

HISTORY 391: SOVIE BABY BOOMERS: COMING OF AGE IN THE SOVIET UNION IN THE KHRUSHCHEV AND BREZHNEV YEARS

Professor Donald J. Raleigh, Spring Semester 2011

Tuesday/Thursday, 3:30-4:45, Stone Center, 201

Office Hours: Tuesday, 9:00-10 AM, Thursday, 2:00-3 PM, and by appointment, Hamilton Hall 410, 962-8077, djr@email.unc.edu



Description: In accordance with History Department guidelines, I have designed this section of History 391 to facilitate the pursuit of independent research on topics of interest to students, who will present the results of their work in both oral and written form. Collectively, we will discuss and research the period in which N. S. Khrushchev (1953-64) and L. I. Brezhnev (1964-82) stood at the helm of state in the Soviet Union. Stalin's successors faced the iconoclast's dilemma: they sought to dismantle the worst feature of Stalinism—terror—but could not find an adequate replacement for it that could breathe new life into the system and guarantee its future stability. Despite superpower status and some stunning achievements at home and abroad, the fault lines in Soviet society ran deep. This was all too apparent to Kremlin leaders, who applied various policies to fix the system or to conceal its fissures. Khrushchev turned to spasmodic reformism and Brezhnev to a more conservative trust in cadres; however, the Soviet

Union faced systemic problems of a staggering nature when Brezhnev died in 1982. In focusing on the 1953-82 period, we will consider the experiences of those that came of age after Stalin's death, since it was they in particular who played determining roles in the reform movement associated with M. S. Gorbachev known as perestroika. Those born in the Soviet Union after World War II lived through decades of peaceful, organic, *evolutionary* change and development and one of the most rapid rates of urbanization that the world has ever witnessed. In these urban microworlds Soviet baby boomers developed subcultures outside official ones, which in some respects paralleled larger developments in the West. The generation that came to power under Gorbachev immediately began to distance itself from the Brezhnev era, which Gorbachev and his associates depicted as one of "stagnation" and lost opportunity. But Gorbachev's Soviet Union, too, eventually succumbed to a crisis in faith as the Soviet myth economy buckled, the constituent union republics went their separate ways, and Western observers declared the end of the Cold War and even the end of history. We cannot understand these dramatic events without appreciating the formative experiences of those who played such a central role in them.

During the course, you will read and discuss several works in common in order to provide appropriate background for your research. I have scheduled this intense reading at the start of the semester so that you can devote your energies during the second two-thirds of the term to researching and writing your seminar papers. Early in the semester you will select a research topic in consultation with the instructor, craft a research proposal, and compile an annotated bibliography. While carrying out bibliographical research you will make a 5- to 10-minute presentation on an important bibliographic aid or document collection. Later in the semester you will make a 10-minute report on your research in progress. At semester's end, you will give 15-minute Power Point presentations summarizing your research findings. You will submit a draft and final paper of approximately 20-25 pages in length, including notes, and edit and evaluate the research papers of two writing partners.

Class attendance is mandatory and **papers must be turned in on time**. You are also expected to take active part in class discussion.

Course Objectives: As an introduction to historical research and research methods, this course is designed to help you develop skills that will serve you well at the university, in graduate or professional school, and later at the workplace. By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- Understand the postwar period of Soviet history
- Improve your critical readings skills
- Learn how to compile a bibliography and take research notes
- Formulate a viable research topic that uses some primary sources
- Conduct sustained independent research
- Appreciate the benefits and drawbacks of various types of sources, including personal narratives
- Present the findings of your research orally
- Formulate an argument and support it with historical evidence
- Write and revise a 20-25 page paper

- Edit and evaluate the work of others

Required Reading:

Keep, John. *Last of the Empires: A History of the Soviet Union, 1945-1991*
 Alexeyeva, Ludmilla and Paul Goldberg. *The Thaw Generation: Coming of Age in the Post-Stalin Era*
 Raleigh, Donald J., ed. *Russia's Sputnik Generation: Soviet Baby Boomers Talk about Their Lives*
 Storey, William Kelleher. *Writing History: A Guide for Students*, 3rd edition.

Grading:

5-10-minute report	2.5%
10-minute report	5.0%
15-minute report	12.5%
Discussion	10.0%
Peer review	10.0%
Research proposal, annotated bibliography, outline, notes, & log	10.0%
Final Paper*	50.0%

*In evaluating your final paper, I will consider: the quality and extent (ambitiousness) of the research; your success in formulating a thesis statement, using evidence to substantiate it, and drawing conclusions; the quality of the writing; the overall effect of the paper; and originality.

Schedule of Seminar Meetings and Assignments

Jan	11	Introduction. Discussion of course objectives. The bibliography card and note card. The research log. Selection of bibliographic aids (Storey, 1-24, Raleigh, 1-23, 120-53).
Jan	13	Mini Lecture: The USSR, 1917-41, and discussion of Keep, 1-65
Jan	18	Discussion of Keep, 66-161
Jan	20	Workshop: RefWorks (Today we will meet in the computer lab in Davis Library, Room 246)
Jan	25	Discussion of Keep, 165-243 (Brainstorming on topics)
Jan	27	Discussion of Keep, 244-328 (Brainstorming on topics)
Feb	1	Discussion of Keep, 331-419
Feb	3	Oral Reports on Bibliographical Aid/Source, Team I (Read Alexeyeva, 1-115) Half of class will give concise, five- to ten-minute reports on a bibliographic aid or document collection. Oral Reports: Discuss the purpose of the guide, bibliography, index, or collection, and who compiled it and why. What can one expect to find in it? What sorts of topics does it address? How is it organized? Is it easy to use? Who might benefit from using it? What are its limitations?

- Feb 8 Oral Reports, Team II (see instructions above) (Alexeyeva, 116-233)
- Feb 10 Discussion of Alexeyeva (entire book, 234-371)
- Feb 15 Discussion of *Russia's Sputnik Generation* (introduction and interviews with male Baby Boomers)
- Feb 17 Discussion of *Russia's Sputnik Generation* (interviews with female Baby Boomers)
- Feb 22 *Submission of Research Proposals* (review Storey, 22-23, and discussion, How to Read a Document (Storey, 25-31)
- Feb 24 How to Read an Article (Students will read the article posted on Blackboard for today's discussion)
- Mar 1 Taking Notes and Introducing the Subject, Storey, 33-51. During the week I would like you to read the introductions to three or four articles published by historians in professional journals in the field such as *Slavic Review*, *Kritika*, *Russian Review*, *Russian History*, *Slavonic and East European Review*, *Cahiers du Monde russe*, etc. Xerox four copies of the introduction that you believe is the most effective of the ones you examined. We will distribute these in class and discuss their merits.
- Mar 3 Writing Workshop and Discussion of Storey, 53-67, 89-113. *Submission of annotated bibliographies.*
- Mar 8-10 Spring Break
- Mar 15 Oral Presentations, **Group A**. Students will present 10-minute oral reports on their research projects and turn in their final bibliographies and research logs.
Oral reports: Provide an update on the information submitted in your paper proposal. Explain your topic and justify it, list the questions you seek to answer and/or your hypothesis, note the sources you find most useful, especially primary sources, and enumerate the problems and difficulties you are having or foresee. Practice your presentations beforehand. These reports should be well organized, informative, and concise.
- Mar 17 Oral Presentations, **Group B** (see instructions above) (Read Storey, 69-87)
- March 22 Oral Presentations, **Group C**. *Students will bring to class copies of the draft introductions of their seminar papers for their writing partners and me.* Ask for help by appending a list of questions that you would like your two reading partners and me to address.
- March 24 Discussion of introductions. Make comments directly on the pages, but also write a brief response to your partners and give copies of it to your partners and to me.

- Mar 29 Writing Day; individual consultations with half of class in my office. *By 2 PM today, students will turn in to their partners and to me an analytical outline of their papers* (see Storey, 70-73). Ask for help! Indicate what questions you want your readers to address. NB: Students meeting with me for consultations today can turn in their outlines when they come to my office. The rest of you can place them in my departmental mailbox.
- Mar 31 Writing Day; individual consultations with half of class. *By 2 PM today, students will turn in to their partners and to me a five-page segment of their papers.* Ask for help! Indicate what questions you want your readers to address. NB: Students meeting with me for consultations today can turn in their five-page installments when they come to my office. The rest of you can place them in my departmental mailbox.
- Apr 5 Discussion of five-page installments (Storey, 115-19). Students will make comments directly on the pages but also will write brief responses to their partners' questions (submitting hard copies to their partners and to me).
- Apr 7 Writing Day, no class. By 10 PM Sunday, April 10, **students will exchange draft papers with their reading partners for peer review and send only their conclusions to me.** Append to your paper a specific list of questions with which you need help (e.g., "Is my introduction too long?" "Do pp. 12-14 belong in the introduction?" "Is my argument clear?" "Do I use too many quotes?") Advice: After writing your paper, put it aside for a few days. Then edit it. Then read it out loud to yourself as you revise one more time. This will help you catch awkward phrases, word repetition, and incomplete thoughts.
- Apr 12 Four students from **Group A** will make 15-minute Power Point presentations, which should discuss their topics, the questions they have posed, the major sources used, the problems they encountered, the structure of the paper, *and* the conclusions reached. Students will return to their reading partners the papers they edited for peer review. **Guidelines for peer review:** Each student will read and edit the papers of two of their classmates. Students will make comments directly on the draft papers, but will also fill out a checklist that I will distribute and write up a page of comments for each paper they critique. Students will give a copy of the checklist and their written remarks to the authors and a copy to me.
- Apr 14 Four students from **Groups A and B** will make 15-minute Power Point presentations.
- Apr 19 Four students from **Groups B and C** will make 15-minute Power Point presentations.
- Apr 21 Four students in **Group C** will make 15-minute Power Point presentations.

Apr 26 Submission of final papers and wrap-up session

Suggestions for Research Projects: Here I wish to call your attention to some research topics, each of which contains a large number of manageable projects.

- A paper that draws heavily on primary documents found in the published document collections identified on my research guide (CIA reports, confidential US diplomatic files, State Department reports, and the diverse documentation found in *Lenin to Khrushchev: The USSR in Retrospect, 1917-1956*).
- An examination of the writings or memoirs of Soviet leaders or officials (Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Molotov); of official texts (Khrushchev's new party program, Brezhnev's constitution); or of Soviet government documents on a specific issue.
- A close reading of the American and/or Soviet press and/or official magazines (in English translation) on a critical issue.
- Images of the Soviet other. How events in the Soviet Union affected US public life and culture. Some examples are representations of the Soviet other in the local or national (American) press; US reactions to the launching of Sputnik; depictions of Soviet life during détente, etc.
- A paper that draws heavily on memoir literature or eyewitness accounts of events, both Soviet and foreign.
- A paper that deals with youth culture during the Khrushchev and/or Brezhnev years (the Komsomol, the 1957 international youth festival, sports education, education and the Soviet school experience, attitudes toward childhood and childrearing, the influence of foreign culture, of tourism, and of cultural exchanges, youth involvement in the virgin lands campaign or in the construction of BAM, rock music, counterculture activities, fashions, Western "heroes" in Soviet public life [Angela Davis, Dean Reed] etc.)
- Rewriting Soviet history. This type of paper would consider how official historiography dealt with a topic and would compare these views with how Soviet historians during the Stalin and Gorbachev eras interpreted the same events.
- Social trends and moral issues (the status of women, the family, the educational system, medicine, crime, alcohol abuse, youth culture, the dissident movement, etc.) Papers on these subjects might draw on official Soviet legislation, the Soviet press in translation, and memoir and secondary literature.
- The Nationalities (students could focus on a specific nationality, national minority, or republic, or on a specific problem such as Russian nationalism).
- Cultural and intellectual life under Khrushchev and Brezhnev (Soviet literature, film, art, music, dance, the media).
- Religion (the attack on religion during the Khrushchev years; religion and the dissident movement/nationalities problem; non-Orthodox Christians, Muslims, Jews, relations with the Vatican, etc.).
- The USSR and the US, or Britain, or China, or other countries.
- A historiographical paper that would survey secondary literature on a given topic, providing essentially a history of academic writing on it. That is, students would

seek to contextualize Western interpretive views (usually social science views) and to explain why different understandings held sway at any given time.