

Revolutionary Russia

HI 446

Fall 2013, W 3:00-6:00, HIS 304 (226 Bay State Road)

Office hours: MW 10:30-12:00 and by appointment

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Course Outline

This seminar examines how the Russian state transformed from an autocratic empire into a radical socialist federation in the early twentieth century. We will focus on what was revolutionary in this process and question the different meanings of revolution in the Russian context. In particular, how did various radicals, revolutionaries, and ultimately the Bolshevik controlled government use the idea of revolution to construct a new revolutionary Russian society? To answer this question, we will explore aspects of nationalism, political violence, high and popular culture, utopianism, and interpretations and reinterpretations of the revolution's narrative and significance after 1917. Each week we will discuss one significant book as well as some primary sources and, whenever possible, literature, film, music, and art.

Course Website

I have decided to experiment with this class in creating a course website that we can all use together. The idea is to combine the functions of blackboard, a class facebook page, and my Guided History student research page in a single site on BU's new platform sites.bu.edu. We will have to work on this together, but what I'm hoping for is a single place where students can go regularly for supplementary readings and primary source material, to post news, video clips, images, or music, and to communicate with me and one another. Students will also each have a page on their site where they will work on, update, and publish their online research guides. The course website is <http://sites.bu.edu/revolutionaryrussia>.

Students are 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/. Student research guides from other classes can be found at blogs.bu.edu/guidedhistory. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the page For Students on that site, as well as the many research guides already on the site.

Course Requirements

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

Two book reviews, 20%. You will write short analytical review essays for any two of the assigned readings (excepting those for September 18). Each essay should be a short two-page assessment of the book's argument, methodology, and evidence used. Ask yourself what kinds of questions the book attempts to answer, why, and how. Include at least two or three interesting questions you feel the book raises. Each review is due on the day of the book's discussion. If you are unhappy with either of your grades you can write a third and I will use your best two essays.

Seminar preparedness and participation, 30%. Attendance is required, but attendance alone is not enough. Students are expected to come to each class having read the assigned book and prepared some questions and to actively participate in discussion. Each student is also responsible for co-leading one seminar. On your day you and your partner should prepare a short oral presentation about the book we are to discuss. You should introduce the book to us along the lines of argument, methodology, and evidence and you should provide us with enough thoughtful questions to guide us through a lively discussion. For your presentation you are also required to create a small packet of pertinent primary sources for the class to read and discuss together. Below I have provided you with a number of possible places to look for these sources, but you are not limited to these anthologies and websites. You must send me a PDF of your primary sources –on the Tuesday before class (at the latest). I will make copies for the class and post it to our website.

Research project, 50%. The research project includes two parts: an online research guide and a seminar paper. We will talk about your research every week and you will receive detailed written instructions about the research and writing process. Students should choose a research topic by October 2. Your research guide is due November 6. The seminar paper is due on the last day of class, December 11.

All assignments should be completed independently and plagiarism from any source is unacceptable. 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/>

A Few Places to Look for Primary Sources

Katerina Clark et. al. eds., *Soviet Culture and Power: A History in Documents, 1917-1953* (Yale UP, 2007).

Jonathan Daly and Leonid Trofimov eds., *Russia in War and Revolution, 1914-1922: A Documentary History* (Hackett, 2009).

Mark Steinberg and Vladimir Khrustalev eds., *The Fall of the Romanovs: Political Dreams and Personal Struggles in a Time of Revolution* (Yale UP, 1997).

Mark Steinberg ed., *Voices of Revolution, 1917* (Yale UP, 2003).

Sheila Fitzpatrick and Yuri Slezkine eds., *In the Shadow of Revolution: Life Stories of Russian Women from 1917 to the Second World War* (Yale UP, 2000).

Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Structure of Soviet History: Essays and Documents* 2nd ed. (Oxford UP, 2013).

Robert Paul Browder and Alexander F. Kerensky eds., *The Russian Provisional Government: Documents* vols. 1-3 (Stanford UP, 1961).

Martin McCauley ed., *The Russian Revolution and the Soviet State: Documents* (MacMillan, 1975).

Robert Weinberg and Laurie Bernstein eds., *Revolutionary Russia: A History in Documents* (Oxford UP, 2011).

Jeffrey Brooks and Georgiy Chernyavskiy eds., *Lenin and the Making of the Soviet State: A Brief History with Documents* (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007).

www.soviethistory.org

www.marxists.org

www.russianarchives.com

Course Schedule

All assigned books have been ordered to the bookstore, with the exception of those for September 18.

September 4

Introduction to the course

September 11

Theodore Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia: Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1863-1914* (Northern Illinois UP, 1996).

September 18

Read one of the two books below and the article by Boris Kolonitskii, "‘Democracy’ in the Political Consciousness of the February Revolution," *Slavic Review* 57, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 95-106.

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution* 3rd ed. (Oxford UP, 2008) or Rex Wade, *The Russian Revolution, 1917* (Cambridge UP, 2000).

I highly recommend students purchase both of these books, as well as the following helpful reference: Acton, Cherniaev and Rosenberg eds., *Critical Companion to the Russian Revolution, 1914-1921* (Indiana UP, 1997).

September 25

Peter Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution: Russia's Continuum of Crisis, 1914-1921* (Harvard UP, 2002).

October 2

Research discussion – topics due

October 9

Frederick Corney, *Telling October: Memory and the Making of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Cornell UP, 2004).

October 16

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Cornell UP, 1992).

October 23

Katerina Clark, *Petersburg: Crucible of Cultural Revolution* (Harvard UP, 1998).

October 30

Isaac Babel, *Red Cavalry* (Norton, 2003).

November 6 – online research guide due

Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams* (Oxford UP, 1991).

November 13

Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Cornell UP, 2005).

November 20

Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (UC Press, 1997).

November 27 – Thanksgiving

December 4

Michael David-Fox, *Showcasing the Great Experiment: Cultural Diplomacy and Western Visitors to the Soviet Union, 1921-1941* (Oxford UP, 2011).

December 11

Research papers due