debate and Cold War Consumer Politics: A Brief History with Documents*, edited by Sarah T. Phillips, Shane Hamilton (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2014), Selected Documents.
- July 1 (Class 17): The Soviet 1960s–1980s: Everyday Socialism and Dissent Movement  
Read: Juliane Fürst, *Flowers Through Concrete. Explorations in Soviet Hippieland*, 35-63 (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2021).
- July 2 (Class 18): Perestroika and the Collapse of the Soviet System  
Read: Order from the Chair of the Committee of State Security [KGB] of the USSR, 'On Measures to Strengthen the Counter-Intelligence Work at Atomic Energy Units in connection with the Accident at the Chernobyl Atomic Energy Station'

- July 3 (Class 19): The 1990s and Post-Soviet Transformation

Read: Svetlana Alexievich, “Chronology: Russia After Stalin Remarks from an Accomplice” + Other Parts, *Secondhand Time: The Last of the Soviets* (Random House Publishing Group, 2016).

### **Final Paper Assignment**

#### **Due July 5**

Write a 7-10 pages long research paper on a topic related to Russian history from 1800s to the late Soviet era. The final paper should demonstrate your ability to build a well-supported historical argument and incorporate at least three secondary and one primary source. Format your paper in Times New Roman, 12-point font, and double-spaced.