

# History 925: Research Seminar in Russian and Soviet History

Professor Donald J. Raleigh  
University of North Carolina, Fall 2010

**Course Description:** Intended to accommodate students at various stages in their graduate careers, this multi-purpose seminar will focus on problems in modern Russian and Soviet history.

- Graduate students at any level may write a seminar paper in the field of Russian/Soviet history, in which case they will plan, conduct, organize, and present original historical research both orally and in writing. This course therefore meets departmental requirements that students write seminar papers during their third and fifth semesters.
- Students who have conducted research on a project they wish to consider for the dissertation may use this opportunity to write a dissertation proposal to satisfy the department's requirement for H905 (formerly 399).
- First-year graduate students who need a directed readings course (H899) can accomplish that goal within the parameters of this course. During the first half of the semester they will read a book a week in the chronological area in which their research interests fall and meet with me to discuss them; during the second half of the semester, they will read a cluster of seven or eight books on a specific issue and write a twenty-page historiographical essay.
- Advanced students who have completed their dissertation research are welcome to enroll in this seminar in order to produce a chapter of the dissertation.
- Those taking PhD comps and writing grant proposals this year may enroll in this course, too. They may submit their draft grant proposals for critical review and their (revised) dissertation prospectuses.

**Class Meetings.** Owing to the multiple purposes of this course, I have had to design a flexible calendar. Please consult it each week. Officially, the class meets on Tuesdays in Howell 201 between 4 and 6:50 PM, but we will end before 6:50 most days. As much as possible, I envision the course as a professional forum for presenting and critiquing each other's work.

## **Formats for Oral Presentations on Research and Reading Projects:**

Students writing research papers and dissertation prospectuses will make twenty-minute oral presentations on their projects early in the semester and once again before submitting their papers. Students taking the course as a directed readings course will make a thirty-minute oral presentation at the end of the semester, before turning in their historiographical essays.

- In their oral presentations, those writing a seminar paper should justify their project, define its scope, place the topic within the historiography, identify the major question to be answered in the paper, explain their methodology, and note their major sources and research problems. The second presentation should update the audience on what progress has been made during the semester and present the paper's major findings.
- Those writing a dissertation proposal should address the same questions, but also include in the paper and oral presentations a tentative dissertation outline and a timetable for submitting grant proposals, for researching the dissertation, and for writing up the project.
- First-year students writing a historiographical paper should explain how the topic relates to their broader professional needs. The presentation should discuss which books and articles will be examined in the paper and why, isolate the major arguments of each work under consideration, and draw some conclusions about the evolution of historical writing on the subject.

**Peer Review:** Students will post copies of their draft and final papers on Blackboard so that they are available for review by the entire class and provide me with hard copies. I invite all students to read and comment on all of their fellow students' work. Assigned writing partners, however, will lead the discussion and critique of individual papers. The partners are:

Jesse, Gary, and Sergei (if he wishes)

Dan and Aaron

Audra, Andrew, and Adrienne

Stephen and Trevor

Mike, Emily, and Gleb (if they enroll in the class)

**Visiting Russian Scholar:** This semester, Sergei Vladimirovich Kazakovtsev from Viatka State University in Kirov, Russia, will conduct research at UNC as a Fulbright scholar. I have invited him to participate in the seminar to the extent that he finds it helpful. I have posted his curriculum vitae on Blackboard.

### **Schedule:**

**Before class on August 24,** visit the Slavic and East European Collections Home Page: <http://www.lib.unc.edu/cdd/crs/international/slavic/index.html> (.). I would like everyone to examine the items listed under "What's New" and "Russian-language Databases." For "homework," those writing seminar papers and dissertation prospectuses will add ten items to their research bibliographies (at least three found in the *Russian National Bibliography* and in *Летопись журнальных статей*), submitting a list of those items on the first day of class.

In addition, Adrienne will prepare a five-minute (show and tell, using the classroom computer) report on the newspaper and journal Russian-language databases; Gary on the *Russian National Bibliography* and *Летопись журнальных статей*; Audra on the Guide to Russian Archives; Andrew on *Вестник Европы*; Jesse on Russian military and security publications; Trevor on the CIA Electronic Reading Room; Stephen on the Savine Collection; and Sergei on my [Research Guide to Soviet History Based on Materials at Davis Library, UNC-Chapel Hill](#). These short presentations should identify the item, explain how to use it, and note what one might find in it.

1. August 24, Introduction. Organization of course.
  - Dan and Aaron will make fifteen-minute presentations on their experiences conducting pre-dissertation research in Moscow (and beyond) this summer, focusing on how they prepared for their trips, their expectations, and what they learned from their forays into the archives. If appropriate, Gary will make a ten-minute presentation on his work in Kazan.
  - Five-minute presentations on research guides
  - Trevor and Stephen will meet with me afterward; please read "How to Read a Book" posted on Blackboard
  
2. August 31, Writing a Dissertation (75 minutes). Emily, Gleb, and Mike will share their experiences researching and writing their dissertations.
  - Roundtable Discussion: Compiling bibliographies and note taking. For homework, visit the Slavic and East European Collections homepage, click on guides, then Guides to Russian Studies, and make use of "Archaeobiblio Base," "Guide to Russian Reference Works," and my "A Research Guide to Soviet History." Among other things, be prepared to discuss items that you discovered or learned about for the first time that will be of use to you now or in your MA or dissertation research.
  - Trevor and Stephen will meet with me afterward for 30 minutes to discuss their readings each week through October 12.
  
3. September 7, Dan and Aaron will make twenty-minute oral presentations on their dissertation projects. Trevor and Stephen will submit written reviews of their books this week by noon on Monday (and meet with me to discuss them today).
  
4. September 14, Audra, Andrew, and Adrienne will make twenty-minute oral presentations on their dissertation projects.
  
5. September 21, Gary, Jesse, and Sergei will make oral presentations on their research projects.

6. September 28, Discussion of Aaron's, Dan's, and Adrienne's first grant proposals (to be posted on Blackboard by 5 PM on Sunday).
7. October 5, No class this week. I will be making a presentation at the University of Michigan. Trevor and Stephen will exchange written reviews of the books they read this week and meet to discuss them. They will send me their reviews before 12 PM on Monday. Gary, Jesse, and Sergei will post on Blackboard, or distribute to the class, a document that the class will discuss next week. Please see the handout posted on Blackboard, "How to Read a Document."
8. October 12, Gary and Jesse will present a document to the class today for discussion. (It is helpful to select a document that is central to your research efforts this semester, especially if it is problematic in some regard. Explain why you chose the document, how you "read" it, and what problems using the document poses.)
9. October 19, No class this week. Twenty-minute consultations with me in my office (Hamilton 410):
  - Gary, 4 PM
  - Jesse, 4:20
  - Audra, 4:40
  - Adrienne, 5 PM
  - Andrew, 5:20 PM
10. October 26, Discussion of Aaron's, Dan's, and Adrienne's (second) grant proposals (to be posted on Blackboard before 5 PM on Sunday).
  - Sergei will present a document to the class if he wishes.
11. November 2, Audra, Andrew, and Adrienne will make their final oral presentations.
12. November 9, Jesse, Gary, and Sergei will make their final oral presentations.
13. November 16, No class today. I will meet with Trevor at 4 PM and with Stephen at 4:20 for consultations. Audra, Andrew, and Adrienne will post their draft dissertations prospectuses on Blackboard and submit hard copies to me. Audra and Andrew will also submit copies to Louise McReynolds.

14. November 23, We will meet today to discuss the three dissertation prospectuses. Jesse and Gary (and Sergei if he wishes) will post on Blackboard and submit to me their draft seminar papers.
15. November 30, We will meet today to discuss the two (three?) research papers. Stephen and Trevor will make their thirty-minute presentations today. Mike, Emily, and Gleb will post a dissertation chapter on Blackboard to be discussed next week.
16. December 7, Discussion of dissertation chapters. Audra, Andrew, and Adrienne will submit their revised prospectuses today; Gary, Jesse, and Sergei (if he wishes) will turn in their revised papers on Thursday. Stephen and Trevor will submit their historiographical papers on Thursday as well.