

# СТАНОВЛЕНИЕ РОССИЙСКОЙ ИМПЕРИИ THE RISE OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE

RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

PROF. BROWN

HISTORY 312

FALL SEMESTER

GAIGE 311

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Fifteen years have passed since the breakup of the Soviet Union (1917-1991), whose leaders had promised that their society would replace the Western capitalist, parliamentary model they so despised. And yet Russia in 2005, despite some recent economic stabilization and even growth, faces seemingly endless turmoil in resolving enormous poverty, low birthrate and short longevity, ethnic tensions, technological decay, and the wariness of the Russians and various Western nations in accepting one another. The U.S. Government is perturbed at Russia's contacts with Iran and North Korea—reminding us that Russia for centuries has had vital interests in the Middle East and East Asia. Above all, the Putin regime has become an outright dictatorship with an independent press, an outspoken parliament, and elected governors a relic of the 1990s.

All of the above reinforces our conviction that there is much that underlies the prolonged crisis of this region. This gives us a clue that there is a background to current Russian affairs that merits serious examination, and we will be studying this background in our course.

More than 60 years after the end of World War II, many of us who are interested in Russia are unaware that major problems of continuity and change in the Soviet and post-Soviet periods have their origin in earlier Russian history. Earlier Russian, Soviet, and post-Soviet history share common developmental problems; consequently if we understand the earlier period, we are able to gain a better perspective on the unity of Russian history and on Soviet and contemporary post-Soviet developments. In fact throughout our course, we will be making connections between past and present developments; the parallels are there.

How will we go about studying this fascinating area? Through a lecture/discussion format, we will analyze the fundamental issues of Russian civilization from its ninth-century origins until the 1917 Revolutions that ushered in the Soviet Union. We will observe common themes throughout, and wrap our learning around them. We cannot treat everything in our examination of 1,000 years, and so we will highlight what is most important.

What are the sources of Russian civilization? Some of the major themes we address are the native and Byzantine (Eastern Roman) roots of Russian civilization; the Mongols; the rise of the centralized state and the distinctiveness of Russian development; the stimulus of the West; and problems and cyclical patterns of Russian development. We will utilize art and architecture, economics, law, literature, religion, women's studies, and other disciplines to assist our investigations.

As we sit back, we will proceed through this fascinating subject, so enjoy! There are several parts to our course and we will study them according to the following schedule:

Weeks 1-2    Origins of Russian Civilization, 9th-13th Cents.

Weeks 3-4    The Mongols and the Period of Fragmentation, 13th-15th Cents.

Weeks 5-9    Rise of Muscovite Russia and the Beginning of Modern Russian History,

15th-17th Cents.

Weeks 10-11 18th Cent. The Era of Peter and Catherine the Great.

Weeks 12-13 Imperial Russia in the 1st Half of the 19th Cent.

Weeks 14-15 Imperial Russia from 1861 to 1917.

## **REQUIRED UNDERGRADUATE READING**

N. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, 7th ed.

J. Cracroft, *The Revolution of Peter the Great*

D. Kaiser/G. Marker, *Reinterpreting Russian History (RRH)*

N. Pushkareva, *Women in Russian History from the Tenth to the Twentieth Century*

T. Rhia, *Readings in Russian Civilization*, Vol. 2 (RRC)

handouts I will distribute

## **REQUIRED GRADUATE READING**

The required undergraduate reading listed above and Kliuchevsky, *A History of Russia*, 3 vols. (on library reserve)

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

The textbook for our course is Riasanovsky, 7th ed.; copies of it and the other books are available for purchase in our campus book store.

Our classroom activities will consist of a mixture of lectures and discussion. Therefore, it is essential that you come having read the assignment for that particular session. This is all the more important since ours is a night class, and we will all have to try hard to stay on top of it. I will distribute a list of questions you should think about as you read through the subject matter. That way you will become better informed of important issues and will be able to get more out of the lectures and discussions.

In addition to your following the weekly reading schedules, it is a good idea to read through the pertinent sections of Riasanovsky for each unit in our course, for an overview of the forthcoming unit before we actually begin that section.

## **WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN CLASS**

*Inquiry, questioning, discussion, presentation, writing...*

A considerable portion of each class will revolve around the active pursuit of knowledge through discussion and the related techniques it incorporates. We will explore and utilize *critical thinking*. Class discussion will revolve around our readings and lecture material. At times we will employ discussion sections to further excite our interests.

You are required to take an active role in this endeavor, and among other things this means having read the material before coming to class and being familiar—if not conversant—with the material. Be *pro active* and demonstrate your knowledge before other members of the class and me. Simply showing up for class and adopting passive behavior will hurt your grade.

I will distribute—to better aid you in reading and discussion—guide sheets with questions and other remarks that will direct you through our readings. I am well aware that some class members talk more than others and that those who talk least can sometimes contribute the most valuable remarks. There are a range of factors influencing why one person might speak more than another, and I take them into account. What is essential is that you make a serious and visible effort *every session* to participate in class discussion.

Visual (slides) and auidial (music tapes) will be an integral part of our course. They will both complement and supplement our readings, and are intended to provide extra dimension.

Also, as time permits, try and stay informed of what is going on in Russia today. I encourage you to keep abreast of current events in Russia through reading newspapers and news magazines, watching T.V. documentaries or other special programs, and cruising the web. As suggestions, watch CNN and read *The Economist* (U.K.), *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *Foreign Affairs*—the last four journals, magazines, and newspapers are all in Adams Library.

### **SCHEDULE OF UNDERGRADUATE ASSIGNMENTS AND DUE DATES**

1 one-hour exam, Week V, Wednesday, October 4	10%
3 Paper assignments--Total length, 15 pages; Discussion	45%
Final Exam	15%
	30%

I. 2 article précis (summaries), each 3 pages long, 6 pages total. Each précis will be based upon one scholarly journal article of your choosing on Russian history. Guidelines will be distributed during Week II. Due in Week IV, Wednesday, September 27. 15%.

II. A document analysis. 5 pages total. Due in Week X, Wednesday, November 8. 15%.

III. Book report on *Women in Russian History* or on another book of your choosing (but do see me first). Due in Week XIV, Wednesday, December 6. 15%.

### **SCHEDULE OF GRADUATE ASSIGNMENTS AND DUES DATES**

Book Report	10%
Term Paper	40%
Discussion	10%
Final Exam	40%
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Graduate paper assignments

I. Book report. See Undergraduate paper assignments, for a description. Due in Week IV, Wednesday, September 27. 10%.

II. A.

A 20-page term paper (not including endnotes and bibliography) to be planned in consultation with me.

Due in Week XIV, Wednesday, December 6. 40%.

or... B.

2 or 3 analyses of sources. The analyses will total 20 pages to be planned with me.  
Due in Week XIV, Wednesday, December 6. 40%

Graduate papers must be particularly well researched and written and be of graduate school quality. I will distribute and explain the guidelines.

### **Schedule of Class Topics and Reading Assignments**

#### **Week of :**

- I. Sept 6 *Introduction: Why Study Earlier Russian History? The Ingredients of Russian Civilization: the land, peoples, religions, and early Kievan Rus', 862-1054.* Rias, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., 3-34; *RRH*, 3-11, 63-67.
- II. Sept 13 *Later Kievan Rus': politics, law, society, and decline, 1054-1237.* Rias, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., 35-57, 82-87; *RRH*, 21-25, 26-29, 30-44, 50-54, 60-62, 67-73.
- III. Sept 20 *The Mongols and the Origins of Muscovy: the formative thirteenth century.* Rias, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., 59-71; *RRH*, 79-87, 99-102, 104-07; "Mongol Life Style."
- IV. Sept 27 *The Early Muscovite Period, 1304-1462. The city-states of Novgorod and Pskov; Lithuania.* Rias, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. 72-81, 88-95, 101-29; *RRH*, 54-59, 87-90, 108-09, 122-24, 127-31.  
***1<sup>st</sup> paper due, Wednesday, Sept 27. Midterm review.***
- V. Oct 4 *On the Eve of a Unified State: from the mid-fifteenth to the early sixteenth century.* Rias, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., 95-101; *RRH*, 109-22, 130-40. (and review Rias for week IV).  
***Midterm.***
- VI. Oct 11 No class tonight. Monday class schedule.
- VII. Oct 18 *The Era of Ivan the Terrible, 1533-98.* Rias, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., 131-43; "The Personality of Ivan the Terrible: What Happened? How Did He Get Away With It?"; *RRH*, 150-54.
- VIII. Oct 25 *The Era of Ivan the Terrible (cont.). The Time of Troubles and the Dawn of the Seventeenth Century.* Rias, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. 144-60; *RRH* 173-76, 180-83.

- IX. Nov 1 *Russian Society 300 Years Ago*. Rias, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., 161-80; RRH, 176-80, 187-92, 213-22; "What It Was Like To Be a Government Worker in the 17th Century."
- X. Nov 8 *Religion and Thought at the Start of a New Epoch*. Rias, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., 181-95; RRH 193-212.  
**2d paper due, Wednesday, Nov. 8.**
- XI. Nov 15 *Peter the Great*. Rias, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., 197-222.  
**Roundtable discussion** of Cracroft, *The Revolution of Peter the Great*.
- XII. Nov 22 *The Russian Empire of the Eighteenth Century*. Rias, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., 223-78: RRC 2: 252-79--"Catherine the Great's 'Instructions,'" "The Legislative Commission of 1767," "A Journey From St. Petersburg to Moscow."
- XIII. Nov 29 *The Russian Empire of the Eighteenth Century* (cont.)  
*Russia from Alexander I to Nicolas I, 1801-55*. Rias, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., 279-340; RRC, 2: 280-94, 303-20--"Memoir on Ancient and Modern Russia," "Apology of a Madman," "Letter to Gogol."
- XIV. Dec 6 *Russia in the era of the Great Reforms*. Rias, 7<sup>th</sup> ed., 341-61; RRC 2: 344-67, 383-89--"Going to the People," "From a Village Diary," "The Slav Role in World Civilization."  
**Roundtable discussion** of *Women in Russian History*.  
**3d paper due Wednesday,, December 6.**
- XV. Dec 13 *On the Road to Revolutions: Russia from 1881 to 1917*. Rias, 7<sup>th</sup> ed. 362-438; RRC 2: 390-401, 416- 44--"The Falsehood of Democracy," "An Economic Policy for the Empire,""The National Problem in Russia."  
**Final-exam review.**

### GENERAL INFORMATION FOR ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments must be done on time. Failure to take a test when scheduled means an automatic failing grade for that examination. Failure to submit a paper on time will result in the grade for the paper being reduced by 5 points for every working day (M-F) that it is late.

In situations where legitimate reason (medical emergency or death in the family) exists for a student's inability to take a test , that person must produce written proof to justify taking a make-up test or submitting the paper/map assignment without penalty. Work- and car-related excuses will not be accepted.

It is your responsibility to avoid submitting sloppy papers with careless grammar and

spelling errors. All papers will be printed distinctly Use a regular Courier or Times New Roman font. Follow the citational form prescribed in the Department of History style sheet.

## CLASS PARTICIPATION

*Learning how to discuss analytically (and letting this become an ingrained habit) is one of the most significant goals of your college, academic experience.* Discussion is an opportunity to talk about history, and is a most effective method for you to digest information and concepts and to explore the subject for new insights. Since a significant portion of the course will involve discussion of the material it is essential that you come to class already having read the assignment for that day. Come to class having already thoroughly read the textbook material, other sources, and your notes from previous class discussions. As you read, think of yourself as an active participant and how you might explain issues in class. Review that assignment after class.

This is a student-driven class. Everyone is expected to participate in class discussion, every single class discussion. When necessary, I will call upon class members. Before you come to class, think of questions and discussion points you want to raise. Be sure and follow through.

When you read through our primary and secondary sources and the handouts I will distribute from time to time, think of and be able to comment upon the following:

***(1) What are the text readings and documents talking about? (2) What is the significance of them? (3) What light do they shed on the historical period they are discussing? (4) How might we understand this period better because of the text readings and documents?***

Bear in mind that the mentalité, terminologies, idioms, and construction of our sources is, at times, quite foreign and demanding of our own frame of reference. Yet it is precisely through wading through all this that we can obtain insightful comprehension into the thought-worlds of earlier Eastern Slavs and Russians and other peoples living under them.

***Be respectful of the professor and others in class!*** Sound carries more easily than you think. Talking to neighbors during class makes it hard for others to concentrate and learn. No cell phones, no beepers, no pagers!

## CLASS ATTENDANCE

Members of class are required to attend every session and remain until the end of each session. I will take roll every session. Failure to attend will jeopardize your performance because there is a very strong correlation between continual class attendance on the one hand and involvement in class activities, comprehension of the material, and satisfactory performance on the other. Students who cut class, even if only occasionally, invariably perform less well than their peers who attend every meeting. For example, do not come into class late on account of work or doctor's appointments. Late arrivals and early departures, depending upon their severity, will result in either ½ or 1 absence. You are responsible for any material covered in class or information presented (such as a test the following session) during your absence; make a point of having a "buddy" whom you can contact in such a situation.

I will allow up to two (2) absences (for whatever reason). The third absence, however, will reduce the final grade by 10 points and a fourth absence by 15 points. For example if you had 3 absences, a grade that had been a 91 would become an 81. Medical and family emergencies

do occur, and so guard your absences accordingly for when you truly might need to be absent.

**GRADE SCALE**

A, 100-92; A-, 91-90; B+, 89-88; B, 87-82; B-, 81-80; C+, 79-78; C, 77-72; C-, 71-70;  
D+, 69-68; D, 67-62; D-, 61-60; F, 59-0.