

## Colloquium on Soviet History, History 782

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UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
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History 782 is designed to prepare students for MA and PhD fields (major and minor) in Soviet and post-Soviet Russian history from 1917 to the present. Apart from familiarizing you with Western, Soviet, and post-Soviet literature on the most important issues in Soviet history, this course will consider the limitations of historical scholarship and discuss areas in need of further research. Each week students will read in common several articles. In addition, students will report on a book selected from the core bibliography. Students enrolled in the colloquium will be divided into two teams. During the second class meeting, Team "A" will make oral presentations on the books they have chosen and Team "B" will submit written reports that same week. The roles will be reversed the following week and the cycle will continue throughout the semester. Students will also be responsible for leading a thirty- to forty-five-minute discussion of the week's topic and required articles once during the semester. Think strategically. As a rough template, however, I suggest that students begin with a short presentation introducing the topic and authors and briefly summarizing the main points or approaches of the essays before posing questions to open up further discussion of critical historiographical issues, trends, and debates.

Oral presentations will be limited to ten minutes in length. You are welcome to speak from an outline and/or to share a handout with the class, but are discouraged from reading reports to the class (whether printed or on your computer screen). Reports should discuss the architecture of the book under review: its thesis or major themes; its methodology; its place in the historiography; its sources and their use; its overall value; its impact on the field; whether or not the author has met his/her objectives; and anything else you consider important or useful. Any pertinent information about an author that bears upon the argument, interpretation, or value of the book, should be called to the class's attention as well. No more than four pages in length, written reviews should address the same concerns as the oral reports. Students will post their essays on Sakai the night before we meet and submit hard copies to me in class.

Students are encouraged to read works in Russian or, for those outside the field, in other foreign languages. Participants from other disciplines or those taking the course to meet the requirements of a minor field may, as much as is reasonable, read within their areas of interest (e.g., gender history, cultural history, social history, labor history, foreign relations, etc.), or focus on a specific problem or issue (e.g., political culture, ideology, the role of the intelligentsia, religion, the problem of reform, nationalities, or whatever). Tell me what your needs are and I will try to accommodate you.

Grading will be based on the following formula:

Oral reports:	40%
Written reports	40%
Participation	20% (including leading a discussion)

## History 782: Reading Colloquium on Soviet History

### Required Readings:

All of the articles that you need to read for this course are available electronically on Sakai.

You need not purchase any books for this course. However, if you have little or no background in the field or need to review major events in Soviet history, I strongly urge you to read volume 3 of the *Cambridge History of Russia* that deals with the twentieth century. Because of the book's princely price, I have placed the title on reserve in the Undergraduate Library. (NB: I have several chapters available electronically, which I have placed on Sakai.) If you can afford the book, I recommend that you purchase your own copy. Alternatively, you may read a widely used narrative history of twentieth-century Russia such as those authored by Ronald G. Suny or John M. Thompson.

Those of you preparing for PhD exams will benefit from reading Walter Laquer's *Fate of the Revolution* (revised edition), and from familiarizing yourselves with *Istoricheskie issledovaniia v Rossii: Tendentsii poslednikh let* (Moscow, 1996), edited by G. A. Bordiugov, or *Sovetskaia istoriografiia*, bk. 2, ed. by Iu. Afanas'ev. I assigned these anthologies as required reading in the past, but because current Russian historiography is changing so rapidly, the books have become dated.

**Class Meetings:** Thursday, Hamilton 425, 2:00-4:50 PM

**Office Hours:** Wednesday, 1:30-2:30 PM; Thursday, 5:00-6:00 PM, and by appointment. My office is in Hamilton 410, 962-8077; [djr@email.unc.edu](mailto:djr@email.unc.edu)

### Weekly Assignments and Study Questions

1. August 25, Introduction. Selection of Books. Discussion of Topic 1, the political viability of the old regime. Discussion of required articles: Arthur Mendel's, "On Interpreting the Fate," Read, "In Search of Liberal Tsarism," and, for those who can read it, S. V. Kulikov, "Imperator Nikolai II kak reformator: K postanovke problemy." Optional: Steinberg chapter in the *Cambridge History of Russia* [hereafter CHR]), and Leopold Haimson's "Lenin's Revolutionary Career Revisited." You may also wish to access Haimson's seminal articles through J-STOR.
  - a. The major figures in the optimist and pessimist schools, their arguments. Locating these views in historical time. The impact of the collapse of the Soviet Union on these points of view.
  - b. Was Haimson wrong? Does it matter?
  - c. The viability of the Duma experiment.
  - d. The revolutionary movement after 1905 and the Russian labor movement.
  - e. Cultural developments of the Silver Age. The relationship between cultural trends and politics and society.
  - f. The question of historical alternatives (debates in Soviet/Russian scholarship).

- g. The Stolypin reforms and their consequences.
  - h. Current Russian and Western scholarship. A return to the optimist school in the afterglow of 1991?
  - i. Research agenda: what needs to be done?
2. September 1. World War I and the Collapse of the Autocracy (Discussion of Boris Kolonitskii, "Russian Historiography of the 1917 Revolution," Paul Dukes, "The 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Russian Revolution: Some Views from Moscow" and "The 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Russian Revolution: Some More Views from Moscow"; Optional: von Hagen chapter in CHR and Hemenway article "Nicholas in Hell.")
- a. The impact of the war on political and social developments.
  - b. The revolutionary movement during the war both inside and outside Russia.
  - c. The formation of a Duma opposition.
  - d. The causes and course of the February Revolution. Interpretations of Katkov, Burdzhakov, Hasegawa, Pares, Florinsky, Ferro.
  - e. Various political and social groups in the revolution. The new political order and the nature of dual power.
  - g. Was Russia ready for revolution?
  - h. Desacralization of the Romanov dynasty and the myth of autocracy.
  - i. Role of the political parties in February and afterward.
  - j. Revolution as a cultural creation. February and the cultural turn. Kolonitskii/Figes.
  - k. Recent reassessments of Nicholas II.
  - l. Research agenda: What still needs to be done?
3. September 8, The October Revolution (Pipes, "1917 and the Revisionists"; Suny "Toward a Social History of the October Revolution"; and "Revision and Retreat"; Optional: Smith chapter in CHR, and Corney article on October as memory project).
- a. Interpretations of the founding fathers: Schapiro, Fainsod, Ulam, Melgunov.
  - b. Interpretations of Daniels, Pipes, Keep, Rabinowitch.
  - c. The importance of the social revolution from below and social identity.
  - d. The nature of the Bolsheviks' popular support. Reasons why their opponents lost. The importance of Lenin's leadership.
  - e. The revolution in the provinces (Suny, Raleigh, Badcock, Retish).
  - f. Social historians and the role of various social groups in the revolution (Wildman, Koenker, Smith, Rosenberg, Mandel, Raleigh).
  - g. The parameters of 1917—when did the revolution end? Its legacy.
  - h. Post-Soviet views on Lenin, Bolshevism, and the nature of October.
  - i. Russia's modern time of troubles, 1914-1922? A new chronology of war, revolution, and civil war?
  - j. What needs to be done?
4. September 15, Soviet Power during the Civil War and Intervention (Holquist, "Information Is"; Raleigh, "Languages of Power"; Rosenberg review of Narskii and Raleigh; Optional, Raleigh chapter in CHR).
- a. Traditional Western interpretations of and emphases regarding the Civil War.

- b. The link between Leninism and Stalinism.
  - c. When did the Civil War begin? End? Russia's new Time of Troubles, 1914-22?
  - d. War Communism (debates in Soviet scholarship).
  - e. Reasons why the Bolsheviks won.
  - f. Civil War as a formative experience, its impact on later developments.
  - g. Assessments by Pipes, Brovkin, Swain, and Read; recent work on the White movement (Smele).
  - h. The crisis of 1921 and the end of the Civil War.
  - i. Problematizing the experience of civil war: Raleigh, Narskii.
5. September 22, Soviet Russia during NEP and the Rise of Stalin (David-Fox, "What Is Cultural Revolution?"; Igal Halfin, 'Looking into the Oppositionists' Souls'; a short piece by Eric Naiman introducing Halfin's essay and the emerging sub-discipline of Soviet subjectivity; optional, Ball chapter in CHR.)
- a. Western scholarship and conceptions of NEP society and the 1920s. The nature of NEP society (classes, groups, attitudes, identities). Causes of stability and crisis.
  - b. Traditional emphases: the nature and role of the party/state bureaucracy; Lenin's Testament and effort to remove Stalin; Bukharinism as an alternative; Trotskyism as an alternative; reasons why Stalin won the struggle for power.
  - c. Why did NEP end?
  - d. The formation of the USSR. Korenizatsiia. What kind of empire was the Soviet Union?
  - e. The debate on cultural revolution. NEP culture.
  - f. Marxism and the women's question. The Soviet family code and gender relations. The rise and fall of Zhenotdel.
  - g. Rediscovering Bukharinism during perestroika; Lenin's two views on NEP. NEP as a golden age?
  - h. Soviet Subjectivity, self-identification, and internalization of the revolution.
  - i. The dictatorship of sex. Making sex Soviet and the body politic.
  - j. Gaps in Western and Soviet scholarship.
6. September 29, The Stalin Revolution (Fitzpatrick, "Revisionism in Retrospect: A Personal View" [go to the fall 2008 issue of SR and read the short replies by Daniels, Getty, Osokina, and Hellbeck]; and "Stalin and the Making of a New Elite," **or** Liutov, Politicheskie nastroeniia," and A. N. Sakharov, "1930: god 'korennogo pereloma' i nachala Bol'shogo terrora." Optional: I have also included an old piece by Tucker, which presents the clearest statement available of the revolution from above paradigm.)
- a. Stalin, Witte, Peter the Great. Bolshevism and modernization.
  - b. The meaning of "revolution from above" and "revolution from below." Why the paradigms have changed.
  - c. Cultural Revolution and legitimating the regime.
  - d. The role of economic planning (Davies).
  - e. Recent Russian studies on the Stalin Revolution.

- f. Collectivization and the famine as historical problems. How many victims? The Holodomor controversy and independent Ukraine.
  - g. Did the Stalin Revolution make economic sense?
  - h. Striking a balance: achievements and cost.
7. October 6, The Stalinist Political and Social Order (Viola, "Popular Resistance in the Stalinist 1930s"; Medushevskii, "Stalinizm kak model"; Edgar, "Bolshevism, Patriarchy, and the Nation". Those who do not read Medushevskii to read Rolf, "A Hall of Mirrors: Sovietizing Culture under Stalinism.")
- a. Interpretations of Stalinism and Stalin's Russia: totalitarianism, modernization, historical-cultural traditions, the psychological-personality approach, Marxist approaches.
  - b. Stages in Stalinism from revolution from above to a new social conservatism. Stalinism as "national Bolshevism." Was there a retreat?
  - c. Stalinism as variant of modernity.
  - d. Stalinist culture and carnival. Representations of women in Soviet culture. The Stalin cult as a new religion.
  - e. The ruling class under Stalin. Ordinary people in extraordinary times.
  - f. Resistance and its meaning in Stalin's Russia.
  - g. A new sub-field: Soviet subjectivities.
  - h. Soviet public language and rhetorical strategies. Using archival sources.
  - i. Pokrovskii and the emergence of Soviet historical scholarship. Creating the canons: The *Short Course* and biography of Stalin.
  - j. Soviet writing on Stalin after 1953. Revisionist accounts during perestroika. The scene today.
8. October 13, The Terror (J. Arch Getty et al., "Victims of the Soviet Penal System," Wendy Goldman, "Stalinist Terror and Democracy," S. A. Kropachev, "Bolshoi Terror i ego zhertvy," or I. A. Kurlianskii, "1937 god: Vlast' ne ot Boga." Optional, Shearer chapter in CHR).
- a. The purges as a historical problem. Memoir and other sources.
  - b. Traditional accounts, Conquest's estimates, Medvedev's voice from within.
  - c. Getty's revisionist account. Rittersporn's. Thurston's.
  - d. How many were purged?
  - e. How did "Stalin" get away with it? Who suffered? Who benefited?
  - f. What the archives do and do not tell us.
  - g. Ivanova and shifting focus away from 1937 to the history of the camps in their entirety.
  - h. Applebaum, the moral question, and the Soviet/Nazi comparison.
  - i. A spate of new works. Goldman, Hagenloh, Shearer.

October 20, Fall Break

9. October 27, Soviet Russia at War; Stalin's Foreign Policy (Weiner, "Saving Private Ivan"; Uldricks, "War, Politics, and Memory," and Berkhoff, "Total Annihilation of the

Jewish Population”); optional, Barber and Harrison chapter in CHR; **OR** Paderin, “Narod-pobeditel”); M. A. Mel’nichenko, “Fenomen frontovogo anekdota: Narodnoe tvorchestvo ili instrument agitatsii?”).

- a. Stalin's relations with Hitler. Why the Nazi-Soviet pact?
  - b. Was Stalin planning to attack Germany? The Icebreaker controversy—and beyond.
  - c. Stalin as military leader; Stalin and his generals.
  - d. Diplomacy during the war; wartime conferences; origins of the Cold War.
  - e. Soviet scholarship on the war.
  - f. Soviet society during the war. How many victims? Why did the Soviet Union win the war?
  - g. Soviet opposition to Stalin. Collaboration. The Vlasov movement. Punished peoples.
  - h. The siege of Leningrad.
  - i. A male-dominated narrative of war. The role of women. New works.
  - j. The psychological impact of war on the postwar generation.
  - k. New writing from Russia
  - l. War’s place in the *longue durée* of Soviet history.
10. November 3, Postwar Stalinism (Fitzpatrick, “Politics as Practice”; Jones, “Every Family Has Its Freaks”; Pyzhikov, “Poslednie mesiatsy diktatura 1952-1953 gody”; optional, “Gorlizki and Khlevniuk chapter in CHR).
- a. The extent to which the war experience changed Soviet society.
  - b. The mood of society and opposition. The Big Deal. Zubkova's writings.
  - c. Features of "high," late, or mature Stalinism.
  - d. Conservatism and cosmopolitanism. Zhdanovism.
  - e. Who ruled Russia? Factionalism within the party? Within the elite?
  - f. Stalin's foreign policy and the Cold War. The Cold War History Project.
  - g. Soviet science, party patronage, and the bomb.
  - h. Stalinist culture, socialist realism, and the middle class.
  - i. Was Stalin planning a new purge? Was Stalin’s death facilitated?
  - j. How to judge Stalin. Striking a balance: achievements and costs.
11. November 10, The Khrushchev Years (Breslauer, "Khrushchev Reconsidered"; Susan, Reid, “Who Will Beat Whom?”; Ethan Pollock, “From *Partiinost’* to *Nauchnost’*”; optional, Taubman chapter in CHR; Aksiutin, “Novoe o XX S”ezde KPSS”; E. Iu. Zubkova, “Na ‘krai’ Sovetskogo obshchestva: Marginal’nye gruppy naseleniia i gosudarstvennaia politika, 1940-1960-e gody.”)
- a. The meaning of de-Stalinization. Anti-Stalinism vs. neo-Stalinism.
  - b. Khrushchevism. His rise to power. How stable was his rule? Why was he ousted?
  - c. Khrushchev's foreign policy. Trouble in Eastern Europe. The Sino-Soviet split.
  - d. Khrushchev's agricultural schemes, economic reforms, and party reforms.
  - e. The "Thaw" and its impact.
  - f. Rewriting Soviet history. The Burdzhakov affair and debates in Soviet

historiography.

- g. Khrushchev's new party program and its consequences.
  - h. The historical legacy. Khrushchev and perestroika.
  - i. New biographies by Tompson and Taubman.
  - j. Revisiting the women's question.
  - k. Popular disorders and their meaning.
  - l. Youth culture, consumption, and Cold War competition.
  - m. Future research agendas. Miriam Dobson's paradigm.
12. November 17, Soviet Society and Politics since Stalin (Conquest, "Academe and the Soviet Myth," and Cohen, "Scholarly Missions.").
- a. Western perceptions and interpretations of Soviet society. How have they changed and why? Soviet (official and unofficial) interpretations.
  - b. The reasons for de-Stalinization. Anti-Stalinism and neo-Stalinism.
  - c. The Soviet bureaucracy, officialdom, state, and society.
  - d. The legacy of Stalinism, of the terror, of World War II.
  - e. Forces of stability and change in the Soviet Union after Stalin.
  - f. The Soviet leadership—generational differences.
  - g. The intelligentsia—a surrogate civil society?
  - h. The economy and how it worked.
  - i. The nationalities question.
  - j. Debates in Soviet historiography on absolutism, the origins of capitalism in Russia, *mnogoukladnost'*, the nature of the Russian working class, consciousness vs. spontaneity)
  - k. Soviet women and the family. Gender difference. Masculinities, Soviet-style.
  - l. Soviet culture, popular and official.

November 24, Thanksgiving

13. December 1, The Period of "Zastoi" (Millar, "Brezhnev's Little Deal"; Krylova, "The Tenacious Liberal Subject"; Cohen, "Was the Soviet Union Reformable?")  
Optional, Hanson chapter in CHR; Zubkova, "Vlast' i razvitie").
- a. The essence of Brezhnevism and of developed socialism.
  - b. The dissident movement and the intelligentsia as surrogate civil society.
  - c. The Soviet economy after Khrushchev. Why stagnation?
  - d. The meaning of détente and why it failed. Did it?
  - e. Soviet youth culture.
  - f. Soviet demographic trends. The nationalities question. The rise of Russian nationalism.
  - g. Images of the Soviet future in Western and émigré/dissident scholarship.
  - h. The meaning of Andropov and Chernenko.
  - i. Soviet popular culture.
  - j. New research agendas.

14. December 8, Gorbachev, Glasnost' and Perestroika (Malia, "A Fatal Logic"; Dallin, "Causes of the Collapse"; and Rowley, "Interpretations"; optional, Brown chapter in CHR).

- a. The rise of Gorbachev. Generation as a category of historical analysis. Role of the thaw generation. Role of Gorbachev and the Gorbachev "factor."
- b. What brought about perestroika? Consequences of social change and modernization.
- c. Gorbachevism: *perestroika, glasnost', demokratizatsiia, novoe myshlenie, uskorenie*.
- d. Social forces supporting the Gorbachev phenomenon. Social forces resisting change.
- e. The intelligentsia: supporters of glasnost. The last Soviet intelligentsia?
- f. Nationalism and the collapse of the Soviet Union.
- g. Perestroika and Soviet historians.
- h. Changes in the teaching and writing of history.
- i. The August 1991 coup attempt and breakup of the USSR. What caused the collapse of the USSR?

15. December 15, Post-Soviet Russia and the CIS (Confino, "The New Russian Historiography," and Kaplan, "The Vicissitudes of Socialism," McFaul chapter, CHR)

- a. The move toward and establishment of a market economy, Russian style.
- b. Economic reform, the West, and privatization.
- c. Assessing the Yeltsin presidency.
- d. Postsoviet culture.
- e. Postsoviet identities. Self and other.
- f. The CIS and the Russian diaspora.
- g. Operation default (1998) and economic stability.
- h. The Putin phenomenon and the verticality of power.
- i. Authoritarianism in Russian history.
- j. Understanding the present. Trends and patterns.

Old topics, now integrated into list:

16. Engendering Soviet History (Bonnell, "The Peasant Woman," or Edgar, "Bolshevism, Patriarchy, and the Nation," and Engel chapter in CHR).

- a. Marxism and the women's question. Leninism. Stalinism.
- b. Women and the revolutionary movement. The collapse of Zhenotdel.
- c. Soviet family policy. Codes of 1918, 1926, 1936, 1944.
- d. Representations of women in Soviet culture.
- e. Women in Soviet society. Recognition that the women's question had not been solved after all.
- f. Women and the dissident movement.
- g. The emergence of Soviet feminism and its agenda.

- h. How perestroika affected Russian women.
  - i. Post-Soviet realities.
  - j. Masculine subjectivities.
  - k. The research agenda: Toward a real gender history. The teaching agenda.
17. The Nationalities Question (Slezkine, “The USSR as a Communal Apartment,” **or** “Khalid, “Backwardness and the Quest for Civilization,” and Smith and Yekelchuk chapters in CHR)
- a. The tsarist government and its minorities.
  - b. The impact of revolution, civil war, and othering.
  - c. The formation of the Soviet Union and the affirmative action empire.
  - d. Stalin's nationalities policy. *Korenizatsiia*.
  - e. Punished peoples.
  - f. Policies of Stalin's successors.
  - g. Soviet demographic trends.
  - h. The rise of nationalism (including Great Russian nationalism).
  - i. Perestroika and the national question.
  - j. Nationalism and the collapse of the USSR.
  - k. Nationalism, identity, and social theory.
  - l. The future of the CIS.
18. Russia Abroad (see list of emerging literature)
19. The Writing of History in the Soviet Union.
- a. Pokrovskii and the emergence of Soviet historical scholarship. Ispart.
  - b. The impact of the Stalin Revolution; Stalin's letter to *Proletarskaia revoliutsiia*; the Red Academy.
  - c. Creating the canons: The *Short Course* and biography of Stalin.
  - d. The Burdzhalov affair and the journal *Voprosy istorii*.
  - e. Debates in Soviet scholarship (on absolutism, the origins of capitalism in Russia, *mnogoukladnost'*, the nature of the Russian working class, consciousness vs. spontaneity, etc.)
  - f. New orthodoxies of the 1970s and 1980s.
  - g. Soviet historians react to perestroika (see *Soviet Studies in History*)
  - h. Emergence of a non-Marxist historical scholarship.
  - i. Trends today.