

History 241: Origins of Modern Russia
Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 9:00-9:50
Spring 2009

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Office hours: MW 3:00-4:00,
TTh 9:00-11:00 (or
by appointment)

Course description

Although History 241 covers more than 1,000 years of Russian history, it is not intended as a traditional survey of the nation's past; instead, it will look at a number of key institutions, personalities, and social movements from Russian history to investigate what it means to be Russian and how Russia fits into the modern world. After all, historians have debated a broad range of questions related to the country's identity for generations: How has Russia been shaped by its location on the borders of Europe and Asia? Is Russia a Western nation, more akin to the countries of Europe than to the nations of the East, or is it—in the words of generations of critics—an “Oriental despotism”? How has the country's economic development shaped its political culture, and is Russia “backward” in its political, economic, or social development (as many observers have contended)?

In particular, we will look at several developments that have helped shape the history of Russia, including the creation of the Orthodox church and its relationship to the state, the rise and fall of serfdom, the growth of autocratic government, the emergence of the intelligentsia and the revolutionary movement, and several centuries of efforts to forge a powerful (and massive) nation-state and empire out of a multi-ethnic culture on the frontiers of Europe. A majority of our readings will be primary sources from Russia's past, which we will use to investigate the development of Russia's unique culture from the medieval period to the modern era, but we will also spend time looking at recent scholarship on Russian history. The result will be a detailed look at the nature of Russian national identity and a case study in the development of the “modern” world.

Course materials

The following books are available for purchase at the campus bookstore and are on reserve at Burling Library:

Andreas Kappeler, *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History*
David Moon, *The Abolition of Serfdom in Russia*
Andrei Pavlov and Maureen Perrie, *Ivan the Terrible*
Nicholas Riasanovsky and Mark Steinberg, *A History of Russia*
Olga Semyonova Tian-Shanskaia, *Village Life in Late Tsarist Russia*

Other articles and primary documents (marked “[Pioneerweb]” on the schedule of readings) will be available on the course's Blackboard site.

Requirements and grading

This course will have five main requirements:

Four short analyses of primary texts (20% of your total grade). During the first half of the semester, you will have six opportunities to write a 1.5-to-2-page analysis of one of the primary sources we'll be reading for class; you need to hand in four of these analyses (including the first one, due on Monday, January 26.) In each case, I will post a question for you to answer on the course's Pioneerweb page immediately after the previous class and you will write a brief essay answering that question, according to specifications included in a separate hand-out. A hard copy of your document analysis will be due at the start of class. (Note that you cannot hand in one of these assignments late, since they're intended to give you the chance to analyze the course readings before we discuss them in class. Plan accordingly!)

Mid-term exam (15% of your grade). This exam will have two sections: an identification section (in which you explain the significance of several people, places, things, or concepts from the first half of the course) and an essay section (in which you will answer one of two essay questions offered to you). The mid-term exam will take place in class on Monday, March 9.

Research paper (25% of your grade). For this assignment, you will write an 8-to-10-page research paper on a topic of your choice on Russian history before 1917. You will need to clear the topic of this paper with me, whether you select it from a list of possible topics or choose a subject of your own. This paper will most likely deal with a debate in the historiography, but can in some cases deal with the analysis of a primary source. You will also need to complete several short preliminary assignments (such as sending me a two-page abstract) before handing in the final paper, which will be due on Wednesday, May 6, at midnight (the end of the day).

Final exam (20% of your grade). This exam will have the same format as the mid-term and will take place on Friday, May 15, at 9:00 AM. The ID section will only cover material from the second half of the course; there will be two essay sections, one focusing on the course's second half and the other covering broader themes in Russian history.

Class participation (20% of your grade). The final requirement for this course is active and informed participation in classroom discussions. I will base this part of your grade on several criteria, including attendance, frequency of participation, the insightfulness of your classroom comments, and the timely completion of the preliminary assignments connected to your final paper. Although I hope that everyone will participate regularly, note that I'm more interested in the quality than in the quantity of your participation.

NOTE: In addition to the requirements listed above, I reserve the right to fail (or to further lower the grade of) any student with more than six unexcused absences. If your grade seems likely to suffer significantly from your absences or your lack of participation, I will let you know early enough that you have time to correct the problem. If you have any concerns about your level of participation, feel free to contact me at any time and we can discuss ways to increase your involvement in discussion.

Important notes

Grinnell College makes reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students need to provide documentation identifying any special needs to the Dean for Student Academic Support and Advising, Joyce Stern, whose office is located on the third floor of the Rosenfield Center. Students should then notify me within the first few days of class.

Students should also be aware of Grinnell's policy on academic honesty. Plagiarism, it goes without saying, will not be tolerated in this course.

Schedule of Readings

NOTE: Days on which you can hand in a document analysis are marked with three asterisks (***)). Every student needs to hand in the first of these assignments (on January 26), and you will then choose 3 of the remaining 5 assignments to complete.

Monday, January 19: Introduction to the course

Wednesday, January 21: In the Beginning

Readings: excerpts from the Primary Chronicle [Pioneerweb]
Riasanovsky and Steinberg, pp. 3-19

Friday, January 23: Princes and Politics in Kievan Rus'

Readings: excerpts from the Primary Chronicle and *Pravda Russkaia* [Pioneerweb]
Riasanovsky and Steinberg, pp. 21-47

Monday, January 26: Religion in Kievan Rus' (***)

Readings: the Primary Chronicle on Vladimir's conversion [Pioneerweb]
Linda Ivanits, "The Pagan Background" [Pioneerweb]
Riasanovsky and Steinberg, pp. 48-57

Assignment: document analysis on the conversion of Vladimir is due (for everyone)

Wednesday, January 28: The Mongol Invasion

Readings: Riasanovsky and Steinberg, pp. 59-71
Russian chronicles on the Mongol invasion [Pioneerweb]
Charles Halperin, "Interpreting the Mongol Yoke: the Ideology of Silence"
[Pioneerweb]

Friday, January 30: The Decline of Kiev and the Rise of Muscovy

Readings: the Nikonian Chronicle on the annexation of Novgorod [Pioneerweb]
Riasanovsky and Steinberg, pp. 72-129

Monday, February 2: From Ivan the Great to Ivan the Terrible

Readings: Pavlov and Perrie, *Ivan the Terrible*, pp. 1-78

Wednesday, February 4: Ivan the Terrible: an Overview (***)

Readings: Pavlov and Perrie, pp. 79-146
documents on Ivan the Terrible [Pioneerweb]

Assignment: document analysis on the Kurbskii-Grozniï correspondence

Friday, February 6: How Terrible was Ivan?

Readings: Pavlov and Perrie, pp. 147-207

Monday, February 9: The Time of Troubles (***)

Readings: primary documents on famine, civil war, and autocracy (15 pp.) [Pioneerweb]
Riasanovsky and Steinberg, pp. 131-160 (skim the section on Ivan)

Assignment: document analysis on political legitimacy during the Time of Troubles

Wednesday, February 11: The Origins of Serfdom

Readings: "Enserfment in Muscovite Russia," Richard Hellie [Pioneerweb]
Chapter 11 of the *Ulozhenie* (law code) of 1649 [Pioneerweb]
documents on peasant movement [Pioneerweb]
Riasanovsky and Steinberg, pp. 169-180

Friday, February 13: How Autocratic was Muscovy?

Readings: Marshall Poe, "The Truth about Muscovy" [Pioneerweb]
Valerie Kivelson, "On Words, Sources, and Historical Method: Which Truth
about Muscovy?" [Pioneerweb]
Charles Halperin, "Muscovy as a Hypertrophic State: A Critique" [Pioneerweb]

Monday, February 16: The Pre-Modern Russian Empire

Readings: Kappeler, pp. 14-59

Wednesday, February 18: Muscovite Church and Society (***)

Reading: the Commentaries of Adam Olearius [Pioneerweb]
Avvakum's account of his suffering [Pioneerweb]
Riasanovsky and Steinberg, pp. 161-168, 181-194

Assignment: document analysis on Muscovite religion

Friday February 20: Peter the Great, the Reformer (***)

Readings: reform legislation of Peter the Great [Pioneerweb]
Riasanovsky and Steinberg, pp. 197-222

Assignment: document analysis on Peter the Great's reforms

Monday, February 23: The Dark Side of Peter the Great

Readings: documents on Peter's relationship to his son [Pioneerweb]
an eyewitness account of the suppression of the *strel'tsy* [Pioneerweb]
M. S. Anderson, "Peter the Great: Man and Personality" [Pioneerweb]
Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, "The Image of Peter the Great in Russia" [Pioneerweb]
Marc Raeff, "Peter's Domestic Legacy: Revolution or Transformation?"
[Pioneerweb]

Wednesday, February 25: Reforming Russia's Service State

Readings: Manifesto Freeing the Nobility from Compulsory Service (1762) [Pioneerweb]
Riasanovsky and Steinberg, pp. 223-234

Friday, February 27: Catherine the Great: An Overview

Readings: *Memoirs of Catherine the Great*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]
Riasanovsky and Steinberg, pp. 235-255

Monday, March 2: Catherine the Great (***)

Readings: *Nakaz* of 1767 [Pioneerweb]
Charter to the Towns; Charter to the Nobility [Pioneerweb]
Marc Raeff, "The Well-Ordered Police State" [Pioneerweb]
Isabel de Madaraiaga, "Catherine the Great, an Enlightened Autocrat"
[Pioneerweb]

Assignment: document analysis on Catherine's reforms

Wednesday, March 4: Imperial Expansion to the West

Readings: Kappeler, pp. 60-113

Friday, March 6: The Nature of the Empire

Readings: Kappeler, pp. 115-167

Monday, March 9: **MID-TERM EXAM**

Wednesday, March 11: Russia under Catherine

Readings: Aleksandr Radishchev, "A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow," excerpts
[Pioneerweb]
Riasanovsky and Steinberg, pp. 264-278

Friday, March 13: Alexander I and the Decembrists

Readings: document packet on the Decembrist uprising [Pioneerweb]
Riasanovsky and Steinberg, pp. 279-301

SPRING BREAK: MARCH 13-29

Monday, March 30: Elite Culture and the Rise of the Intelligentsia

Readings: Richard Wortman, "The Development of a Russian Legal Consciousness"
[Pioneerweb]
Nikolai M. Karamzin, "On the Book Trade and the Love for Learning in
Russia" (1802) [Pioneerweb]
Nicholas Riasanovsky, "The Split Between the Government and the
Educated Public [Pioneerweb]
W. Bruce Lincoln, "The Genesis of an 'Enlightened' Bureaucracy, 1825-
1856" [Pioneerweb]
Walter M. Pintner, "The Russian Higher Civil Service on the Eve of the
Great Reforms" [Pioneerweb]
Riasanovsky and Steinberg, pp. 323-340

Wednesday, April 1: Imperial Expansion to the East

Readings: Kappeler, pp. 168-212

Friday, April 3: **NO CLASS**

Assignment: By the end of the day, email me a paragraph (4-5 sentences) proposing a topic for
your paper, along with a list of 3-5 books or articles that you've consulted

Monday, April 6: Repression!

Readings: David Moon, *The Abolition of Serfdom*, pp. 1-48
Riasanovsky and Steinberg, pp. 301-323

Wednesday, April 8: The Great Reforms

Readings: documents on the Great Reforms [Pioneerweb]
Moon, pp. 49-70
Riasanovsky and Steinberg, pp. 341-361

Friday, April 10: The Abolition of Serfdom

Readings: Moon, pp. 70-130

Monday, April 13: Nationalism and Empire

Readings: Kappeler, pp. 213-279

Wednesday, April 15: From Alexander II to Alexander III

Readings: Sergei Witte, "An Economic Policy for the Empire" [Pioneerweb]
Riasanovsky and Steinberg, pp. 362-377

Friday, April 17: Empire and Modernization

Readings: Kappeler, pp. 283-323

Monday, April 20: The Rise of the Left

Readings: Katerina Bereshkovskaia, "Going to the People" [Pioneerweb]
Catechism of a Revolutionary [Pioneerweb]
Program of the Narodnaia Volia [Pioneerweb]

Wednesday, April 22: From Peasant to Revolutionary

Readings: S. I. Kanatchikov, *A Radical Worker in Tsarist Russia*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]
Assignment: A 2-page discussion of the historical problem covered by your research paper, with an updated bibliography

Friday, April 24: Peasant Life after Emancipation

Readings: Olga Semyonova Tian-Shanskaia, *Village Life in Late Tsarist Russia*, intro. and ch. 1-6

Monday, April 27: The Late Imperial Village, Continued

Readings: Semyonova Tian-Shanskaia, ch. 7-10 (ch. 95-170)

Wednesday, April 29: The Autocracy in a New Age

Readings: Orlando Figes, *A People's Tragedy*, ch. 1 [Pioneerweb]
Konstantin Pobedonostsev, *Reflections of a Russian Statesman*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]

Friday, May 1: The Revolution of 1905

Readings: Riasanovsky and Steinberg, pp. 377-396
 Petition of Father Gapon [Pioneerweb]
 Nicholas II's concessions [Pioneerweb]
 Lenin's theory of the party [Pioneerweb]

Monday, May 4: Revolution and Empire

Readings: Kappeler, pp. 328-366

Wednesday, May 6: From 1905 to 1917

Readings: Leopold Haimson, "Dual Polarization in Urban Russia, 1905-1917" [Pioneerweb]
 Riasanovsky and Steinberg, pp. 397-415

Assignment: **RESEARCH PAPER IS DUE**

Friday, May 8: War and Revolution

Readings: Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]
 Ron Suny, "Revising the Old Story" [Pioneerweb]

Friday, May 15: **FINAL EXAM (9:00 AM)**