History 200: Russia and America

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Fall 2016                          Office: 4125 Humanities
Fridays 11-12:55                    Office phone: 263-1783
Office Hours: Fridays 1:30-2:30 and by appointment

This introductory seminar will look at Russian and American engagement from the late 19th century through the present. It will focus on diplomatic relations, cultural relations, economic relations, and other forms of Russian and American engagement. Themes will include: American views of the Bolshevik Revolution; Henry Ford in Russia; America's response to Stalinism; the Cold War; McCarthyism; Khrushchev's visit to America; Detente; the 1980 Olympics; and Soviet responses to American popular culture. Students will look at some of the historical reasons for anti-American sentiment in Russia and examine claims that we are now in the midst of a new "Cold War." Students will read memoirs, speeches, political position papers, and other (English-language and translated) primary sources. They will also look at rich primary sources available on the UW-Madison campus—including fascinating archival documents about American-Russian economic and cultural relations in the Wisconsin State Historical Society Archive.

**Goals:** This course will focus on developing the following skills:
- **Asking questions**, including questions that may generate new directions for historical research. Posing questions to prompt productive group discussion.
- **Finding and citing sources.** Learning the logic of footnotes, bibliographies, search engines, libraries, and archives, and consulting them to identify and locate source materials.
- **Evaluating sources.** Determining the perspective, credibility, and utility of source materials. Distinguishing between primary and secondary material for a particular topic. Identifying the perspective or authorial stance of a source. Summarizing an argument presented in a text.
- **Developing and presenting an argument.** Using sources appropriately to create, modify, and support tentative conclusions and new questions. Citing evidence to support an argument.
- **Communicating ideas and research findings effectively** through written and oral presentations.
Films: There are three films scheduled for Tuesday evenings at 7 pm (see below). Viewing the films is a required part of the course. If you are absolutely unable to attend the scheduled viewing (because of work or another conflict) see me and I will arrange for you to see the film on your own.

Grades: Course grades will be determined as follows: weekly writing assignments 30%; participation in weekly discussions in class and informal presentations 40%; final essay 30%.

Final Essay: I will give out essay questions during Week 10 of class. Your papers will require some research outside of class—and the use of primary and secondary sources. Final Essays are due by 12/19 at 3 pm, in my campus mailbox.

Readings: Our course packet will be available for purchase in early September at StudentPrint on East Campus Mall. It will also be on reserve at College Library. All of the readings below are in the course packet unless otherwise indicated.

Assignment for the First Day of Class: Read The New York Times and find an article about Russia and America. Bring a copy of the article to class on 9/9.

Week 1, 9/9: Introduction: Russia and America, History and Politics
This week we’ll talk about the historian's craft and about how historians, journalists, and politicians put together narratives about current and past events.

Week 2, 9/16: The Russian Empire and the United States
Themes: Mutual Perceptions
Skill: What are primary sources and secondary sources?
Readings:
1. Read online: "The Tsar's Regime," BBC Bitesize History http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/higher/history/russia/tsar/revision/1/

**Assignment due 9/16:**
Write a one-page double-spaced paper (12-point font) reflecting on the following: What can the primary sources you read this week tell us about Russian and American mutual perceptions? What are some questions that these sources cannot answer?

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**Week 3, 9/23: 1917: Russia's Revolutions and American Responses**

**Themes:** Revolution and Ideology; Entanglement

**Skill:** How do we work with archival sources and memoirs?

**Readings:**

**Assignment due 9/23:**
Write a one-page paper reflecting on what the Bryant memoir and the archival documents tell us about Russia and its revolutions. Are the authors "reliable" narrators? Explain.

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**Week 4, 9/30: 1918-1922—Fear and Opportunities**

**Themes:** Civil War and American Intervention; The "First" Red Scare

**Skill:** How can we use cartoons, photographs, posters and other visual primary sources? How can we combine them with other types of sources?

**Readings:**
6. Browse the following websites:
   http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/library/alumni/online_exhibits/digital/redscare/

**Assignments due 9/30:**
1. Based on the primary sources, what did Americans expect or want out of their interactions with Russia? Do you think these sources give an accurate portrayal of what Americans thought about Russia? Explain.
2. Choose a political cartoon or poster or photograph from one of the above websites that you think sheds light on American-Russian relations during this period. Print out a copy of this source and bring it to class.

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**Week 5, 10/7: Building Utopia, Exploring the Roadways**

**Themes:** Americans in "Bololand," Soviets in America

**Skill:** How do we fill in the blanks when reading primary source accounts?

**Readings:**

**Assignment due 10/7:**
What is the relationship between economics and politics? Is it surprising to you that American-Soviet business relations grew in this period of official non-recognition?

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**Week 6, 10/14: Capitalism's Collapse and Socialism's Moment**
Themes: Politics, Economics, and Everyday Life
Skill: How do we read different kinds of primary sources "against" each other?

Readings:
2. John Scott, Behind the Urals: An American Worker in Russia's City of Steel (1942), pp. 3-6, 9-51, 55-92, 137-159.
3. John Scott's correspondence with the U.S. Department of State, from the John Scott Papers in the Wisconsin State Historical Society Archive.

Assignment due 10/14:
Write a one-page paper discussing similarities and differences between the two primary sources (Behind the Urals and John Scott's correspondence).

Tuesday Evening 10/18, 7 pm—Film: The Extraordinary Adventures of Mr. West in the Land of the Bolsheviks

Week 7, 10/21: Hopes, Dreams, and Stalinist Terror
Themes: Stalinism, American Apologists, Biography and History
Skill: How do we work with historical newspapers?
Resource: At noon we will head over to the Chazen Museum for a tour of the Davies collection.

Readings:

Assignment due 10/21:
1. Use the ProQuest Historical Newspapers database for The New York Times (http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/advanced?accountid=465) via the UW Library website to find one of the newspaper
articles mentioned in the Alexander Gumberg correspondence. Bring a copy of the article to class.
2. Write a one-page paper addressing the following: Do you think that Duranty and Davies were acting as apologists for Stalin? What do you think motivated them?

**Week 8, 10/28: World War II and the Postwar Moment**

**Themes:** The Wartime Alliance; 1946

**Skill:** How do we work with online sources?

**Readings:**

**Assignment due 10/28:**
Find an online resource (website, database, etc.) with reliable primary sources about the Cold War. Be prepared to tell your classmates about it and why it is useful.

**Week 9, 11/4: Postwar Reconfigurations**

**Themes:** The Soviet Bloc, McCarthyism

**Skill:** How do we format bibliographies and footnotes?

**Readings:**
1. Look at the following websites for background information on McCarthyism and the "Second" Red Scare:
   - http://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/red-scare
   - http://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/joseph-mccarthy

**Assignment due 11/04:**
Put together a bibliography of three primary sources and three secondary sources on a theme related to the "Second Red Scare" or Soviet Postwar Expansionism. Then put the sources into footnote format.

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**Week 10, 11/11: Khrushchev Comes to America**

**Themes:** DeStalinization, Cold War Diplomacy

**Skill:** How can we use video and film to answer historical questions?

**Note:** I will give out the questions for your final essays in class this week.

**Readings:**

**Assignment due 11/11:**
Watch YouTube footage of Nikita Khrushchev. Write a one-page paper discussing its usefulness as a primary source.

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**Tuesday Evening 11/15, 7 pm—Film: Cold War Road Show**

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**Week 11, 11/18: Wisconsin State Historical Society Visit**

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**Week 12, 11/25: Happy Thanksgiving!**

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**Week 13, 12/2: Superpower Showdowns**

**Themes:** Cold War Crises, The Politics of Detente

**Skill:** How do we cite and paraphrase sources?

**Readings:**
3. Spend some time looking at the Cold War International History Project Archive http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org

**Assignment due 12/2:**
Choose a document from the Cold War International History Project Archive website. Select an interesting quote from the source. Write it down verbatim and explain in one paragraph why it is compelling. Then paraphrase the quote—taking it out of the quotation marks and restating it (capturing its essence) in your own words.

**Tuesday Evening 12/6, 7 pm—Film: One, Two, Three**

**Week 14, 12/9: From "Stagnation" to "New Thinking"**
**Themes:** The 1980 Olympics, Rock and Roll and Radio Free Europe
**Skill:** Writing an effective opening statement.

**Readings:**

**Assignment due 12/9:**
Imagine that you are a Soviet citizen who fell asleep in 1978 and woke up in 1988. Write a one-page paper discussing some changes that you might notice in your environment. Focus on writing a compelling opening statement.