

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, UW-MADISON
HISTORY 420 – SPRING 2022

THE HISTORY OF RUSSIAN THOUGHT, 1762-1909
1221 Humanities, TR 9:30-10:45am; In-person lectures/discussion

Instructor: Prof. D. M. McDonald,
5134 Humanities.

Office Hours: M 1:30-3:30, R 1-4 OR by appointment.

email: dmcdon1@wisc.edu

Textbooks: None of these books is on order. The instructor recommends finding affordable options (new or used) through local or online sellers. Editions listed recommended, but not obligatory.

A. Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, Stanford U.P.

A. Pushkin, *Eugene Onegin*, Penguin Classic Ser.

F. Dostoyevsky, *Notes from Underground*, Dutton.

N. Chernyshevsky, *What Is To Be Done?*, Ardis.

I. Turgenev, *Fathers and Sons*, Norton Critical Editions.

NB: Most of the course's weekly readings are posted as pdf files on the class's Canvas site.

Learning Outcomes

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

- Gain an understanding of the continuities and changes in the history of Russian social and political thought across the last 150 years of the empire's existence.
- Acquire the ability to read and interpret a variety of genres and arguments advanced by successive generations of Russian thinkers.
- Gain a broader understanding, through the Russian example, of the many possible "readings" of canonical texts in varying social, national and historical context, thereby refining understandings of such labels as "Enlightenment," "conservatism," "liberalism," "socialism," and "nationalism," among others.
- 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.

- Develop an appreciation for the operations and identities in a society that differs markedly from that in the United States.
- Develop 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.

Purpose and Requirements:

The lectures and readings in this course address the development of social and political thought in Russia from the Enlightenment to the aftermath of the revolutions of 1905-1907. Like their contemporaries elsewhere, Russian thinkers drew their inspiration from trends and debates taking place among thinkers and political figures across Europe, but they used these sources to answer questions that they confronted in Russian life. Out of this process of adaptation they created an identifiably “Russian” intellectual tradition, with recurrent themes, motifs, questions and assumptions shared by thinkers from across the political spectrum. The history of thought also encompasses by necessity the emergence and history of the "intelligentsia," a special and diverse group—both in their composition and their outlooks--which claimed the roles of Russia’s conscience and consciousness, to use the terms of a historian writing in 1906. An understanding of the various lines of development taken by Russian thought in the nineteenth century is incomprehensible without a treatment of the intelligentsia, since their conservative and liberal critics engaged them in debate on the ground they set.

Due to the particular nature of Russian intellectual history, we will be dealing with a wide variety of sources. Since this course deals with intellectual history and the texts that formed it, most of the materials you read consist of translations from essays, memoirs, and polemics written by Russian intellectuals. These texts will support lectures and form the basis for in-class discussion. However, you will also read plays and novels, which themselves disseminated themes and arguments current in discussions among Russian readers and thinkers. The depictions in these works of certain characters and ideas exercised a strong influence over the development of intelligentsia identities; they also helped cultivate a broad sympathy for this group among the educated Russian reading public, largely noble at the time of the course’s beginning, but much more socially and professionally diverse by the twentieth century. Finally, as the chief explanatory overview for the materials dealt with in this course, you will use Andrzej Walicki's history of Russian thought. Students not familiar with Russian history in general should read a reliable textbook to help orient themselves to the larger political and social contexts shaping the thought of this period.

Students are expected to attend **ALL** lectures. The analysis and discussion in class meetings will prove useful *only if* students complete a given week’s reading assignments *before* that week’s classes. Of course, in this COVID era, if students find themselves obliged to self-isolate due to a positive test or any sorts of symptoms, they must do so: simply provide the instructor with notice of the reason for the absence.

Course Workload and Requirements:

This three-credit course meets as a group 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 or preparing the paper/s and exams required in this class.

Written work for the course will include several components, each assessed for a share of the final grade:

- 1) 15% of the final grade will reflect in-class work: attendance, preparation, and participation in discussion.
- 2) Two take-home examinations: a mid-term (*due March 10*), worth 20% and a final examination (*due May 11*) worth 25%.
- 3) Two brief (5-7pp.) papers, written before and after the mid-term, in response to one in a list of assigned questions – the first paper (*due March 1*) will account for 15% of the final grade and the second (*due April 28*) for 25%.
- 4) *Graduate* students will write a 15pp. research paper (see instructor) due the same date as the second paper, the mid-term, the final, and three book reviews.

. 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 imperial Russian intellectuals might seem light-years removed from the modern United States, issues of social and ethnic difference or inequality form central motifs in the history of Russian thought and continue in the present. Throughout the period we'll be examining, imperial Russian 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.

History Lab

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>.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Statement

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (UW-855) require the university to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities to access and participate in its academic programs and educational services. Faculty and students share responsibility in the accommodation process. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations during the beginning of the semester, or as soon as possible after being approved for accommodations. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center [<https://mcburney.wisc.edu/>] to provide reasonable instructional and course-related accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. (See: McBurney Disability Resource Center)

Academic Calendar & Religious Observances

You can use the link above to provide your students with information about the current and future academic calendars, along with the university's religious observance policy.

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.

IMPORTANT DATES:

Tuesday, March 1 – first paper due.

Thursday, March 10 – take-home mid-term.

Thursday, April 28 – second paper due.

Wednesday, May 11 – final exam due.

SCHEDULE

WEEK	ASSIGNMENT—READINGS FOR WEEK
Jan. 25	Introduction. Russian society, the state and the rhetoric of absolutism. Russia's Enlightenment: Sociability, Virtue, Duty Readings: Walicki, Chapter 1; on Canvas – Excerpts from Catherine's <i>Nakaz</i> and polemic with Novikov.
Feb. 1	"Enlightened" Critiques of Autocracy: 1765-1790. Readings: Wal., ch. 2; on Canvas – Fonvizin materials and Radishchev, "True Son of the Fatherland," and "Zalesskaia polest'."
Feb. 8	History, Morality, Society: Russia's late Enlightenment, 1790-1815. Readings: Wal., ch. 3; on Canvas – Karamzin and Radishchev.
Feb. 15	Romanticism, Revolt, and Restoration: the Decembrists and their aftermath, 1815-1825. Readings: On Canvas – Decembrist readings.
Feb. 22	Alienation and Nation: The Birth of the "Superfluous Man," 1825-1836. Readings: Wal., ch. 5; Pushkin, <i>Eugene Onegin</i> . FIRST PAPER DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS MAR. 1
Mar. 1	Alienation and Nation, Part II: P. Ia. Chaadaev and the "Slavophiles." Readings: Wal., ch. 6; on Canvas – Kireevskii and Khomiakov materials.
TAKE-HOME MID-TERM DISTRIBUTED IN CLASS MAR. 3, DUE BY BEGINNING OF CLASS MAR. 10	
Mar. 8	Alienation and Nation, Part III: the "Wonderful Decade," 1836-1846: "Westernizers." Readings: On Canvas – Bakunin, Belinskii, and Herzen,
Mar. 12-20	SPRING BREAK!
Mar. 22	Fathers and Children – Political Thought during the Reform Era. Readings: Wal. pp. 183-209; I. Turgenev, <i>Fathers and Sons</i> , including added materials in the Norton edition; on Canvas – Dobroliubov, "Oblomovism."
Mar. 29	Russian Utilitarianism and Russian Feminism in the 1860's. The Intelligentsia and Their Critics. Readings: Wal., ch. 11-p. 215; Chernyshevskii, <i>What Is To Be Done?</i> excerpts; on Canvas – Dostoevskii, <i>Notes from Underground</i> , part 1.
Apr. 5	Russian Populism, 1868-1881: From "Going to the People" to the "People's

Will.”

Readings: Wal., ch. 12; on Canvas – Mikhailovskii, Lavrov, Bakunin and Breshko-Breshkovskaia.

- Apr. 12 Conservative and Liberal Thought in Post-Reform Russia.
Readings: Wal., ch. 14; on Canvas – Chicherin, pan-Slavism, and Pobedonostsev materials.
- Apr. 19 Russian Marxism, 1885-1905.
Readings: Wal. ch. 18; Plekhanov and Lenin materials.
- Apr. 26 Seeking the “Rule of Law State:” Varieties of Russian Liberalism, 1891-1905.
Readings: Wal., ch. 17-p. 394; on Canvas – Miliukov and Kistiakovskii materials.

SECOND PAPER DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS, APRIL 28

- May 3 After the Deluge, Political Thought in Russia after 1905.
Readings: On Canvas – Struve and Izgoev pieces.

FINAL EXAMINATION DUE BY 5PM WED., MAY 11