

HI 783 - Introduction to Russian and East European History

Thursdays 2:00P-04:50 PM

Hamilton 420

Prof. Chad Bryant

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Office Hours: W 1:30-3:30

and by appointment

HI 783 is the capstone course for those in the Russian and East European Studies program, although the seminar will be of interest to anyone looking for an introduction to these fields. While designing this syllabus I have kept several goals in mind. One goal is to provide concentrated, in-depth looks at some of the major topics in modern Russian, East European, and Central Asian history. These topics include, but are not limited to, nationalism, the experience of war and revolution, the rise and fall of Communist rule, and the challenges faced by these regions in the post-Communist era. A second goal is to expose graduate students to a variety of methodological and interpretive approaches to research questions and to place our books within the larger context of scholarly writing about the regions. Finally, participants will be encouraged to ask new questions inspired by our readings. Russian, East European, and Central Asian studies are exciting, fresh, and expanding fields of study. In asking research questions I hope to inform your own research agenda and encourage you to think about the future of the field as a whole.

Required texts

Pieter Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria*)

Robert D. Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar: Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia*

Roman Szporluk, *Communism and Nationalism: Karl Marx Versus Friedrich List*

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*

Maria Bucur, *Heroes and Victims: Remembering War in Twentieth-Century Romania*

Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Krushchev*

Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970-2000*

Padriac Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe 1989*

Lilia Shevstova, *Russia - Lost in Transition: The Yeltsin and Putin Legacies*

Adeeb Khalid, *Islam after Communism: Religion and Politics in Central Asia*

Robert J. Donia, *Sarajevo: A Biography*

Recommended reading

Joseph Rothschild and Nancy Wingfield, *Return to Diversity*

We will read and discuss one book per week. All of these books are available on reserve at the undergraduate library.

Course Expectations

The heart of the seminar is class discussion. The success of our meetings depends on everyone reading the week's assigned book and then arriving to class with ideas, insights, or questions for the group. I also hope that we can remain open to other's opinions while offering arguments based upon a thorough understanding of the texts. Quality of thought is more important than quantity.

Every other week you will be asked to write a review of the book assigned to class. At our first meeting we will divide the class into two groups, Team A and Team B. Team A will write reviews of Judson's *Guardians of the Nation*, which we are reading for September 2. Team B will write reviews of Crews' *For Prophet and Tsar*, which we are reading for September 9. The following week, Sept. 16, we will hold a writers' workshop to discuss how we might improve these first book reviews. Then we will begin writing reviews again, with Team A writing the next round of reviews and Team B writing reviews for the week thereafter.

All reviews should be posted to the "Discussion threads" folder of blackboard before class begins. Keep your review to no more than three pages. A good review should address the following questions: What is the book about? What is its argument? How is that argument made? What sources are used and how is the book structured? What is the significance of the book's argument? What are the book's strengths and weaknesses? Excellent examples can be found by looking at the reviews published in *Slavic Review* and other scholarly journals available at the library.

All of the information available on this syllabus, along with the week's writing assignment, will be available on the course's blackboard.unc.edu site.

Your final grade will be determined by using the following percentages:

Class participation: 50%

Five book reviews: 10% each (total 50%)

Aug. 26

Introductions and Expectations

Sept. 2

Pieter Judson, *Guardians of the Nation: Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria*

Team A book reviews

Sept. 9

Robert D. Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar: Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia*

Team B book reviews

Sept. 16
Writing workshop

Sept. 23
Roman Szporluk, *Communism and Nationalism: Karl Marx Versus Friedrich List*
Team A book reviews

Sept. 30
Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*
Team B book reviews

Oct. 7
Maria Bucur, *Heroes and Victims: Remembering War in Twentieth-Century Romania*
Team A book reviews

Oct. 14
Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Krushchev*
Team B book reviews

Oct. 21 – Fall Break – No class

Oct. 28 Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970-2000*
Team A book reviews

Nov. 4 Padriac Kenney, *A Carnival of Revolution: Central Europe 1989*
Team B book reviews

Nov. 11 Lilia Shevstova, *Russia - Lost in Transition: The Yeltsin and Putin Legacies*
Team A book reviews

Nov. 18 Adeeb Khalid, *Islam after Communism: Religion and Politics in Central Asia*
Team B book reviews

Nov. 25 – Thanksgiving – No class

Dec. 2 Robert J. Donia, *Sarajevo: A Biography*
No book reviews this week