Course Introduction / Objectives

This is an advanced course for students wishing to immerse themselves in the history of one of the most remarkable, and terrible, phenomena of the twentieth century. The Soviet experiment began with utopian goals and degenerated into quite possibly the greatest example of state-organised mass murder the world has ever seen. This course is concerned with the recovery from that experience, and will therefore commence with what seemed at the time to be the high point of the Soviet tide -- 1945, as the Red Army paraded victoriously through the streets of Moscow, casting the banners of the defeated Nazis at the feet of the Great Leader, the Vozhd, Josef Stalin. We will then trace the course of the postwar history of the USSR to its collapse in 1991, and we shall also examine the fortunes of the successor states of the Soviet Union through the quarter-century of their post-Soviet existence. We shall ask some questions along the way: after the Great Patriotic War, was there a genuine impulse among the political elite to improve the lives of the peoples of the Russian empire, or was the postwar Soviet period simply an exercise in the application of political power for power's own sake? In what ways did the implementation of communist policy reflect the ideology that was espoused, and in what ways did policy depart from that ideology? Was the collapse of the Soviet Union primarily caused by internal or external factors -- indeed, was it even "inevitable" as some commentators have suggested? How have the peoples that experienced the collapse of the USSR rebuilt their civil societies? Can they maintain stability and prosper in the future? In this course we shall adopt a mixed lecture and seminar approach to examine these and other crucial historical questions that arise from the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. The seminar component of this course is not an afterthought: it is co-equal with lectures and it will be an extraordinarily valuable exercise for you as students to examine and reflect upon the events -- some heroic, others tragic -- that serve to form the history of what was the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. As students you will:

- Understand the linkages between power, ideology, and centralised authority that characterised the postwar Soviet Union
- Understand the fundamental nature of Soviet communism and its impact upon the peoples of the Russian empire from the Great Patriotic War to the USSR's collapse and after
• Appreciate the peculiarities of the Russian, Soviet, and Western historiography of the USSR as a phenomenon and historical process
• Uncover the reasons behind the collapse of the USSR
• Appreciate the difficult roads still being navigated by the successor states of the USSR even now, a quarter century after the state's collapse
• Understand the issues and challenges that now face the peoples of the former Soviet Union as they seek independent futures for themselves in the early twenty-first century
• Learn how to craft sophisticated techniques of documentary research, analysis, and communication and to apply those techniques to the study and investigation of Soviet and post-Soviet history

**Acadia Advantage:** Acadia Advantage technology that will be employed in this course includes the standard employment of PowerPoint presentations in lectures, the use of ACORN to post readings for students' use in seminars and elsewhere, the utilisation of a variety of internet sources to explore some of the more contentious issues in Soviet history, and the use of e-mail for communications (note that I will endeavour to answer all emails within 24 hours of receipt; usually less if I'm in my office when they arrive).

**Disability Access:** If you are a student with a documented disability who anticipates needing accommodations in this course, please inform me after you meet with Kathy O’Rourke (902-585-1823) disability.access@acadiau.ca or Abu Kamara (902-585-1291) abu.kamara@acadiau.ca in Accessibility Services, Student Resource Centre, lower level of the Fountain Commons.

**Aid with Written Work:** Your best defence against unpleasant surprises with your written work is to maintain contact with your professors in all your courses. This way you can ensure that you know exactly what they're looking for, and you may also be able to show them samples (drafts) of the assignment that you're working on and receive feedback. The Writing Centre also offers free help to all students wishing to improve their writing skills. To book a one-on-one appointment with a writing tutor, click below:

[writingcentre.acadiau.ca/writing-tutorials.html](http://writingcentre.acadiau.ca/writing-tutorials.html)

To see which helpful presentations and workshops you might want to attend this year, click here:

[writingcentre.acadiau.ca/workshops-and-presentations.html](http://writingcentre.acadiau.ca/workshops-and-presentations.html)

Books and journal articles from the library can improve your assignments, labs, and papers. Visit the library at http://library.acadiau.ca. View resources specifically selected for your course at http://libguides.acadiau.ca/history and contact the History Librarian, Britanie Wentzell (britanie.wentzell@acadiau.ca) or 1403 for research help.

**Textbooks:** There are two core textbooks for this course; these are supplemented by weekly readings that are posted on the course's ACORN page. Familiarity with both texts and the readings will be essential for your performance in this course. You will be reading a significant amount on a weekly basis in order to develop and maintain the required level of participation for the course. This is not a course that will allow you to skip lectures, readings, and seminars and expect to pass at the end. The textbooks are:


As noted above, you will find additional readings organised on a weekly basis on the course's ACORN page. These are not supplemental, or optional, readings. They complement the textbook readings and form the core materials for discussion at our weekly seminars.
Assignments and Grade Weighting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Grade Weight</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country Presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>October 11th and 13th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Essay</td>
<td>30%, as follows:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal</td>
<td>(5%)</td>
<td>October 4th, in class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>(25%)</td>
<td>November 27th, on ACORN by midnight</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminar Participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Various Dates Through the Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>During Fall Term Exam Period, Date T.B.A.</td>
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Brief Assignment Descriptions

1. COUNTRY PRESENTATION: During the first week of class you will organise yourselves into pairs and will randomly draw one of the successor states of the USSR (there are 15, including Russia). You will be responsible for researching the state, and presenting a 5-minute presentation dealing with the major elements of the state's experience within the USSR, and its post-Soviet experience. Questions such as its transition to democracy, its economic development, record on human rights and individual freedom, place in the global international order, etc., etc. should all be elements presented by you to your colleagues in class. The presentations themselves will be held in the classes of 11 and 13 October. The presentation, together with your presentation notes, will be the basis upon which you are graded, and the assignment is worth 15% of your course grade overall. You will therefore be required to submit a set of your presentation notes for grading, on the day of your presentation. Each member of the presenting pair will receive the same grade.

2. SEMINARS: Because this is considered to be a senior course, and since it promises to maintain a fairly limited enrollment, we have an excellent opportunity for class seminars and discussion groups. Therefore on most Fridays (see the schedule below for detailed dates) we shall have a class fully devoted to discussions that will be based upon primary and secondary sources that relate to the history of Russia and the Soviet Union from the end of the Great Patriotic War to the present. The sources upon which the seminars are based can all be found on the course ACORN page. You are expected to read the sources in advance and to analyse and -- hopefully -- discuss with one another the implications of the sources in advance of the seminars. Of course, you are also expected to attend the seminars as well, and to participate in the discussions! Your entire seminar mark will be based on the quality of your participation; there is no written component that will be graded by me. I realise that some of you may be nervous about participating in seminars. If you feel this way, you are most welcome to meet with me during my office hours to discuss the sources and their implications in advance of the seminar.

3. RESEARCH ESSAY: Please see the separate essay description sheet located on the course ACORN page for a detailed discussion of the research essay.

4. FINAL EXAMINATION: The final examination will be held in the Fall Term examination period, date to be announced. It will consist of essay questions only. It is worth 30% of your course grade. I will provide more information about the final in due course.

Academic Integrity and Dishonesty

I refer you to the section “Academic Integrity” to be found on p. 58 in the “Academic Policy and Regulations” section of the Acadia University Calendar, 2017-2018. You must be familiar with these guidelines to be enrolled in this course. Plagiarism is also viewed seriously by the Department of History and Classics: it is departmental policy that plagiarised work will receive a grade of F (zero), with no departmental appeal possible.
In especially bad cases more severe penalties, including a course grade of F (zero) and/or a recommendation for expulsion from the university, are possible. If the transgression warrants it, I will not hesitate to seek the application of such a penalty. Please note that under no circumstances will I tolerate a breach of academic integrity: transgressions such as cheating, plagiarism, or actively aiding another student in such an act will result in -- at the very least -- a grade of zero on the offending assignment.

Having said this, I also want you to know that for many of you issues of plagiarism are both worrisome and confusing. (Cheating is an entirely different and much more simple offence; if you don't know you're cheating, then there are problems far beyond mere academic integrity involved.) In order to alleviate the plagiarism problems, you should certainly review the superb resources put together by the staff at the Vaughan Library

http://library.acadiau.ca/sites/default/files/library/tutorials/plagiarism/)

and you should complete the online "You Quote it, You Note it!" tutorial that they have prepared. Paying attention to these resources will ensure that you will be able to avoid the various plagiaristic pitfalls that exist. (It also means that, if you do plagiarise, the defence of ignorance will not be available.) In any event, it all boils down to the best defence possible, thus: **IF IN DOUBT, PROVIDE A SOURCE!!!**

**Lecture Schedule**

**Week 1 (Sep 06-08): Course welcome, discussion of assignments in detail, overview of the object of our study, Russia and the Soviet Union**

**Week 2 (Sep 11-15): The Burden of History**
Readings: Lovell, "Introduction"; Ostrovsky, "Prologue"
Seminar: Remembrance and Ignorance (ACORN Week 2 Folder)

**Week 3 (Sep 18-22): The Great Patriotic War and After**
Readings: Lovell, Ch. 2 (20-34); Ch. 3 (69-74); Ch. 4 (109-116)
Seminar: The Nature of War, the Pravation of Peace (ACORN Week 3 Folder)

**Week 4 (Sep 25-29): International Relations, Eastern Europe, and the Origins of the Cold War**
Readings: Lovell, Ch. 8 (248-258)
Seminar: Who Started the Cold War? (ACORN Week 4 Folder)

**Week 5 (Oct 02-06): The Khrushchev Era and After: Destalinisation, Thaw, and Re-Freeze**
Readings: Lovell, Ch. 2 (34-54); Ch. 4 (116-131)
Seminar: Was the Thaw a Genuine Impulse or a Political Manoeuvre? (ACORN Week 5 Folder)

Oct. 6 - Fall-Term Study Day; No Class

**Week 6 (Oct 09-13): Presentation Week**

Oct. 9 - Thanksgiving; No Class

Readings: Lovell, Ch. 5 (138-169); Ch. 9 (293-310)
Seminar: Going Against the Grain - Opposition Under Brezhnev (ACORN Week 7 Folder)

**Week 8 (Oct 23-27): The Weakness at its Heart, Part 1 - Nationalities and Governance**
Readings: Lovell, Ch. 6 (176-195); Ch. 7 (205-235)
Seminar: The USSR - An Ungovernable Entity? (ACORN Week 8 Folder)
Week 9 (Oct 30-Nov 03): The Weakness at its Heart, Part 2 - Agriculture and the Economy
Readings: Lovell, Ch. 3 (74-93)
Seminar: Why Did Soviet Agriculture Fail? (ACORN Week 9 Folder)

Week 10 (Nov 6-10): Gorbachev's Revolution
Readings: Ostrovsky, Chapters 1-3
Nov. 10 - Fall-Term Study Day; No Class

Week 11 (Nov 13-17): Seminar on Collapse of the USSR
Seminar: Was it Pushed? The Collapse of the USSR (ACORN Week 11 Folder)
Monday 13 November is Remembrance Day Holiday; Wednesday 15 November is a Fall-Term Study Day; no class.

Week 12 (Nov 20-24): The Chaotic Nineties
Readings: Ostrovsky, Chapters 4-5
Seminar: The Environmental Hangover (ACORN Week 12 Folder)

Week 13 (Nov 27-Dec 01): Quo Vadis? Russia Under Putin and Medvedev
Readings: Ostrovsky, Chapters 6-7
Seminar: A Very Modern Authoritarianism (ACORN Week 13 Folder)

Week 14 (Dec 04-06): The Return of Russia, the Return of the Leader: Contemporary Russia Under Putin
Readings: Ostrovksy, "Epilogue: Aerial Combat"
Dec. 6th: Seminar: Russia's Place in the Twenty-First Century? (ACORN Week 14 Folder)