

History 162: Russia under the Last Tsars and Soviet Commissars

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Spring Semester 2014

Course Objectives: History 162 offers a broad-brush survey of Russian and Soviet political and social history since 1861, introducing students to the major themes and issues that have defined the country's past and that are framing its post-Soviet present. For the various periods we will focus on, you should be able to:

- Evaluate the Imperial government's efforts at reform after the Crimean War, the effects of these reforms on the major social groups in Russia, and why they failed to prevent the collapse of the autocratic system.
- Understand the key role the intelligentsia played in Russian history and account for the development and evolution of a revolutionary movement before 1917.
- Characterize the beliefs and world view of Russia's rulers, consider the problems each inherited from his predecessor, identify critical turning points in each reign or tenure in office, and provide an overall assessment of each tsar or Soviet commissar.
- Appreciate the impact of war and the threat of war on both Russian and S
- Assess Bolshevik efforts after 1917 to construct a socialist society and the nature of the Stalinist system, later known as the command-administrative system, which emerged from the Stalin Revolution of the 1930s.
- Define the major features of the Stalin Revolution: industrialization, collectivization of agriculture, cultural revolution, social mobility, and terror.
- Understand efforts made after the death of Stalin in 1953 to reform the system, the nature of these efforts, and their contribution to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.
- Consider whether Russia could have forged its own, separate path in the modern world through adhering to shared beliefs, community, and equality. Consider how ideology (autocracy, Communism) both enabled and restricted Imperial and Soviet leaders.
- Relate the experience of women to the broader trends in Russian and Soviet history.
- Familiarize yourself with Russian and Soviet foreign policy objectives.
- Acquire a basic knowledge of Russian geography and of the nature of the Russian and Soviet empires.
- Appreciate the Khrushchevian "thaw," the rise of the generation of '56, the Dissident movement, and the experiences of Soviet baby boomers.
- Discuss the basic features of the Gorbachev Revolution.
- Account for the collapse of the Soviet Union.
- Sketch the major events and issues in Russian history since 1991.

In addition, assignments are geared to help you acquire and sharpen basic skills that will benefit all of your endeavors. You hopefully will demonstrate improvement in:

Reading critically, writing clearly, and synthesizing.

- Identifying an author's argument and evaluating how well he or she supports it with evidence.
- Reading literature and personal accounts as historical texts.
- Articulating arguments of your own based on historical evidence.
- Writing logical and coherent arguments and exams.

Required Reading. The following titles are available at the Undergraduate Reserve desk or for purchase at Student Stores.

- Evtuhov, Catherine and Richard Stites. *A History of Russia since 1800*

- Turgenev, Ivan. *Fathers and Sons*
- Pipes, Richard. *Three "Whys" of the Russian Revolution*
- Raleigh, Donald J. *Soviet Baby Boomers: An Oral History of Russia's Cold War Generation*
- Several articles available electronically (on Sakai)