

HISTORY 418: IMPERIAL RUSSIA, 1801-1914
FALL 2021

1131 Humanities, MW 2:30-3:45

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Office hours: W 10-12, R 2-4 or by appointment

TEXTBOOK: N. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, (hardcover or paper, various editions); all other assigned weekly readings posted as pdf files on the course's site on the course's Canvas as is a copy of this syllabus.

COURSE INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS:

Learning outcomes

Students taking this course should achieve the following objectives through their work for this course:

- Acquire an understanding of the social, intellectual, economic and international forces that shaped the history of the Russian Empire from 1801 until the outbreak of the Great War in 1914.
- Develop an insight into the operations of different power hierarchies—lord/serf, noble/common, ruler/ruled, gender and ethnic/colonial—in the territories of a large multinational, multiconfessional empire.
- Refine their ability to read, contextualize and explain the meaning of a broad variety of historical sources, from the course textbook to primary sources and memoirs that make up the assigned weekly readings.
- Gain the ability to recognize forces for change, rupture and continuity in Russian history.
- Develop an appreciation for the operations and identities in a society that differs markedly from that in the United States.
- The ability to extrapolate beyond the period covered in the course to identify similarities and differences between imperial Russia and its successors under Communist and post-Communist rule
- The ability to use evidence provided by course readings to write a clearly expressed, well-organized and persuasive argument about assigned topics, both in term papers and examinations.
- The ability to incorporate insights from Russian history into a broader understanding of international politics and challenges in the contemporary world.

History 418 addresses the main themes of Russia's history from the accession of Emperor Alexander I in 1801 through the aftermath of the revolution of 1905. This class pursues several related educational objectives through a combination of lectures, assigned readings and written assignments. First and foremost, a commitment to active engagement with all of the course's components should give students an overview of the various processes and forces that shaped the history of the Russian empire during the "long" nineteenth century, a period of sweeping transformation in virtually all that states realms of social, cultural, and political life. Second,

students should develop their skills in critical reading and thinking, chiefly through preparation for lecture and in their work on the assigned term papers and tests. In addition to the textbook, students' readings will come from translated primary sources—legal documents, memoirs or contemporaries' commentaries on Russia as a political, social and moral order. Careful reflection on these readings and lectures will allow students to identify and offer explanations for the persistence of certain themes and arguments across the time-period covered in the course, as well as understanding parallel processes of change in imperial political and social histories. Ideally, students will also develop an understanding of Russians' experiences of their world on their own terms: we often overlook the fact that the overwhelming majority of the empire's subjects saw their country and society as "normal" and worthy of their patriotism, even including the state's many critics among elites, working populations or national minorities. Finally, in their written work, students should enhance their skills in making clear arguments supported by pertinent evidence.

Course workload and requirements/assignments:

This course meets as a group (or with dedicated online time) for 2 75-minute sessions (i.e. "power lectures" – dmm) per week and carries the expectation that you will spend an average of 2 hours outside of class for each class period. In other words, in addition to class time, plan to allot an average of 6 hours per week for reading, writing, preparing for discussions, and/or studying for quizzes and exams for this class.

The lectures for the class build on or add to the materials contained in the assigned readings [see schedule below]. They take as their starting-point the assumption that students will have read the appropriate texts *before* coming to lecture. The written work for the course consists of several sorts of written work: first, a brief paper offering commentary on a primary source chosen by the student; second, two term papers chosen from a list of topics distributed by the instructor; and third, two take-home examinations, a mid-term and a final. The commentary paper will amount to approximately 400 words, while the term papers (dealing with the pre- and post-Reform periods respectively) will be longer, but still quite brief at 1,250-1,500 words. They will draw on the pertinent evidence provided in your assigned readings and lectures, with a special emphasis on the use of the primary materials among those readings. The commentary paper will count for 5% of your final grade; it falls due at **5PM on Friday, October 8**. Your first term paper, due by **5PM on Wednesday, October 20**, will account for **15% of the final grade**. Your second paper, due by **5PM on Wednesday, December 8**, will make up **30% of the grade**. As concerns the two take-home examinations, you will submit your mid-term by **5PM on Wednesday, November 3**, while the final examination has to come in at any time in Exam Week before **7:00 PM, Wednesday, December 22**. **Each of these examinations will account for 25% of your final grade.**

Papers will be graded on the conventional A-F scale used at the UW-Madison. Grades will reflect the papers' relative accomplishment in a combination of areas: the use of evidence, and particularly primary sources; the proper annotation of evidence—i.e. the use of foot- or endnotes according to a consistent protocol; the clarity, organization, persuasiveness *and* originality of the argument; and finally, the quality of the written exposition. While a clear and well-argued repetition of the arguments presented by the textbook or lectures will earn an AB or

B, depending on the quality of the execution, students have to demonstrate that they have come to their own well-grounded conclusions about a problem in order to receive an A. Grades lower than a B should serve as a signal that the student should devote more time, thought or attention to their work if they wish to achieve a better grade. As an incentive, the relative worth of written work increases during the course of the semester, in order to reward evidence of improvement. The instructor will discuss the research and writing of such papers during class time. Students should also make use of the scheduled office hours to consult with the instructor about their writing or research.

Graduate credit

Graduate students are not required to write the first assigned paper. Instead, they will write two reviews of book-length historical studies, selecting at least one dealing with Russian history before the reign of Peter I.

Please make a note of these dates and enter them into your calendars. The instructor will amplify on the nature of each assignment in lecture and section. They will also specify their expectations for evaluating your work.

Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. While medieval and early modern Russia might seem light-years removed from the modern United States, issues of social and ethnic difference form a central motif in the area's history and its present. As you will learn, the territories embraced by the Russian Empire by 1800 housed numerous ethnic communities – Russians, Ukrainians, Cossacks, Tatars, Finnic peoples, Turkic Muslims and, after 1772, a large Jewish population – in a state that professed Orthodox Christianity as the official religion. Moreover, this society consisted of a hierarchically ranged set of discrete, caste-like social groups, each with its own norms and customs. And, like many other societies of the time, Russian elites accepted and profited from slavery until well into the seventeenth century, while also practicing a particularly stringent form of serfdom, whose effects on Russian society lingered for more than a century after the institution's abolition in 1861. Russian history presents a helpful lens into how every society, our own included, attributes specific meanings to and valuations of difference, whether racial or linguistic or confessional, which often become an unseen foundation of that society's norms and assumptions about inequality.

At UW-Madison, we commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. To these ends, the university fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.

Those seeking assistance or extra guidance in framing and writing research papers should consult with the department's History Lab. A representative of this valuable resource will visit our class early in the semester. As the Lab's web-site states:

The History Lab is a resource center where experts (PhD students) will assist you with your history papers. No matter what stage you are at in the writing process – choosing a topic, conducting research, composing a thesis, outlining your argument, revising your drafts – the History Lab staff can help you sharpen your skills and become a more successful writer. Drop by Humanities 4255 or schedule a one-on-one consultation at <http://go.wisc.edu/hlab>.

FINALLY, all students should make every effort to familiarize themselves thoroughly with definitions of *plagiarism*. University instructors and authorities regard plagiarism as an extremely grave offense. In this class, willful plagiarism will result in severe sanctions. Should students have any questions about how to acknowledge their sources or to include others' work in their writing without running the risk of plagiarism, they should consult the university's web-page on the topic: <https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/misconduct/academic-integrity/>. The instructor is also more than willing to discuss these issues.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS **(All readings except Riasanovsky posted on Learn@UW)**

Week 1 (9/8): INTRODUCTION—WELCOME AND COURSE OVERVIEW

READINGS: **Class:** Riasanovsky, chapters XXIII, XXIV.

Week 2 (9/13): THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE—STATE, *SOSLOVIA*, RELIGION, ETHNOS .

READINGS: Catherine's *Charter to the Nobility*; documents on serfdom; Bisha, *Russian Women*, "Religious Rituals of Daily Life," 125-134, 235-241; Radishchev.

Week 3 (9/20): THE REIGN OF ALEXANDER I (1801-1825): PART I—GREAT EXPECTATIONS, 1801-1812.

READINGS: Rias., XXV; Czartoryski; Speranskii's reform project; Karamzin.

Week 4 (10/4): PART II: ALEXANDER "THE BLESSED,"

READINGS: Treaty of Tilsit; War of 1812, i. e. “Great War of the Fatherland”; Holy Alliance; Alexander’s “testament”; Origins of Decembrists

[SOURCE COMMENTARY DUE 5PM 10/8]

Week 5 (10/11): “THE APOGEE OF AUTOCRACY”—NICHOLAS I (1825-1855).

READINGS: **Class:** Rias. XXVI; materials on Decembrist rising Trubetskoi, Pushkin and Odoevskii; Pestel’s testimony; Nicholas I and the search for order; Russo-Ukrainian relations.

Week 6 (10/18): CHALLENGES TO THE “NICHOLAS SYSTEM” AT HOME AND ABROAD (1830-1856)

READINGS: **Class:** Rias. XXVII XXVIII; Nicholas and Poland; Chaadaev. Kireevskii, Belinskii, Herzen; Materials on Crimean war.

[FIRST PAPERS DUE IN CLASS, 10/20]

Week 8 (10/25): ALEXANDER II AND THE ERA OF THE GREAT REFORMS, 1855-1881—MAKING THE REFORMS, 1855-1874.

READINGS: **Class:** Rias. XXIX; Abolition of serfdom; Alexander’s Manifesto; Katkov on Poland; Dobroliubov on “Oblomovism.”

[NB: TAKE-HOME MIDTERM SENT OUT 10/25; DUE IN CLASS 11/1]

Week 9 (11/1): THE “FAILURE” OF REFORM: IMPLEMENTATION AND THE BEGINNINGS OF ORGANIZED DISSENT, 1863-1870.

READINGS: Nechaev’s “Catechism of a Revolutionary”; Uspenskii; Bisha, *Russia’s Women*, pp. 181-191, 340-343

[QUESTIONS FOR SECOND TERM-PAPER DISTRIBUTED: PAPER DUE 12/8]

Week 10 (11/8) RUSSIA’S RESTIVE 1870s

READINGS: Breshko-Breshkovskaia. Danilevskii, San Stefano, Pahlen on Turkestan

Week 11 (11/15): AUTOCRACY’S SWAN-SONG OF AUTOCRACY—THE REIGN OF ALEXANDER III (1881-1894).

READINGS: Rias. XXX (1881-1894), XXXII; *Narodnaia volia*

documents, assassination trial, Pobedonostsev

Week 12 (11/22): THANKSGIVING

Week 13 (11/29): MODERNITY AND ITS DISCONTENTS: STATE AND SOCIETY IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

READINGS: Rias. XXXII, XXXIII. Witte's vision and report on workers' conditions; Bisha, pp. 81-97

[NB: SECOND PAPER DUE IN CLASS 12/8]

Week 14 (12/6): RUSSIA'S LAST AUTOCRAT—NICHOLAS II (1894-1917).

READINGS: Rias. XXX, XXXI; Miliukov on Russian "crisis," Witte on 1905-1906; Bloody Sunday; October Manifesto; Party/fraction platforms: Kadet, SR, Union of Russian People, Bolsheviks

Week 15 (12/13) THE "CONSTITUTIONAL EXPERIMENT" (1900-1914)

READING: Bisha, pp. 51-55, pp. 346-353, Stolypin, "Great Russia"; Durnovo memorandum.

TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAMINATION DUE BEFORE 7PM, WEDNESDAY, DEC. 22