

## **HI 273 – Russia and Its Empires since 1900**

Spring 2013

MWF: 11:00-12:00

Prof. Simon Rabinovitch

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Office hours: Tuesdays 2:30-4:00 and Thursdays, 1:00-2:30 and by appointment

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### **Course Outline**

Focusing on empires and revolutions, this class examines the Russian Empire's dissolution, the creation of the Soviet Union, Soviet expansion in Eastern Europe and Asia, the breakup of the Soviet Union, and Russian efforts to maintain influence in the post-Soviet space. We will discuss the changing definitions of the Russian *imperium*, and with it, what it means to be Russian.

### **Course Websites**

- All required texts not for purchase, assignments, handouts from class, and any essential course documents will be available on blackboard.
- I will also maintain a facebook page for the course where I'll post interesting contemporary news and multimedia. Students are encouraged to "like" the page and to post materials and comments (please, keep it civil). The facebook page can be accessed from the Teaching page of my website, [blogs.bu.edu/srabinov/teaching/](http://blogs.bu.edu/srabinov/teaching/).
- Students are also encouraged to familiarize themselves with the writing and research guides and other multimedia on the Student Resources page of my site [blogs.bu.edu/srabinov/student-research-resources/](http://blogs.bu.edu/srabinov/student-research-resources/).

### **Course Requirements**

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

2-3 page book review, 10%. Each student is responsible for reviewing Mikhail Bulgakov, *Heart of a Dog*. This novel is widely available in several English editions on Amazon and through other booksellers and libraries. The book review is due on February 11.

Midterm, 20%. For the examination you will write an analytical essay analyzing a primary source. The midterm will take place on March 4.

Online research guide, 20%. You will write an online research guide (essentially a multimedia annotated bibliography) on a topic pertinent to the class. I will provide more detailed instructions and help you get started. We will be having a research seminar on February 4 (this is compulsory, and I will be taking attendance). Research guides will be

published on the website <http://blogs.bu.edu/guidedhistory> and will form the groundwork for your term paper. For the purpose of grading your guide will be considered complete on April 1, though you will be free to continue to update and upgrade your guides after.

Term paper, 25%. Students must complete one research paper (+/- 8-10 pages) examining some aspect of Russian history pertinent to the course. Topics might cover political, religious, intellectual, cultural, social, or economic history and should correspond approximately to the topic of your research guide. I will frequently suggest topics during the course of the semester and students are encouraged to come to my office to discuss possibilities. Both the syllabus and the bibliography in the textbook are good places to start your search for a topic. The term paper is due April 26.

Final examination, 25%. The final exam will be a two-hour open-book exam. For the exam, students will answer two essay questions pertaining to the major themes of the course. Students may bring any notes or books of their choosing to the exam.

Class discussion and preparation. Attendance and informed participation in class discussion is required. Although a grade will not be allocated for participation, in the case of final grades which are borderline good participation may boost a student's grade. Prolonged absence is grounds for failure.

All assignments should be completed independently and plagiarism from any source is unacceptable. In all written assignments be sure to properly credit (using proper citations) all ideas, phrases, statements, arguments, and ideas taken from your sources. Cases of suspected academic misconduct will be referred to the Dean's Office. If they have not already, students should familiarize themselves with the Academic Conduct Code of the College of Arts and Sciences:

<http://www.bu.edu/cas/students/undergrad-resources/code/>

## **Texts**

Text available for purchase at the BU Barnes and Noble:

Robert Service, *A History of Modern Russia: from Tsarism to the Twenty-First Century* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Harvard University Press, 2009).

- This textbook is required for purchase. For most classes you will be required to read one chapter from this text.

Recommended for purchase:

Ronald Grigor Suny ed., *The Structure of Soviet History: Essays and Documents* (Oxford University Press, 2002).

- This combination source book and anthology includes key interpretive essays and short primary sources. We will frequently discuss sources from this book in class. Reading the interpretive essays on your own will provide you with a greater depth of understanding for the Soviet period.

Mikhail Bulgakov, *Heart of a Dog/A Dog's Heart* (depending on the translation) (Penguin, Grove Press, Hesperus, and other editions).

- An English translation of *Sobach'e serdtse* can be easily acquired on Amazon and other online booksellers. I will put a PDF of a complete edition on blackboard, but since you'll have to review the book, you might as well own it.

All readings on blackboard are indicated in the syllabus by \*.

## **Course Schedule and Assignments**

January 16

Introduction to the course

January 18

Russia as Empire (Service Introduction)

January 21 – (no class, holiday)

January 23

And Russia? 1900-1914 (Service 1)

January 25

The Fall of the Romanovs 1914-1917 (Service 2)

January 28

Conflicts and Crises 1917 (Service 3)

Alexander Kerensky, “The Breakup of the Democratic Parties” and “The Final Struggle for My Russia”\*

January 30

The October Revolution 1917-1918 (Service 4)

Francois Furet, “The Universal Spell of October”\*

February 1

New World, Old World (Service 5)

V. I. Lenin, “Tasks of the Youth Leagues”

February 4

Research Seminar

February 6

Civil Wars 1918-1921 (Service 6)

February 8

The New Economic Policy 1921-1928 (Service 7)

February 11

Bulgakov, *Heart of a Dog*\*

Book review due

February 13

Leninism and its Discontents (Service 8)

February 15

The First Five-Year Plan 1928-1932 (Service 9)

Stalin, "The Right Danger in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union" (1928) and

"Dizzy with Success" (1930)

February 18 – (no class, holiday)

February 20 – substitute Monday

Fortresses under Storm: Culture, Religion, Nation (Service 10)

February 22

Film: Circus (*Tsirk*, 1936)

February 25

Terror upon Terror 1934-1938 (Service 11)

February 27

Evgeniia Ginzburg, selections from *Into the Whirlwind*\*

March 1

Coping with Big Brothers (Service 12)

March 4

Midterm examination

March 6

The Second World War 1939-1945 (Service 13)

Nikita Khrushchev, "The Great Patriotic War," from *Khrushchev Remembers*\*

March 8

Suffering and Struggle 1941-1945 (Service 14)

Spring break, March 9-17

March 18

The Hammers of Peace 1945-1953 (Service 15)

March 20

The Despot and his Masks (Service 16)

March 22

'De-Stalinization' 1953-1961 (Service 17)

"The Great Terror and the Twentieth Party Congress," from *Khrushchev Remembers*\*

March 25

Hopes Unsettled 1961-1964 (Service 18)

March 27

Stabilization 1964-1970 (Service 19)

March 29

'Developed Socialism' 1970-1982 (Service 20)

April 1

Guided History presentations – online research guide due

April 3

Andrei Sakharov, Roy Medvedev, Valentin Turchin, "A Reformist Program for Democratization"\*

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, "Repentance and Self-Limitation in the Life of Nations"\*

April 5

Privilege and Alienation (Service 21)

April 8

Towards Reform 1982-1985 (Service 22)

April 10

Glasnost and Perestroika 1986-1988 (Service 23)

Mikhail Gorbachev, "October and Perestroika"\*

April 12

Imploding Imperium 1989 (Service 24)

April 15 – (no class, holiday)

April 17

Hail and Farewell 1990-1991 (Service 25)

Victoria Bonnell and Gregory Freidin, "Televorot: The Role of Television Coverage in Russia's August 1991 Coup"\*

April 18 – substitute Monday

April 22

Power and the Market 1992-1993 (Service 26)

April 24

Film: Window to Paris (*Okno v Parizh*, 1994)

April 26

The Lowering of Expectations 1994-1999 (Service 27)

Mikhail Gorbachev, "The Union could have been Preserved"\*

Term paper due

April 29

And Russia? From 2000 (Service 28)

Vladimir Putin, "Russia at the Turn of the Millennium"

May 1 – last day of classes

(Service Afterword)