DESCRIPTION: This is an introductory lecture survey course on the history of Russia and the Soviet Union since 1917. It is open to all interested undergraduates, without prerequisite. The Soviet Union had a tremendous impact on world affairs in the twentieth century, and this course meets general education requirements both by virtue of its breadth and because it introduces students to key aspects of history as a discipline. Topics include the causes and course of the Russian Revolution and the political consolidation of communism; social, cultural, and economic change; Stalin’s “revolution from above”; Stalinist terror; the experience of the Second World War in the Soviet Union; the Cold War; the particular character of Soviet culture in the late Soviet period; the collapse of the USSR; and the first post-Soviet decade. In light of recent tensions between Russia and Ukraine, the course will devote particular attention to Ukrainian history as well as Russian history.

Course objectives: Students should come out of this course with knowledge of the major events in Russian, Soviet, and Ukrainian history, as listed above. They should be able to identify the various countries of the post-Soviet region on a map, and know something about the distinctive cultures of some of those countries. They should be able to analyze the causes of several major events, and gain a better understanding of how historians approach the issue of causality. They should be able to draw connections between different spheres of historical experience, such as economy, society, culture, politics, and foreign affairs. As this year’s course focuses more than usual on literary and personal narratives, students will also improve their ability to place such texts in historical context and analyze them as sources.

Grades will be based on a midterm (20%), a final exam (35%), and two papers (15% and 30%). Both the midterm and the final will include factual sections and essays. The final will be cumulative. Active, thoughtful participation in class may raise your grade by a couple of percentage points (e.g. from 82 to 84). Failure to take one of the exams or to turn in a paper, plagiarism on either of the papers, or a failing grade on the final exam will mean an automatic F in the course. Grades will be recorded on Blackboard.

Papers: The first paper will be based primarily on assigned readings, and you will be asked to write and submit it through Blackboard. The second paper (6-7 pages) is a small research paper. Assignments will be posted on line.

Required readings available at the bookstore:

Geoffrey Hosking, *The First Socialist Society*
Fyodor Gladkov, *Cement*
Miron Dolot, *Execution by Hunger*
Natalya Baranskaya, *A Week Like Any Other*
Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted*
CLASS TOPICS


M Mar. 31 Origins of the revolution
W Apr. 2 The “February Revolution” and its aftermath
F Apr. 4 Lenin and the Bolsheviks: ideology, leadership, policies, methods


M Apr. 7 The Russian Civil War: armies, terror, public support
W Apr. 9 Revolutionary dreams: art, culture, and utopianism in the Russian Revolution
F Apr. 11 The rough transition: famine, inflation, and rebellion, 1921-22. Discuss Cement.

Week 3. NEP. Reading: finish Cement; First Socialist Society, 92-148.

M Apr. 14 Class and gender in revolutionary Russia. Finish discussing Cement.
W Apr. 16 Politics, economy, and institutions of the 1920s; conclude revolutionary period.
F Apr. 18 Centralization and diversity: Central Asia in the 1920s and 1930s. First paper due.

Week 4. Stalin’s “revolution from above.” Reading: First Socialist Society, 149-82, 205-26; Miron Dolot, Execution by Hunger (all)

M Apr. 21 Collectivization: the triple assault on peasant life. Discuss Execution by Hunger.
W Apr. 23 Famine: a Ukrainian genocide? Finish discussing Execution by Hunger.
F Apr. 25 Soviet society in the 1930s (prepare First Socialist Society 205-26).

Week 5. The Great Terror. First Socialist Society, 183-205, 226-60; Nikolai Bukharin's letter to Stalin; Nikolai Ezhov's letter to Stalin (both on Blackboard; from Oleg V. Naumov and J. Arch Getty, The Road to Terror).

M Apr. 28 The Great Terror: from the Kirov murder to the decimation of the Soviet elite. Discuss the letters by Bukharin and Ezhov.
W Apr. 30 Mass operations and Soviet ethnic cleansing
F May 2 Midterm exam. Bring an exam booklet.

Week 6. The Great Patriotic War. Reading: First Socialist Society, 261-325. Start working on research papers!

M May 5 Stalin's foreign policy, the German invasion, and the Holocaust in the Soviet Union
W May 7  How the Red Army won

F May 9  Soviet society during and after the war; postwar Stalinism

**Week 7. Khrushchev’s Thaw.** Reading: *First Socialist Society*, 326-402; Andrei Sakharov et al., “Manifesto II” (on Blackboard).

M May 12  The Cold War from Stalin to Khrushchev

W May 14  The "Thaw" in Soviet culture

F May 16  Andrei Sakharov and the dissident movement. Discuss Sakharov, “Manifesto II.”


M May 19  Environmental degradation: a Soviet legacy

W May 21  Women in the Soviet Union. Discuss *A Week Like Any Other*.

F May 23  Paradoxes of the Brezhnev period. **Second paper due in class.**


M May 26. **Memorial Day -- no class**

W May 28  Perestroika and glasnost'. Discuss *Armageddon Averted*, 1-86.

F May 30  The collapse of the USSR. Discuss *Armageddon Averted*, 86-112.

**Week 10. After communism.** Reading: *Armageddon Averted*, 113-220.

M June 2  Russia in the Yeltsin era: a flawed transition. Discuss *Armageddon Averted*, 113-68.

W June 4  Post-Soviet disorder: Georgia, Tadjikistan, Chechnya. Finish *Armageddon Averted*.

F June 6  Geopolitics and the Russian diaspora today

**Final exam: 3:15 p.m., Tuesday, June 10.** Bring two green books.