

History 260
Russia Since the Revolution, 1917 to the Present
Spring 2010, WF, 4-5:15pm, Nicely 321

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Wondering aloud about Soviet intentions at the beginning of World War II, Winston Churchill famously called Russia “a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.” This course will seek to demystify modern Russia and lay bare the events, problems, opportunities, and personalities that brought this fascinating country from defeat, revolution, and chaos first to superpower status and then through decline and collapse to the important regional power that Russia remains today.

Course Learning Objectives:

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- 1) Relate the major events of Russian History over the past two centuries, with special attention to the Revolution of 1917, Leninism, Stalinism, World War II, the Cold War, the Soviet collapse, and the post-Soviet era
- 2) Develop a familiarity with Russia literary and cultural traditions as they were expressed and experienced in the twentieth century.
- 3) Assess the nature of Russia’s place along its periphery and in the world at large.

Required Reading (available at the bookstore):

Catherine Evtuhov and Richard Stites, *A History of Russia: Peoples, Legends, Events, Forces Since 1800* (Houghton Mifflin, 2004), photocopy of pp. 254-532

Isaac Babel, *Red Cavalry and Other Stories*

Mikhail Bulgakov, *White Guard*

Film:

Burned by the Sun (dir. Nikita Mikhalkov, 1994)

Grades:

Your final grade will be calculated from your performance in class, your score on the midterm and cumulative final examinations, and the quality of your required paper.

Class participation will count for 20 percent of your final grade. Noticeable absence, frequent tardiness, cases of unexcused early departure, rudeness, and disruptive behavior will seriously harm your score in this category. Absolute attendance, frequent participation, doing all required readings, making incisive comments, and good manners will seriously help it. Anything said in class, furthermore, can appear on your examination.

Mobile phone use in a polite, interactive atmosphere is distracting, discourteous, and unnecessary. **ALL CELL PHONES MUST BE TURNED OFF DURING CLASS AND ARE SUBJECT TO IMMEDIATE CONFISCATION IF USED.** Text messaging is also very annoying and strictly prohibited. The instructor realizes that mobile phones may be useful in the event of an emergency. If you anticipate an emergency on a particular class day, stay home.

The midterm (**MARCH 26**) and cumulative final examinations (**TBA**) will each count for 30 percent of your final grade. **PLEASE NOTE:** There will be **NO OPPORTUNITY** to make up this examination unless I am informed of your absence **IN ADVANCE**. If you do not inform me of your absence **IN ADVANCE**, you will automatically receive a failing grade. Makeup examinations will in any case be **COMPLETELY DIFFERENT** from the examination given to the rest of the class, and so there will be no advantage in taking one after everyone else.

The 5-7 page required paper, due on **March 19, 2010**, will account for 20 percent of the final grade. The paper will be an interpretative review of Isaac Babel's collection of stories *Red Cavalry* and Mikhail Bulgakov's novel *White Guard*, two books about the Russian Civil War. Your work **MUST** address one of the themes listed on the final page of the syllabus.

Our required films will add to the quality of your understanding and thus contribute to your performance on exams and in class discussions. Both films are also eligible for short (maximum one page) extra credit assignments, due within a week of the film screened.

Cheating, plagiarism, or any other type of academic dishonesty is unacceptable at AUB and will result in a failing grade for the course.

Topics:

Week I: February 17 and 19

Russia: From Empire to Revolution and Civil War (to 1921)

History of Russia, 257-317; 512-519

White Guard

Week II: February 24 and 26

Red Victory and Consolidation of Power (1921-1929)

History of Russia, 318-354

Red Cavalry

February 26: NO CLASS

Week III: March 3 and 5

Stalin's Soviet Union (1929-1939)

History of Russia, 355-387

Week IV: March 10 and 12

“The Great Patriotic War”: The Soviet Union in World War II (1939-1945)

History of Russia, 388-405, 520-525

Week V: March 17 and 19

Peacemaking and the Coming of the Cold War (1945-1953)

History of Russia, 406-422

March 19: Papers Due

Week VI: March 24 and 26

Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev (1953-1964)

History of Russia, 423-439

MARCH 26: MIDTERM

Week VII: March 31 and April 2

April 8: Toward Stagnation (1964-1969)

April 2: NO CLASS (EASTER BREAK)

History of Russia, 453-465

Week VIII: April 7 and 9

Brezhnev in Power: Détente (1969-1975)

Week IX: April 14 and 16

Renewed Cold War (1975-1985)

History of Russia, 465-470

April 16: NO CLASS

Week X: April 21 and 23

Film: *Burned by the Sun* (dir. Nikita Mikhalkov, 1994)

Week XI: April 28 and 30

Gorbachev and Reform (1985-1989)

History of Russia, 471-485

Week XII: May 5 and 7

Soviet Collapse and a New Russia (1989-1999)

History of Russia, 485-500

Week XIII: May 12 and 14

Russia at the Turn of the 21st Century

History of Russia, 525-532

Week XIV: May 19 and 21

Putin's Russia (1999-2009)

History of Russia, 500-511

Week XV: May 26 and 28

Review

Paper Topics

In reference to Mikhail Bulgakov's *White Guard* and Isaac Babel's collection of short stories, *Red Cavalry*, you must craft an interpretive essay around the theme listed below.

NO INTERNET SOURCES!!

- On Civil War