



HIS 211: Imperial Russia

Autumn Semester 2010
Course Meeting: MWF 12:30-1:20

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Office: SSC 219 (x7435)
Office Hours: MWTh 1:30-2:30
and by appointment



Throughout this course, we will look at fundamental developments in Russian history from the seventeenth century and the reign of Peter the Great to Nicholas II and the collapse of the tsarist empire in the revolutions of 1917. Throughout this period, Russia transformed from a medieval, feudalistic society into a modern, formidable empire. However, Russia struggled with changing social structures, emerging industrialization, and expanded intellectual ideas that ultimately brought a sharp and final end to the Imperial period and the Romanov dynasty. Although we will roughly follow a chronological approach, we will also explore in detail three themes: political dynamics, social and cultural constructions, and empire building.

The first theme focuses on the **political** trends and shifts. The Russian Court was filled with intrigue, conspiracy, brilliance, and incompetence. How do we account for the rise and collapse of the great power wielded by Russia's tsars? How effective was the political leadership at bringing about change in the empire, and who were the supporting and competing powers?

Second, we will focus on the **social** dynamics in a changing Russia, from perspectives of the nobility, the clergy, the intelligentsia, and the peasantry, and how the various estates interacted with each other. History is certainly not only about the rulers and elites; all aspects of society helped shape the direction of Imperial Russia. We will also discuss the intellectual and cultural aspects of Russian history, and how this related (or remained distinct) from contemporary European ideas. One of the central questions, which plagued Russian intellectuals, is whether Russia is part of "the West" or is something altogether unique.

And finally, we will also look at Russia as an **empire**, both in terms of how the empire expanded and was ruled, as well as the differences between the center and the periphery. From Peter I to Nicholas II, the Russian Empire expanded at a tremendous rate – often unplanned – until the Russian autocrat reigned over a sixth of the earth's land. With this expansion came new groups with different languages, social structures, and religious beliefs. How have Russians and their rulers oriented themselves toward other peoples, both within and outside the empire? Studying the successes and challenges of this multiethnic, multi-confessional empire provides insight into aspects of empire building and the challenges of maintaining such a hold over such expanses.

HIS 211 meets the **HIPHI** requirement – Historical and Philosophical Studies. By completing the requirements for this History course, students will:

1. Acquire a perspective on history and an understanding of the factors that shape human activity. This knowledge will furnish students with insights into the origins and nature of contemporary issues and a foundation for future comparative understanding of civilizations.
2. Develop critical thinking through the study of diverse interpretations of historical events.
3. Apply critical thinking through historical analysis of primary and secondary sources.
4. Develop communications skills in exams, papers, discussions.
5. Develop an understanding of the patterns of Russian history, and how they inform present-day Eurasian society, politics, and relations with its neighbors.

Required Readings:

- Walter Moss. *A History of Russia. Volume 1, to 1917.*
 Ekaterina Romanovna Dashkova. *The Memoirs of Princess Dashkova.*
 Leo Tolstoy. *Hadij Murad.*
 Chekhov, Gogol, Gorky, Turgenev. *Four Great Russian Plays.*
 Olga Semyonova Tian-Shanskaia. *Village Life in Late Tsarist Russia.*
- Additional readings are posted on Moodle

Grading:

Participation	15%	Research Paper:	
Take-Home Midterm Exam	10%	- Proposal	5%
Book Review	15%	- Presentation	5%
Day in a Life of a Peasant Paper	15%	- Final Paper	20%
Take-Home Final Exam	15%		

Grading Scale:

A: 93% and above	B+: 87-89.9%	C+: 77-79.9%	D+: 67-69.9%
A-: 90-92.9%	B: 83-86.9%	C: 73-76.9%	D: 62-66.9%
	B-: 80-82.9%	C-: 70-72.9%	F: below 62%

Grading Rubric For Writing Assignments:

	Introduction/Thesis	Support for Thesis	Use of sources/citations
A	Well-written, introducing the main themes of the paper, capturing the interest of the reader, with a well-defined thesis statement.	Each paragraph directly relates to the thesis statement, with excellent examples and analysis that articulates the connection.	Well-cited examples that support the argument, with a thorough analysis.
B	Adequate overview of the topics of the paper, a weaker thesis statement.	For the most part, the paragraphs relate to the thesis statement, the connection is not always articulated or clear.	A few (but not sufficient) citations, tends to be a bit light on analysis.
C	Vague statements, largely off-topic, lacking a clear thesis statement.	Paragraphs seem random, with no clear or articulated connection to the thesis statement.	References materials or examples but gives no or few exact citations, lacks adequate analysis.
D	Completely lacking a clear focus with no thesis statement.	Paragraphs and examples are completely irrelevant to the topic at hand, with no clear argument.	Lacks any citations or analysis, or includes an over-usage of quoted material.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:

As a student at Gustavus, you are expected to know and abide by the College's Academic Honesty Policy as printed in the academic catalog. The policy states, in part, "In all academic exercises, examinations, presentations, speeches, papers, and reports, students shall submit their own work. Footnotes or some other acceptable form of citation must accompany any use of another's words or ideas. Students are especially cautioned that quoting or paraphrasing from electronic sources without proper citation is as serious a violation as copying from a book or other printed source."

All instances of academic misconduct (such as plagiarism) will result in a zero for that assignment and be reported to the Office of the Provost. A continuing pattern of academic misconduct could result in academic probation or expulsion.

By turning in any assignments for this course you are agreeing to the **honor pledge**: "On my honor, I pledge that I have not given, received, or tolerated others' use of unauthorized aid in completing this work."

Andrea A. Lunsford offers the following suggestions to "Avoid Plagiarism" in *The Everyday Writer*:

- Maintain an accurate and thorough working bibliography.
- Establish a consistent note-taking system, listing sources and page numbers and clearly identifying all quotations, paraphrases, summaries, statistics, and visuals.
- Identify all quotations with quotation marks – both in your notes and in your essay. Be sure your summaries and paraphrases use your own words and sentence structures.
- Give a citation or note for each quotation, paraphrase, summary, arguable assertion or opinion, statistic, and visual that is from a source.
- Prepare an accurate and complete list of sources cited according to the required documentation style. (192)

Participation, Deadlines, and Assignment Submissions:

It is expected that students regularly attend class having read the assigned material and ready to participate in discussions. "Ready" means you have completed and thought carefully about the readings. Students can also participate by meeting me during office hours or by e-mailing me questions and comments.

Everyone should consistently demonstrate common courtesy to both me as the instructor and your fellow classmates. With that in mind, if there are occasions when you are late to class you should enter as quietly as possible without making a scene. Cell phones should be turned off or silent (yes, vibrations still make noise). And we should all treat each other's comments and questions with the respect they deserve.

All assignments for this course are to be submitted in **electronic format** through Moodle. Your completed assignment needs to be uploaded prior to the start of class on the day the assignment is due. Papers turned in late without requesting an extension ahead of time will be reduced in grade for each day it is late; requests for an extension must be made at least 24 hours before the assignment is due.

Exams:

There are two take-home exams in this course. The exam question and parameters will be handed out in class one week before the due date. Responses are to be based **only** on course materials – readings and class discussions – and are **NOT** to include any outside sources (such as the Internet). As with any paper, your response should have a thesis statement and sufficient examples with citations to support your argument.

Disability Services:

If you have a physical, psychiatric/emotional, medical, learning or attentional disability that may have an effect on your ability to complete assigned course work, please contact Laurie Bickett, Disability Services Coordinator, in the Advising Center (x6286). She will review your concerns and decide with you what accommodations are necessary. I will be happy to work with you, upon receipt of documentation from her.

Formatting Guidelines for Typed Assignments:

- All writing assignments are to be typed, with one-inch margins and page numbers;
- Use only 12-point font size, Times or Times New Roman, double-spaced;
- Correct spelling and grammar; proofread your paper before turning it in;
- Use proper citations (a works-cited page is **not** necessary, except for the research paper);
- Read and re-read the question asked to make sure you are answering it fully;
- For additional help, please visit the Writing Center or talk to me during office hours.

Writing Assignment: Book Review, 3-4 pages

Below is a list of books covering a wide range of topics in Imperial Russian history. Select one of the books and get it from the library (I have double checked to make sure each of these books is in the Folke Bernadotte Library collection). If you wish to find a different book not included in this list, please see me first. There should be enough books so that each student in the class reviews a separate book.

Skim through the book to get an idea of what the book is about. In skimming, you should read the introduction, the conclusion, and the opening and concluding sections of each chapter. You should also take note of the sources the author used – is the work largely based on primary sources gathered from archival research, or is it more a work of synthesis based largely on secondary sources? How did the author use these sources, and are the appropriate (are there sufficient citations)?

Using the online resources of the library, look for a few scholarly book reviews (typically found in academic journals). What have reviewers said? What are the advantages of the argument and where are the author's weaknesses, according to the reviewer? Be sure to cite these book reviews.

This assignment is meant to demonstrate your ability to read a text critically and analytically. Your book review should succinctly summarize the main arguments of the book, the evidence and sources used to support these arguments, and offer your reactions and assessment of the work. A book review is not simply a summary of the book, nor simply your reaction to the content ("I really enjoyed this book" or "I found this book boring"). Rather, the book review should present the strengths and weaknesses of the book, and support your reactions ("This book offers and excellent insight into Russian history

because...”). Is it written well? Is it accessible or uncomfortably demanding? Does the book contribute to your understanding of history?

You may also wish to use this assignment as an early exploration into a topic for your research paper, although you are also free to research a completely different topic.

Due: This is a rolling deadline, and you are strongly encouraged to turn in the book review earlier in the semester. However, the absolute final date that the review should be submitted by is **November 29**.

Please select from one of the following books:

- W. Bruce Lincoln. *Sunlight at Midnight: St. Petersburg and the Rise of Modern Russia*.
- Lindsey Hughes. *Peter the Great: A Biography*.
- Edward C. Thaden. *Russia's Western Borderlands, 1710-1870*.
- Michael Khodarkovsky. *Russia's Steppe Frontier: The Making of a Colonial Empire, 1500-1800*.
- Simon Dixon. *Catherine the Great*.
- John LeDonne. *Absolutism and Ruling Class: The Formation of the Russian Political Order, 1700-1825*.
- John Klier. *Russia Gathers Her Jews: The Origins of the "Jewish Question" in Russia, 1772-1825*.
- Richard Wortman. *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy*, vol. 2.
- Nicholas Riasanovsky. *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825-1855*.
- Anna Zelkina. *In Quest for God and Freedom: The Sufi Response to the Russian Advance in the North Caucasus*.
- Michael Hamm. *Kiev: A Portrait, 1800-1917*.
- W. Bruce Lincoln. *The Conquest of a Continent: Siberia and the Russians*.
- Alexander Martin. *Romantics, Reformers, Reactionaries: Russian Conservative Thought and Politics in the Reign of Alexander I*.
- Adeeb Khalid. *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform Jadidism in Central Asia*.
- Yuri Slezkine. *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North*.
- Martin Malia. *Alexander Herzen and the Birth of Russian Socialism, 1812-1855*.
- W. Bruce Lincoln. *The Great Reforms: Autocracy, Bureaucracy, and the Politics of Change in Imperial Russia*.
- Christine Worobec. *Peasant Russia: Family and Community in the Post-Emancipation Period*.
- Jeffrey Brooks. *When Russia Learned to Read: Literacy and Popular Literature, 1861-1917*.
- Hans Rogger, *Russia in the Age of Modernisation and Revolution, 1881-1917*.
- Laura Engelstein. *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-De-Siècle Russia*.
- Tuomo Polvinen. *Imperial Borderland: Bobrikov and the Attempted Russification of Finland, 1898-1904*.
- Robert Geraci. *Window on the East: National and Imperial Identities in Late Tsarist Russia*.
- Robert Massie. *The Romanovs: The Final Chapter*.
- W. Bruce Lincoln. *In War's Dark Shadow: The Russians Before the Great War*.

Writing Assignment: Day in a Life of a Peasant, 5-6 page Paper

Olga Semyonova Tian-Shanskaia's *Village Life in Late Tsarist Russia* offers one of the best descriptions of the peasantry in the post-emancipation period leading up to the Bolshevik revolution. In response to this book and our in-class discussion, I would like you to write a creative essay, placing yourself in the position of "Tatiana" (a composite female peasant). Assume that it is just before the 1905 Revolution, and you are recounting to your children and grandchildren your life experiences. You should discuss three of the following topics:

- Childhood and adolescence
- Sexual mores, sexual relations, and courtship
- Engagement and marriage
- Pregnancy and childbirth
- Child rearing and the relations between parents and children

This paper should describe very specific events with high detail – and why these events happened (i.e. the peasants' rationale to act in certain ways). The examples you describe must be based on information you gathered from this book; do not make up incidents that are not found in the book. Although I am asking you to place yourself into the role of a nineteenth century peasant and this paper should be written in first person, as a 21st century historian you should note where you found specific details and observations from the book (put the page number in parentheses).

Due: November 1

Writing Assignment: Research Paper, 5-7 pages

Throughout this course, we explore numerous themes and rulers. Choose an aspect of Imperial Russian history that interests you and write an analytical research essay. While your paper topic should emerge from a reading or a class discussion, you should use the class materials only as a starting point to doing outside research on the topic, to delve into the topic with greater depth and analysis; your paper should not simply summarize our discussions, but rather should go significantly beyond our class work and represent your own ideas, analysis, and original conclusions.

You should include at least 3 additional scholarly sources not used in class (Wikipedia, as an encyclopedia, is not what I would consider a "scholarly" source). As with any paper, there must be sufficient citations to support your argument with concrete examples, and all sources you used must be listed in a "Works Cited" page.

A research paper proposal is due by **Monday, November 15**. The proposal, approximately a half to one page, should briefly present your research topic, the central questions you are exploring, and the sources that will help inform you of this topic. The proposal will help you begin the research process early, narrow your focus, and enable me to offer suggestions on your topic.

During the week of December 6 you will present your research topic and conclusions to the class. Your presentation should be between 5 and 10 minutes long and should also include a discussion of the sources that inform your research. Although not required, you may also wish to locate images and create a PowerPoint presentation.

The completed research paper is due on the last day of class, **Monday, December 13**.