Villanova University

Department of History

HIS 8603/ Russian Revolutions

Thursdays, 5:20-7:20

Bartley 027A

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**Course Description**:

2017 marks the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolutions. Although revolutionary promises proved more difficult to realize than most Russians then imagined, in 1917 the revolutions seemed to have the potential to transform not only Russia but also the world. This course seeks to put the Russian Revolutions into context. We will explore the revolutionary period of 1905 through 1922 in order to understand more fully the hopes, difficulties, failings, and tragedies of the revolution. Through secondary sources and seminar discussions, we will examine the origins, contours, and consequences of the Russian Revolutions.

Some of the topics that we will explore include the role of violence in the revolution and revolutionary movements; the details and significance of the fall of Tsarism; the role played by various interest groups in the revolution; the contours of how the revolution affected various constituencies including women, religious groups, ethnic groups, and socio-economic classes; the effects of the revolution on popular and revolutionary culture; the political machinations of the Soviet leadership; the use of monuments, myths, and memory in the revolutionary mission; nationality and colonial issues; and the reaction of the worldwide community to the Soviet Revolution. The final project for this course will be a research paper that requires the use of primary source materials (in English).

**Course Objectives**: Students will gain an in-depth understanding of both the Russian Revolutions and the Historiography of the Revolutionary period. Students will work with primary and secondary source materials to produce an original research paper on the topic of their choosing.

**Assignments and Grades**

1. Seminar Participation: (30%) Your participation is critical to the success of this course. It is vital that you come to class prepared **every** week. I expect every student to attend each class session and actively and thoughtfully participate. At this level, discussions should not constitute a question and answer session between the professor and the students. Instead, our weekly meetings should involve analysis and questioning on the part of all participants. You should not expect that just saying something is enough to earn an A for seminar participation. Your contributions to our class discussions should convey serious thought, analysis and insight and demonstrate a sound grasp of the assigned sources. Please see grading rubrics at the end of the syllabus for more clarification.
2. Book Reviews: (15% each for a total of 30%) Students must prepare a review of **two** of the assigned monographs. These reviews need to be between 750 and 1000 words and follow the guidelines on writing book reviews that I will distribute. These book reviews must be turned in at the beginning of the class for which that particular monograph is assigned. (Please note that you cannot write a review of Doctor Zhivago)
3. Bibliographies and Statement of Research Question: (10%) Students must identify and describe a research question that they plan to explore and develop a detailed bibliography that will be used in this research. A paragraph length description of this research project along with a detailed and properly formatted bibliography must be turned in on March 16.
4. Research Papers: (30%) Students will write a 12-15 page original paper based on their research and analysis of primary and secondary sources. Some collections of primary sources can be found at alphahistory.com; soviethistory.msu.edu; Marxists.org; Eurodocs.lib.byu.edu; and <https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc/explorefurther/digital/russia/>. This is not an exhaustive list. There are rich collections of periodicals and newspapers available in English depending on the topic. Memoirs, published diaries, and published correspondence are also sources to examine. Research Papers are due on May 4.

**Required Materials**

No e-readers/laptops will be admitted in class. Research on teaching and learning has raised concerns about lower retention with e-readers.

1. **Books**

* Frederick C. Corney, *Telling October: Memory and the Making of the Bolshevik Revolution*
* Orlando Figes, *A People’s Tragedy: The Russian Revolution 1891-1924*
* Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution, 1917-1932 5-1917*
* Wendy Goldman, *Women, the State, and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917-1936*
* Dominic Lieven, *The End of Tsarist Russia: The March to World War I and Revolution*
* Lars Lih, *Lenin*
* Semion Lyandres, *The Fall of Tsarism: Untold Stories of the February Revolution*
* Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*
* Boris Pasternak, *Doctor Zhivago*
* Alexander Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks in Power: The First Year of Soviet Rule in Petrograd*
* Rochelle Ruthchild, *Equality and Revolution: Women’s Rights in the Russian Empire, 1905-1917*
* Rex Wade, *Russian Revolution, 1917*

1. **Articles, Chapters and Essays**

* Alexandra Kollontai, “Communism and the Family” at Marxists.org
* Excerpts from V.I. Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?* (Available at Modern History Sourcebook)
* Excerpts from V.I. Lenin, *State and Revolution* (Available at Modern History Sourcebook)
* V.I. Lenin, “May Day” Available on Blackboard.
* Arno Mayer, *The Furies: Violence and Terror in the French and Russian Revolutions* Available through Falvey from Jstor EBooks
* S.A. Smith, “The Historiography of the Russian Revolution 100 Years On,” *Kritika,* 16 (Fall 2015): 733-749. Available through Falvey’s Article Databases
* Ronald Grigor Suny, “Revision and Retreat in the Historiography of 1917: Social History and Its Critics” *Russian Review*  53 (April 1994): 165-182. Available through Falvey’s Article Databases
* Leon Trotsky, “The Proletariat and Revolution” and “The Events in St. Petersburg” Both available on Blackboard
* Max Weber “The Vocation of Politics” from *The Essential Weber: A Reader* (BB)

1. **Useful Databases**

* ABSEES (Falvey Database)
* Alphahistory.com on Russian Revolution
* Eurodocs (Through Falvey – though most are in Russia)
* Historical Abstracts (Falvey Database)
* JSTOR (Falvey Database)
* Marxists.org
* Russian Revolution and Britain documents at University of Warwick site
* Soviethistory.msu.edu

**Class Schedule/Assigned Readings**

January 19 Introduction to the Russian Revolution

Reading: S.A. Smith, “The Historiography of the Russian Revolution 100 Years On” *Kritika* 16 (Fall 2015): 733-749*.* Ronald GrigorSuny, “Revision and Retreat in the Historiography of 1917: Social History and Its Critics” *Russian Review* 53 (April 1994): 165-182

January 26 Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*

Marx, *Communist Manifesto*; Trotsky, “The Proletariat and Revolution” and Trotsky, “The Events in St. Petersburg” (Trotsky articles on BB)

February 2 Dominic Lieven, *The End of Tsarist Russia: The March to World War I and Revolution*

Excerpts from Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?* at <http://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/Halsall/mod/1902lenin.asp>

Excerpts from V.I. Lenin, *State and Revolution* at <http://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/Halsall/mod/lenin-staterev.asp>

February 9 Rex Wade, *Russian Revolution, 1917*

Introduction through Chapter 3 of Mayer, *The Furies: Violence and Terror in the French and Russian Revolution* (Available through Jstor ebooks)

February 16 Orlando Figes, *A People’s Tragedy: Russian Revolution 1891-1924*, Parts 1 through 3

February 22 Recommended but not required: Viewing of the film Агония (Agoniya) at 7:00pm

February 23 Lars Lih, *Lenin*

March 2 Alexander Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks in Power: The First Year of Soviet Rule in Petrograd*; Max Weber “The Vocation of Politics” from *The Essential Weber: A Reader* (BB)

March 9 No class – Spring Break

March 16 Showing of Eisenstein, *October*

**Research topics and Bibliographies Due**

Lenin, “May Day” (BB); Additional Article TBA

March 23 Frederick Corney, *Telling October: Memory and the Making of the Bolshevik Revolution*

March 30 Rochelle Ruthchild, *Equality in Revolution: Women’s Rights in the Russian Empire, 1905-1917;* Alexandra Kollontai, “Communism and the Family” at Marxists.org

April 6 Wendy Goldman, *Women, the State, and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917-1936*

April 13 No class – Easter Break

April 20 1:00 “How an Uprising Became a Revolution: Rethinking the Politics of Russia’s 1917 February Revolution” - Lecture by Professor Semion Lyandres, IDEA Accelerator

5:20 Guest Professor Semion Lyandres for our Graduate Seminar

Semion Lyandres, *The Fall of Tsarism: Untold Stories of the February Revolution*

April 27 Orlando Figes, *A People’s Tragedy: Russian Revolution 1891-1924*, Part 4

Article: TBA

May 4 **Research Papers Due at the Start of Class**

Boris Pasternak, *Doctor Zhivago*

**Policy on Recommendation Letters**

**Please be advised that I can only write a recommendation letter for students applying to Ph.D. programs who earn at least an A- in my courses. If you do request a recommendation letter, please be prepared to give me a detailed list of programs, contacts, deadlines, and a completed personal statement.**

Grading Rubrics for Graduate Courses in History

A = exceptional; well beyond mastery and individual insights; originality; polished prose; consistent, substantive participation and intellectual leadership

A- = outstanding: mastery of the materials, issues, and questions that inform the course as a whole; insightful; consistent execution; good clear prose; substantial participation

B+ = very good: a solid grasp of the materials, issues, and questions that inform the course as a whole; clear prose with some awkwardness; frequent useful participation

B = good: an understanding of most of the materials, issues, and questions that inform the course as a whole; inconsistent or awkward prose with writing errors; sporadic uneven participation

B- = adequate: an uneven understanding of materials, issues and questions that inform the course as whole; weak prose; rare or poor participation

C+= passing but inadequate: superficial understanding of materials, issues and questions that inform the course as whole; ungrammatical prose with little coherence; no participation

C = poor: not up to graduate standards; faulty understanding of materials, issues and questions that inform the course as whole; seriously deficient prose with no coherence; no participation

F = failure.

Graduate Paper Grading

Rubrics for an A:

Prose: clear, precise, grammatically correct, error-free, and pleasing formal English.

Argument: innovative, orderly, coherent, well/beautifully constructed, skillful marshalling of evidence, clear, clearly stated thesis, and persuasive.

Analysis: goes beyond description or narrative; addresses issues that transcend the particular focus of the paper; demonstrates an understanding of the literature on the topic; and penetrates beneath the surface meaning of the sources.

Research: uses a sufficient number and range of appropriate primary sources [where applicable], consults and applies the pertinent secondary literature, and cites accurately the sources using a standard style sheet acceptable to the professor.

Rubrics for an A-:

Prose: clear, precise, grammatically correct, formal English

Argument: orderly, coherent, carefully constructed, skillful marshaling of evidence, usually clear, clearly stated thesis, and persuasive.

Analysis: goes beyond description or narrative, complete and thorough treatment of the paper topic, demonstrates an acquaintance with the literature on the topic; and penetrates beneath the surface meaning of the sources.

Research: uses a sufficient number and range of appropriate primary sources, consults the pertinent secondary literature, and cites accurately the sources using a standard style sheet acceptable to the professor.

Rubrics for a B+:

Prose: clear but uneven, grammatically correct, formal English

Argument: coherent, organized, marshals evidence, some obscurity, not brought forward to its conclusion, interesting but not completely persuasive.

Analysis: sometimes lapses into mere narrative or description, missed opportunity/ities for analysis of evidence presented, a substantive treatment of the paper topic, demonstrates an awareness of the literature on the topic ; often penetrates beneath the surface meaning of the sources.

Research: uses a fair number and range of primary sources, consulted some of the pertinent secondary literature, and generally cites accurately the sources using a standard style sheet acceptable to professor.

Rubrics for a B:

Prose: occasionally unclear, grammatically unsure, sometimes colloquial English

Argument: not fully coherent, sometimes disorganized, evidence ineffectively employed, somewhat obscure, not particularly persuasive

Analysis: frequently lapses into mere narrative or description, an incomplete treatment of the paper topic, demonstrates a partial awareness of the literature on the topic; sometimes penetrates beneath the surface meaning of the sources

Research: uses a limited number and range of primary sources, consulted few of the pertinent secondary works on the topic, and cites unevenly the sources using a standard style sheet acceptable to professor

Rubrics for a B-:

Prose: frequently unclear, weak grasp of grammar, often colloquial English

Argument: sometimes incoherent, somewhat disorganized, insufficient evidence, repeatedly obscure, unpersuasive

Analysis: relies mainly on narrative or description, superficial treatment of paper topic, demonstrates a fragmentary awareness of the literature on the topic; rarely penetrates beneath the surface meaning of sources

Research: uses the minimum number and range of primary sources, consulted one or two secondary works on the topic, and sometimes cites incorrectly or fails to cite the sources using a standard style sheet acceptable to professor

Rubrics for a C+/C:

Prose: basically unclear, numerous grammatical errors, colloquial English

Argument: often incoherent, often disorganized, insufficient and ineffectively employed evidence often obscure, unpersuasive

Analysis: relies exclusively on narrative or description, reliance on quotations in place of analysis, misguided treatment of paper topic, no awareness of literature on the topic; does not penetrate beneath the surface meaning of sources

Research: Uses fewer primary sources than necessary, relied too much upon secondary sources or, alternatively, neglected to contextualize the primary sources with any secondary sources, and cites incorrectly or fails to cite the sources.

Class Participation Grading

A Always prepared; consistent, but not overbearing, participation; raises level of discussion with questions, contributions that go beyond the immediate focus on the readings; relates material to previous discussions and texts; builds upon other student contributions; displays intellectual acuity in seeing to heart of issues raised by readings; proposes ways in which author’s conclusions might be advanced, critiqued.

A- Always prepared; contributes regularly without prompting; actively engaged listener,

building upon other student contributions; displays critical thinking skills in treatment of the readings, but stops just short of widening their implications or advancing author’s conclusions.

B+ Always prepared; contributes occasionally without prompting; thoughtful comments

when called upon; active listener.

B Regularly prepared; rarely volunteers, but occasional thoughtful comments when called

upon; active listener.

B- Sometimes prepared; rarely volunteers; minimal answers when called upon, that reveal a lack of any substantive analytical appreciation of the topic.

C+ Seldom prepared; never volunteers; minimal answers when called upon.

C Minimal answers reveal lack of preparation; never volunteers; rambling or tangential

Comments when called upon.

F No evidence of preparation; excessive absences; disruptive or no participation.