

HISTORY 236
FROM KYIV RUS' TO THE FALL OF THE USSR
David Brandenberger



"We, grandsons of Suvorov and sons of Chapaev, are fighting with all the strength we have." (Kukryniksy, 1941)

This course considers the history of eastern Europe and Eurasia by surveying a thousand years of regional history from Kyiv Rus' and Muscovy through the Russian empire and the USSR. Although the course's units are arranged in chronological order, they are intentionally diverse and varied. Social, cultural and political history flank diplomatic and dynastic concerns. Empire, nation, class and gender play major thematic roles in this course, as do propaganda, ideology and historiography. Finally, the course's readings are structured along interdisciplinary lines to acquaint students with the literature and arts of the period.

Office hours are Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:30-2 and by appointment. Don't hesitate to take advantage of email to clarify basic course information with the instructor.

COORDINATES
Humanities 313 / dbranden@richmond.edu / (804) 289-8667
Office hours: MW 10:30-12 and by appointment

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS
 (*reading on Blackboard; †reading on online library databases)

WEEK ONE:

Monday

“The Martyrdom of Boris and Gleb,” in *Medieval Russia’s Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*, ed. Serge A. Zenkovsky (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1974), 101-105*

“Ilya of Murom and Nightingale the Robber,” in *Sixty Folk-Tales from Exclusively Slavonic Sources*, ed. A. H. Wratislaw (London: Eliot Stock, 1889), 167-171*

Library assignment distributed

Wednesday

Vladimir Volkoff, *Vladimir the Russian Viking* (Woodstock: Overlook Press, 1986), xiii-xxiii, 105-181*

in class: excerpts from *The Primary Chronicle: Laurentian Text*, eds. Samuel Hazzard Cross et al (Cambridge: Medieval Academy of America, 1953), 95-98, 110*

WEEK TWO:

Monday

“Kievan Rus and the Mongols,” in Geoffrey Hosking, *Russian History: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 1-16†

Edward Acton, *Russia: The Present and the Past* (London: Longman, 1986), 1-16*

Wednesday

“Our Country in the Distant Past,” “The Kiev State” and “Eastern Europe under the Rule of the Mongol Conquerors,” in *Short History of the USSR/Stalin’s Usable Past*, ed. David Brandenberger [unpublished ms., 2019], 105-136*

WEEK THREE:

Monday

“The Formation of the Muscovite State,” in Hosking, *Russian History: A Very Short Introduction*, 17-36†

Wednesday

“Rise of the Russian National State,” “Expansion of the Russian State” and “Peasant Wars and Revolts of the Oppressed Peoples in the 17th Century,” in *Short History of the USSR*, 137-168*

Friday

Paper #1 due

WEEK FOUR:

Monday:

“The Russian Empire and Europe,” in Hosking, *Russian History: A Very Short Introduction*, 37-59†

in class: “Peter the Great and the Rise of Russia, 1682-1725” [accounts by Gilbert Burnet, Johann Georg von Korb, Alexander Gordon and Jean Rousset de Missy], in *Internet Modern History Sourcebook*
<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/petergreat.asp>

Wednesday

“Russia in the 18th Century: The Empire of Landlords and Merchants” and “Tsarist Russia—the Gendarme of Europe,” in *Short History of the USSR*, 169-207*

Friday

Library Assignment due

WEEK FIVE:

Monday

In-class debate on the contours of Hosking’s and Shestakov’s treatment of medieval/premodern history

Wednesday

Nikolai Gogol, “Nevsky Prospect,” in *Plays and Peterburg Tales*, trans. Christopher English (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 3-36 <https://archive.org/details/petersburgtalesm00gogo>

WEEK SIX:

Monday

Ivan Turgenev, “Khor and Kalinych,” in *Sketches from a Hunter’s Album* (New York: Penguin Classics), 15-28*

Olga Tian-Shanskaia, “Infanticide, Emotion, Sexual Disorder and Food,” in *Village Life in Late Tsarist Russia*, ed. David Ransel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 95-115*

Maxim Gorky, “On the Russian Peasantry,” *Journal of Peasant Studies* 4:1 (1976): 12-27*

in class: excerpts from Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (Boston: John P. Jewett, 1852) <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/203/203-h/203-h.htm>

Wednesday, September 29

“The Responsibilities and Dangers of Empire,” in Hosking, *Russian History: A Very Short Introduction*, 60-70†

Mikhail Lermontov, “Book I: Bela,” in *A Hero of Our Time*, trans. J. H. Wisdom et al (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1916) 3-93 <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.b5296851&view=1up&seq=7>

WEEK SEVEN:

Monday

“Reform and Revolution,” in Hosking, *Russian History: A Very Short Introduction*, 71-83†

“The Growth of Capitalism in Tsarist Russia,” in *Short History of the USSR*, 208-232*

Wednesday

“Reform and Revolution,” Hosking, *Russian History: A Very Short Introduction*, 83-96†

“The First Bourgeois Revolution in Russia,” in *Short History of the USSR*, 233-257*

WEEK EIGHT:

Monday

Fall Break

Wednesday

In-class debate on the contours of Hosking’s and Shestakov’s treatments of the early modern period

WEEK NINE:

Monday

Konstantin Pobedonostsev, "The Great Falsehood of Our Time," in *Reflections of a Russian Statesman* (London: Grant Richards, 1898), 32-58

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nnc2.ark:/13960/t02z2g952&view=1up&seq=44>

Dominic Lieven, "Autocratic Government," in *Nicholas II: Emperor of all the Russias* (London: Pimlico, 1994), 102-131*

Wednesday

Peter Durnovo, "Memorandum to Nicholas II," in *Readings in Russian Civilization*, ed. Thomas Riha, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 2: 465-478*

WEEK TEN:

Monday

"The Second Bourgeois Revolution in Russia" and "The Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia," in *Short History of the USSR*, 258-280*

Tuesday—film screening (Youtube.com)

October, dir. S. Eisenstein (Sovkino, 1927), 100 min <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XSvJHxmPtY>

Wednesday

[Documents on the October 1917 Revolution], in *The Russian Revolution*, ed. Ronald Kowalski (New York: Routledge, 1997), 80-98*

WEEK ELEVEN:

Monday

Aleksandr Blok, "The Twelve" (1918), in *The Twelve and Other Poems* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 141-161*

in class: excerpts from *Time of Troubles: the Diary of Iurii Vladimirovich Got'e* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988)*

Wednesday

"The Soviet Union's Turbulent Rise," in Hosking, *Russian History: A Very Short Introduction*, 97-111†
optional: "The Turn to Peaceful Labour. Economic Restoration of the Country," in *Short History of the USSR*, 302-309*

WEEK TWELVE:

Monday

Hiroaki Kuromiya, *Stalin* (New York: Longman, 2005), 101-128*

"Points of View [by Andre Barbusse, Bouris Sourvarine, Lev Trotsky, Eugene Lyons, J. T. Murphy, Isaac Deutscher, Anthony Edens]," in *Stalin*, ed. T. H. Rigby (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1966), 93-108*

Wednesday

"USSR is the Land of Victorious Socialism," in *Short History of the USSR*, 310-340*

WEEK THIRTEEN:

Monday

Richard Stites and Catherine Evtukhov, "The Soviet Homeland Defended: World War II (1939-1945)," in *A History of Russia Since 1880* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2004), 388-405*

in class: Konstantin Simonov, "Smolensk Roads," in *Mass Culture in Soviet Russia*, eds. Richard Stites and James Von Geldern (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 336-337*

Wednesday

Aleksei Tolstoi, "The Russian Character," in *Russkii kharakter: rasskazy sovetskikh pisatelei* [*Russian Character: Tales by Soviet Writers*] (Moscow: Russky Yazyk, 1987), 152-169*

Friday

Paper #2 due

WEEK FOURTEEN:

Monday

In-class debate over the contours of Hosking's and Shestakov's treatments of the Stalin period

Wednesday

No class

WEEK FIFTEEN:

Monday

"The Soviet Union: Triumph, Decline and Fall," in Hosking, *Russian History: A Very Short Introduction*, 112-130†

Wednesday

Victor Pelevin, "Sleep," in *The Werewolf Problem in Central Russia* (New York: New Directions, 2010), 59-79*

Nina Andreeva, "I cannot forsake my principles," *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, March 13, 1988

<https://phalanx.niceboard.com/t513-i-cannot-forsake-my-principles>

FINALS PERIOD:

Monday

Paper #3 due