

## **“Twentieth Century Central Asia”**

**History 600 - Seminar 4**

**Professor Ali Igmen, 1:20 Wednesday**

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### **Content and objectives:**

On March 29, 2004, two major cities in Uzbekistan, the capital Tashkent and the ancient city of Bukhara, experienced their first terrorist bombings since the country's support of “the war on terrorism.” This was another indication that since the horrific terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, Central Asia moved to the center stage. The world is turning its attention to Central Asia because of the current conflicts in Afghanistan, and the Middle East. My hope is that you are enrolled in this seminar because you are interested in Islam and Communism in Central Asia. The primary goal of this seminar is to equip you with the tools and knowledge of the region and its twentieth-century history.

The purpose of this seminar is to analyze the cultural and social impact of Stalinism in the region and on its people. It examines the expansion of the Imperial Russia, and Bolshevik and Stalinist ideology into Central Asia. The readings also expand into the post-Stalin Era. They include secondary literature and some Central Asian primary sources. The background readings on the political history of the Soviet Era will assist us understand the social and cultural developments. The articles in the reading package and on e-reserve elaborate on the politics of social and cultural change in Central Asia.

Given the time constraints of a semester, the “region” is limited to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Xinjiang of China. Our main goal is to learn about the ways in which the peoples of Central Asia forged their “Soviet” identities through cooperation, resistance and rebellion. We will address such specific topics as ethnic and national identity versus regional and local identity; sedentary life styles versus nomadism; traditional Islam versus Sufism; central socialist ideology versus localized socialism; and Soviet cultural establishment versus local cultural traditions.