

History 201: Historian's Craft Russia and America

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Fridays 11-12:55 via BB-Collaborate

This course investigates the relationship between Russia and the United States, focusing on how the two states and their peoples influenced each other over the course of the 20th century. The course will look some at traditional diplomatic relations, but will largely focus on formal and informal economic and cultural relations, “people’s diplomacy,” and other forms of engagement. Rather than trying to cover the entire span of Russian-American relations we will focus on three main themes: 1. Revolutionary Russia and America’s Response; 2. The 1930s; 3. Cultural Cold War.

This course has a sizable historical methods component and offers an opportunity to experience the excitement and rewards of doing original historical research and conveying the results of that work to others. We will spend time each week focusing on the development and honing of skills essential to the historian’s craft. These skills include critical reasoning, research, source evaluation, and analytical writing. Students will gain hands-on experience doing archival research and will share their research findings with the class in oral presentations. Attendance and participation are mandatory. At the end of the semester each student will submit a 10-page research paper on a topic relating to the course theme. (A number of the shorter course papers are designed to help students develop a research proposal, a research plan, and ultimately the paper itself.)

Format: Reading and weekly discussion in BB-Collaborate. (We will likely switch to Zoom once the site license is set up). Students are expected to show up for class prepared and ready to participate.

Goals: This course, which satisfies the Comm-B requirement, will focus on developing the following skills:

-**Asking questions**, including questions that may generate new directions for historical research. Developing historical questions through engagement with different kinds of sources. Asking historical questions to guide individual 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. Identifying the purposes, limitations, and parameters of various search engines. Taking advantage of the range of library resources available online.

-**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. Distinguishing between the content of a source and its meaning in relation to a particular question.

-**Developing and presenting an argument**. Using sources appropriately to create, modify, and support tentative conclusions and new questions. Writing a strong, clear thesis statement. Revising a thesis statement based on additional research or analysis. Identifying the parts of an argument necessary to support a thesis convincingly. Citing evidence to support each part of an argument. Identifying the contribution of an argument to existing scholarship.

-**Planning further research**. Drawing upon preliminary research to develop a plan for further investigation. Writing a research proposal, annotated bibliography, and outline.

-**Communicating ideas and research findings effectively** through formal and informal written and oral presentations.

Blog Posts: Over the course of the semester students will write eleven blog posts related to the weekly readings. These blog posts must be posted to Canvas by 3 pm the day before class.

Research Paper: Students will write original 10-page research papers on topics related to the course theme. Students are required to use a range of primary sources and to become well acquainted with the secondary literature on their chosen topic. There is a multitude of primary sources available online, including newspapers, memoirs, government documents, archival documents (in edited volumes or on approved websites), photographs and other visual sources, speeches, letters, and so on. I will consult with students individually or in small groups during office hours about sources. On designated dates (noted below), students will submit a research

question, a research proposal, a revised research proposal, and a short bibliography of primary and secondary sources.

Readings: Most readings are available on Campus or as ebooks through the UW Library website. Other books can be purchased or borrowed as Kindle ebooks.

Credit Hours: This is a 3-credit course. The credit standard for this course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course's learning activities (at least 9 hours per week), which include our regularly scheduled meeting times, reading, writing, individual consultations, watching assigned films, and working on individual research projects.

Office Hours and Small Group Consultations: I will hold consultations (10-minute slots) and small-group discussion meetings (20-minute slots) in BB-Collaborate on Tuesdays 11-12, Thursdays 1-2, and on Fridays after class. I will have a sign-up sheet posted on Canvas.

Course grades will be based on the following distribution: Participation (including presentations) 35%, blog posts 20%, research-related assignments 15%, final research paper 30%.

Introduction

Week 1, 9/4: Thinking Like a Historian; Narratives of Engagement

This week we'll talk about the historian's craft and about how historians put together narratives about the past.

Part I: Revolutionary Russia and America's Response

Week 2, 9/11: Prelude to 1917

Skill: What are primary sources? What can they tell us about the past?

Readings:

1. Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad* (1869), pp. 120-136. (Canvas)
2. George Kennan, "Russian State Prisoners: Further Details of the Prison Life of the Revolutionists," *Century Illustrated Magazine*, vol. 35 (March 1888): 5-16. (Canvas)

3. "George Kennan's Siberian Travels," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 16, 1887, p. 9. (Canvas)
4. "When Mark Twain Wept," *Kansas City Star*, April 7, 1888, p. 2. (Canvas)
5. "Gorky and Twain Plead for Revolution," *The New York Times*, April 12, 1906.
6. Maxim Gorky, "The City of the Yellow Devil," 1906. (Canvas)

Blog Post #1:

Write a (roughly 400-500 word) blog post addressing 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?

Week 3, 9/18: Russia's Revolutions and America's Responses

Skill: How can we judge the "reliability" of a narrator?

Readings:

1. John Reed, *Ten Days that Shook the World* (1919), chapters 1-4. (Available as a free download via the UW Library website at: <https://search.library.wisc.edu/catalog/9913025934902121>)
2. Louise Bryant, *Six Red Months in Russia: An Observer's Account of Russia Before and During the Proletariat Dictatorship* (1918), pp. 1-51, 99-109. (Canvas)
3. Donald E. Carey, *Fighting the Bolsheviks* (1997), pp. 1-4, 41-50. (Canvas)

Blog Post #2:

Write a (roughly 400-500 word) blog post addressing the following: How can we judge the "reliability" of a narrator? Do you think that Bryant, Reed, and Carey have a good understanding of what they are observing and writing about?

Week 4, 9/25: Fear and Opportunities

Skill: What are the strengths and weaknesses of different kinds of primary sources: private reports, public documents, literature, journalism, film?

Readings:

1. A. Mitchell Palmer, "The Case Against the 'Reds,'" *Forum*, vol. 63 (1920): 173-185. (Canvas)
2. "Report of Trip to Russia, October 1921," From S. G. McAllister to H. F. Perkins, International Harvester, from the Cyrus McCormick Papers in the Wisconsin State Historical Society Archive. (Canvas)
3. Vladimir Mayakovsky, *My Discovery of America* (1925), pp. 73-99. (Canvas).
4. Maurice Hindus, "Henry Ford Conquers Russia," *The Outlook*, June 29, 1927, pp. 280-283. (Canvas)

Film:

The Extraordinary Adventures of Mr. West in the Land of the Bolsheviks, 1924

Blog Post #3:

Write a (roughly 400-500 word) blog post addressing the following: Which of the primary sources did you find most useful for understanding Soviet-American relations during the 1920s? Why?

Research Deadline #1:

Research question due. Post to the class Dropbox.

Part II: The 1930s

Week 5, 10/2: Magnetic Mountain and Little Golden America

Skill: How do we read sources by the same author or from the same time period "against" each other?

Readings:

1. John Scott, *Behind the Urals: An American Worker in Russia's City of Steel* (1942), 3-6, 9-51, 117-133, 173-206, 247-249. (Canvas)
2. John Scott's correspondence with the U.S. Department of State, from the John Scott Papers in the Wisconsin State Historical Society Archive. (Canvas)
3. Ilya Ilf and Evgeny Petrov, *Little Golden America* (1936), pp. 53-59, 71-76, 96-103. (Canvas)

Blog Post #4:

Write a (roughly 400-500 word) blog post discussing similarities and differences between the two John Scott sources (*Behind the Urals* and John Scott's correspondence). Include at least one direct quote from each work.

OR

Write a (roughly 400-500 word) blog post comparing John Scott and Ilf/Petrov as narrators. Include at least one direct quote from each work.

Class Visit:

Slavic bibliographer Dr. Andy Spencer will visit with us for part of class to talk about online resources for your research papers.

Week 6, 10/9: The "Race Question" and Soviet-American Relations

Skills: How can we use memoirs and films to gain a more vivid picture of the past?

Readings:

1. Robert Robinson, *Black on Red: My 44 Years Inside the Soviet Union* (1988), 23-33, 35-53, 55-63, 65-73, 75-112. (Canvas)
2. Langston Hughes, *I Wonder as I Wander: An Autobiographical Journey* (1993), 95-121. (Canvas)

3. Jennifer Wilson, "When the Harlem Renaissance Went to Moscow," *New York Times*, August 21, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/21/opinion/when-the-harlem-renaissance-went-to-communist-moscow.html>

Film:

Circus, 1936

Blog Post #5:

Write a (roughly 400-500 word) blog post addressing the following: Did the readings and the film this week change your understanding of Soviet-American relations in the 1930s and the some of the issues in play? Explain.

Research Deadline #2:

Revised research question and one-page research proposal due. Post to the class Dropbox.

Week 7, 10/16: American Apologists for Stalin?

Skills: How can scholarly books (secondary sources) help us with our original research?

Readings:

1. Walter Duranty articles in the *New York Times* (Canvas)
"Power of Stalin Now at Its Height," *NYT*, January 23, 1933.
"Stalin Tells Red Youths to Ferret Out Foes," *NYT*, February 3, 1933.
"Death of 17 Asked at Moscow Trial," *NYT*, January 29, 1937.
2. Joseph E. Davies, *Mission to Moscow* (1941), pp. 1-7, 21-31, 36-38. (Canvas)
3. Tim Tzouliadis, *The Forsaken: An American Tragedy in Stalin's Russia*, 2008, pp, 48-60, 108-147, 368-369, 374-378. (Canvas)
4. Correspondence among Alexander Gumberg, Walter Duranty, and Raymond Robins, from the Alexander Gumberg Collection in the Wisconsin State Historical Society Archive. (Canvas)

Blog Post #6:

Write a (roughly 400-500 word) blog post addressing the following: Do you think that Davies and Duranty were acting as apologists for Stalin? Why or why not?

Class Visit:

An archivist from the Wisconsin State Historical Society Archive will visit with us for part of class to talk about the Alexander Gumberg Collection.

Week 8, 10/23: Ideals of Womanhood and Soviet-American Relations

Skill: How can scholarly articles (secondary sources) help us with our original research?

Readings:

1. Julia Mickenburg, "Inequality in the U.S. Was So Bad, Thousands of American Women Moved to Soviet Russia," *Timeline*, April 17, 2017,

<https://timeline.com/american-women-moved-russia-5eec1b68cd34>

2. Frank S. Nugent, "'Ninotchka,' an Impious Soviet Satire Directed by Lubitsch Opens at the Music Hall," *New York Times*, November 10, 1939.

<https://www.nytimes.com/1939/11/10/archives/the-screen-in-review-ninotchka-an-impious-soviet-satire-directed-by.html>

3. *Ninotchka* script from the Wisconsin State Historical Society Archive. (Canvas)

4. Marjorie Hilton, "Gender and Ideological Rivalry in *Ninotchka* and *Circus*: The Capitalist and Communist Make-Over," *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema* 8, no. 1 (2014): 2-23. (Canvas)

Film:

Ninotchka, 1939

Blog Post #7

Write a (roughly 400-500 word) blog post addressing the following: What is Hilton's argument about the two films? Do you agree with her? Are there any key points of comparison between the films that she missed?

Research Deadline #3:

Revised one-page research proposal due and list of three possible primary sources. Post to the class Dropbox.

Part III. Cultural Cold War

Week 9, 10/30: Khrushchev's Cold War Road Show

Skill: How do we use newspaper websites and government documents?

Video Clips:

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/cold-war-roadshow-chapter-1/>

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/cold-war-roadshow-khrushchev-goes-hollywood/>

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/cold-war-roadshow-khrushchevs-american-journey/>

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/cold-war-roadshow-khrushchevs-cool-welcome-ny/>

Readings:

1. "Khrushchev's Trip Itinerary." *PBS*,

www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/cold-war-roadshow-nikita-khrushchevs-trip-itinerary/

2. Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev in America* (1960), pp. 104-113, 152-163. (Canvas)
3. John Scali, "A Scene of Enormous Confusion, Activity." *Carroll Daily Times Herald* September 23, 1959, p. 1. (Canvas)
4. "Report on the Khrushchev Visit," *Department of State Office of the Historian*, October 1959, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960*, vol. X, part 1, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v10p1/d136>
5. Rósa Magnúsdóttir, "Be Careful in America, Premier Khrushchev!": Soviet Perceptions of Peaceful Coexistence with the United States in 1959." *Cahiers Du Monde Russe* 47, no. 1/2 (2006): 109–130. (Canvas)
6. Stephen J. Frese, "Comrade Khrushchev and Farmer Garst: East-West Encounters Foster Agricultural Exchange." *The History Teacher* 38, no. 1 (2004): 37–65. (Canvas)

Newspaper Database Assignment:

Use the ProQuest Historical Newspapers database (available at <http://researchguides.library.wisc.edu/content.php?pid=48126&sid=354447>) to find a newspaper article about Khrushchev's 1959 visit to America. Read the article and be prepared to talk about it in class.

Blog Post #8

Write a (roughly 400-500 word) blog post addressing the following: Based on the source material you've looked at this week, did Khrushchev's visit affect the Cold War?

Week 10, 11/6: The Zhivago Affair

Skill: How do we read a scholarly book for argument and key details without becoming bogged down? How do we format a bibliography?

Readings:

Peter Finn and Petra Couvee, *The Zhivago Affair: The Kremlin, the CIA, and the Battle Over a Forbidden Book* (2014).

Blog Post #9

Write a (roughly 400-500 word) blog post addressing the following: What is the main argument of *The Zhivago Affair*? Do you find it compelling? What kinds of sources do the authors use to support their findings?

Research Deadline #4:

Bibliography of primary and secondary sources due. Format using the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Post to the class Dropbox.

Week 11, 11/13: Fear

Skill: How do we work with different kinds of visual sources?

Readings:

1. John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, *Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America* (2000), pp. 287-330, 436-443. (Canvas)
2. Committee on Un-American Activities, "100 Things You Should Know About Communism in the USA," 1949. (Canvas)

Film:

Fail Safe, 1964

Political Cartoons:

Browse the following two websites. Select a political cartoon that you find particularly striking. Be prepared to discuss it in class.

1. <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/pointing-their-pens-editorial-cartoons/cold-war.html>
2. https://www.vatnikstan.ru/arhiv/cartoons_coldwar/?fbclid=IwAR2rxa7af83uVD1d855nh8LE01_HFhIuJ2rqXNezaCOeCcaySk0R68BvjY

Prelinger Archives:

Browse the following archive <https://archive.org/details/prelinger>

Watch one of the following:

1. https://archive.org/details/0771_Duck_and_Cover_12_33_20_12
2. https://archive.org/details/0169_In_Our_Hands_Part_3_How_To_Lose_Wh at_We_Have_10_00_43_11
3. Another civil defense film of your choice from the Prelinger Archives.

Blog Post #10:

Write a (roughly 400-500 word) blog post addressing the following: In your opinion, how important was propaganda to the Soviet Union and to the United States in fighting the Cold War?

Research Deadline #5

Thesis statement due. Post to the class Dropbox.

Week 12, 11/20: Sports, Rock, and Radio Free Europe

Skill: How do we use documentaries as a source? How do we use websites with archival sources?

Readings:

1. "Olympics: To Go or Not to Go? The U.S. Weighs Hitting Moscow Where It Would Really Hurt," *Time*, January 28, 1980. (Canvas)
2. Stephen Smith and Bruce Nelan, "Bearish Beginning in Moscow: The Clouded Games Get Under Way in a Grand Setting," *Time*, July 21, 1980. (Canvas)
3. Victor Ripp, "Discovering America," in *Pizza in Pushkin Square: What They Think of Us in the USSR* (1990), pp. 105-121. (Canvas)

4. Serge Schmemmann, “Soviet Union Ends Years of Jamming of Radio Liberty,
New York Times, December 1, 1988,
<https://www.nytimes.com/1988/12/01/world/soviet-union-ends-years-of-jamming-of-radio-liberty.html>

Archives:

Browse the following website: <https://pressroom.rferl.org/history>

Film:

Free to Rock, 2017

Blog Post #11

Write a (roughly 400-500 word) blog post addressing the following: What is the main argument of the documentary *Free to Rock*? Did you find the argument convincing? Why or why not? What kinds of sources did the director use to support his position?

Research Deadline #6

Revised thesis statement due (I’ll be sending back the original with feedback early in the week). Post to the class Dropbox.

Part IV: Research and Writing

Week 13, 11/27: Thanksgiving

Week 14, 12/4: Research Presentations

Final papers due on Friday 12/11 by 5pm in the class Dropbox