

Fall 2023
University of Wisconsin-Madison

History 418 – Imperial Russia, 1801-1917

Tuesday and Thursday, 4:00PM-5:15PM
Helen C. White Hall, 4281

Professor Geoffrey Durham (he/him)

Email: gdurham@wisc.edu

Office location: 4118 Mosse Humanities Building or Zoom

Office hours: Wednesdays, 9am-11am and by appointment

Credits: 3



Course Description

Between 1801 and 1917, imperial Russia went from being the center of the world's largest land empire and one of Europe's Great Powers to a collapsing state embroiled in war and revolution. Nevertheless, the Tsarist regime outlived many of its main rivals. What happened and why? With staggering ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity, as well as immense inequalities in terms of wealth and rights, how did the empire's different parts fit together? How can we understand the relationship between the Russian empire and the nations that emerged from within it? In this survey of Russian imperial history between 1801 and 1917, we will examine these questions and pay particular attention to themes of imperial expansion and diversity, as well as the social, political, and economic structures that shaped the lives of the tsars' subjects across Eurasia. Doing so will enable us to consider the historical relationship between Ukraine and Russia, and to evaluate Vladimir Putin's use of that history to justify the ongoing war and his broader geopolitical ambitions for the Russian Federation.

Diversity & Inclusion

At UW-Madison diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation. As a community, we value the contributions of each person and respect the ways that their identity, culture, background, experience, status, and abilities enrich life on and beyond campus. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. UW-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background, whether they are students, staff, or faculty.

Everyone has a right to be addressed and referred to in accordance with their personal identity. In our class you will have the chance to indicate the name that you prefer to be called and, if you choose, to identify pronouns with which you would like to be addressed.

Mental Health & Well-Being

Students often experience stressors that can influence their academic experience and personal well-being. These may be mental health concerns, substance misuse, sexual or relationship violence, difficult family or friend circumstances, campus climate, financial matters, or may take other forms. I hope that you feel empowered to learn about and access UW-Madison's mental health services and/or other resources when needed. Please visit www.uhs.wisc.edu or call University Health Services at 608-265-5600 for more information.

All students have a right to feel safe and respected at UW-Madison. Unfortunately, sexual and relationship violence do happen here. Free, confidential resources are available on and off campus for students impacted by sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, and stalking (regardless of when the violence occurred). Friends of survivors are also encouraged to seek support. A list of resources can be found at www.uhs.wisc.edu/survivor-resources/.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

I recognize that it is a personal decision to disclose a disability. I encourage students with disabilities to contact the [McBurney Disabilities Resource Center](#), which is UW-Madison's office for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for establishing accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin state law, and university policies. Implementing reasonable accommodations is a shared responsibility between students and instructors, so I ask that you inform me of any needs as soon as possible, certainly within the first three weeks of class. I promise to do what I can to accommodate whatever needs you may have, including but not necessarily limited to those recommended by the McBurney Center.

Format

In-person lecture and discussion. (There are no distinct discussion sections for this course.)

Course Objectives & Learning Outcomes

The goal of this course is for you to interpret the readings and to come to your own conclusions. What you learn in this class, and the quality of our experience together, depends on your commitment to reading closely, coming to class with informed ideas and questions, and being prepared to help your classmates answer theirs.

Throughout the semester, you will learn to do the following:

- Identify the major turning points in Russian imperial history between 1801 and 1917.
- Interpret course materials to arrive at your own conclusions about the major debates in the field.
- Develop and answer historical questions through engagement with primary sources and secondary literature.
- Evaluate primary sources in terms of their perspective, credibility, and utility for analysis.
- Understand, summarize, and critique arguments presented in secondary literature.
- Communicate your ideas, questions, and conclusions clearly in written and spoken form.
- Write a strong, clear thesis statement supported with evidence that you cite, paraphrase, and/or quote.

Required Work & Methods of Assessment

- Within the first three weeks of class, each of you should plan to meet with me individually for roughly ten minutes. This will give us the chance to learn more about one another, and for you to ask any questions or express any concerns you have about the course.
- Complete assigned readings and come to class. My lectures are meant to both complement and supplement the material covered in the assigned readings. In other words, they may overlap, one may expand upon the other, or they may cover distinct—but related—material. You should complete the readings for each session before coming to class. Please bring copies of readings to class with you.
- Discussion board posts (on Canvas) and informed, engaged class participation. By 9am on days when we have class, you should submit a brief response to the assigned readings for that day. (This means that most weeks, you will be submitting two posts—one for each meeting.) These do not need to be longer than one or two paragraphs. The idea is that by taking the time to reflect and engage with what you've read, you'll be better prepared for class, written assignments, and exams. I view these as more of a warm-up for class than a formal assessment of your grasp on the material. I do not grade these individually but they do cumulatively count towards your participation grade. I promise to provide written comments on one of your posts in the first few weeks of class to help make them more useful to you.
- By October 12 you will submit a two-page interpretive essay that corresponds to material covered in the first five weeks of class. Essentially, these essays will be expanded and revised versions of one of your discussion posts. It is up to you to decide what topic you'd like to address.

- Two in-class exams (mid-term and final). You will take the mid-term exam in class on October 19. You will take the final exam on December 15 at 7:25pm-9:25pm.
- A letter to Karl Marx (roughly three-four pages in length), due on November 21.

Deadlines, Late Work, & Attendance

I acknowledge that your time is a finite resource and that there are many demands on it. I hope that I have paced readings and assignments in a manner that balances the course's learning objectives with a respect for your time. My deadlines are meant to keep you on track and protect you from a bottleneck of work. Having said that, life happens. If you are feeling stressed about completing an assignment on time, please send me an email at least twenty-four hours before the deadline so that we can make any necessary arrangements. I will automatically grant extensions if you notify me at least twenty-four hours before the deadline. If you request an extension with fewer than twenty-four hours remaining until the deadline, I will review your request on a case-by-case basis.

You have two excused absences in this course—no questions asked and no need to notify me in advance. If you need to miss more than two class sessions, I ask that you email me with at least forty-eight hours advanced notice.

Grading Breakdown

- Attendance and participation (including discussion posts on Canvas): 30%
- Interpretive essay (two-three pages): 10%
- Midterm exam: 20%
- Letter to Karl Marx (three-four pages): 15%
- Final exam: 25%

Grading Scale

A: 93-100 AB: 88-92 B: 83-87 BC: 78-82 C: 70-77 D: 60-69 F: 0-59

Accessing Course Materials

All readings on the syllabus are required and are available in PDF format on the course's Canvas site. Research has shown that people retain more of what they read when they do so in paper copy and annotate what they read. You are not required to buy any materials for this class.

Regular and Substantive Student Interaction

Our class meetings provide the main opportunity to engage in regular and substantive student interaction. During class I will provide direct instruction through lectures, answer student questions about course content, and facilitate student discussion of the course materials. Additionally, I will be available during my weekly office hours for one-on-one or group meetings with students. If you would like to meet but have a scheduling conflict with my office hours, please email me so that we can find an alternative time. I try to respond to all emails within twenty-four hours. I will provide further substantive interaction by providing written feedback on assignments.

Academic Integrity

If you are having difficulty with an assignment or feeling like you don't have enough time to complete work for this course, please see me. It is my experience that most instances of academic misconduct are the result of panic in the face of deadlines and mounting workloads. As established in the above note, "Deadlines and Late Work," I have a flexible policy that prioritizes your learning in full recognition of the many other demands on your time.

By enrolling in this course, you are agreeing to join UW-Madison's scholarly community and to uphold its high academic standards. Academic misconduct is behavior that compromises the integrity of the university. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit such acts are examples of misconduct. I understand plagiarism as including—but not limited to—the following:

- Using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation.
- Copying from another text without proper acknowledgment of your indebtedness to that source. (This includes software such as ChatGPT.)
- Submitting work written by another person.
- Presenting somebody else's work as your own.

Academic misconduct may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary sanctions include—but are not limited to—failure on the assignment or for the course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, or suspension. For substantial or repeated cases of misconduct, I will confer with the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards for further review. For more information, please refer to <https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-misconduct/>. I also encourage you to speak with me if you have any questions about what does and does not constitute academic misconduct.

A Note on Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Please be aware that my policy on AI may be different from those of instructors for your other courses. There is no standard university-wide policy. I encourage students to think critically about using generative AI software, such as ChatGPT, in educational settings. In particular, I ask that you reflect on how it interferes with the course's stated learning objectives—that is, for "you to interpret the readings and to come to *your own* conclusions." You may not submit text generated by AI as your own writing. If you submit AI-generated text for class assignments, I will consider that plagiarism.

History Lab

The History Lab is the Department of History's writing center. Our graduate student staff offer expert, one-on-one advising for your projects (both in-person and virtually). Regardless of the stage of your project—choosing a topic, conducting research, outlining, drafting, revising—the History Lab staff will be able to help. Please visit the [website](#) for instructions on how to schedule an appointment or to find tips, guides, and other resources to help with assignments.

Explanation of Credit Hours

This class meets for two, 75-minute class periods each week over the fall/spring semester and carries the expectation that students will work on course learning activities (reading, writing,

studying, etc.) for about 3 hours out of the classroom for every class period. The syllabus includes more information about meeting times and expectations for student work.

Requisites: Sophomore standing

Course Designations: Breadth-Social Science; Level – Intermediate; L&S credit – counts as Liberal Arts and Science credit in L&S; Counts toward 50% graduate coursework requirement.

Week 1

September 7 – Eurasia and the Stakes of Imperial Russian History

- Nothing to read for this week—but please listen to “Putin vs. Ukrainian History” (23 mins.), an episode of the podcast *The Naked Pravda*, which features an interview with Dr. Faith Hillis, a historian at the University of Chicago:
<https://meduza.io/en/episodes/2022/02/26/putin-vs-ukrainian-history>.

Week 2

September 12 – The Russian Empire in the Eighteenth Century

- Kivelson and Suny, *Russia's Empires* (89-115, 134-39)

September 14 – Autocracy, Elite Political Culture, and the Assassination of Paul I

- Lieven, “The Elites” (225-44) [*The Cambridge History of Russia*, vol. 2]
- “Theophanes Prokopovich: The Justice of the Monarch’s Will in Designating the Heir to His Realm, 1722” (371-73) [*A Source Book for Russian History*, vol. 2]
- “Catherine II’s Charter to the Nobility, 1785” (113-17). [Dmytryshyn]
- “Czartoryski’s Account of the Events Surrounding the Assassination of Paul, 1801” (153-65) [Dmytryshyn]

Week 3

September 19 – The Socio-Legal Framework of the Russian Empire: *Sosloviia* [Estates]

- Smith, *For the Common Good and Their Own Well-Being* (1-13; 95-122)
- “A Restriction on Educational Opportunities for Nonprivileged Members of Russian Society, August 1827” (237-38) [Dmytryshyn]

September 21 – Serfdom: An Imperial System or Set of Local Social Relations?

- “Society: The Lower and Middling Estates of Imperial Russia” (290-92) [*Reinterpreting Russian History*]
- Hoch, “The Peasant Commune” (297-303) [*Reinterpreting Russian History*]
- Kolchin, “Peasant Patterns of Resistance” (303-11) [*Reinterpreting Russian History*]
- “Estate Owners’ Instructions: I. I. Shuvalov and V. G. Orlov” (444-47) [*A Source Book for Russian History*, vol. 2]
- “Nicholas I’s Speech in the State Council on the Peasant Problem, March 30, 1842” (552-53) [*A Source Book for Russian History*]

Week 4

September 26 – The Incorporation of Ukraine

- Kappeler, *The Russian Empire* (60-69)
- Shevchenko, “Preface to an Unpublished Edition of *Kobzar*” (101-04) [*Towards an Intellectual History of Ukraine*]
- Mykola Kostomarov, “The Books of the Genesis of the Ukrainian People” (94-100) [*Towards an Intellectual History of Ukraine*]

September 28 – Imperial Russia and the Napoleonic Wars

- Evtuhov and Stites, *A History of Russia* (1-32)

- “Alexander I’s Proclamation during the War of 1812” (190-92) [Dmytryshyn]
- “M. I. Kutuzov’s Report to Alexander I Concerning the Evacuation of Moscow, September 16, 1812” (192-93) [Dmytryshyn]
- Herzen, *My Past and Thoughts* (3-11)
- Martin, “Russia and the Legacy of 1812” (145-61) [*Cambridge History of Russia*, vol. 2]

Week 5

October 3 – Political Alternatives, Constitutionalism, and the Decembrists

- Raeff, *The Decembrist Movement* (1-29)
- “Excerpts from Pestel’s Testimony,” (222-26) [Dmytryshyn]
- “Nicholas I’s Own Account of the Events of December 14, 1825” (528-30) [*A Source Book for Russian History*, vol. 2]
- “Polish Freedoms under the Constitution of 1815” (195-99) [Dmytryshyn]
- “Polish Dethronement of Nicholas I, 1831” (199-200) [Dmytryshyn]
- “A Statement by Nicholas I to Polish Representatives, October 1835” (200-01) [Dmytryshyn]

October 5 – Ideas about Russian-ness: Slavophiles, Westernizers, and Official Nationality

- Evtuhov and Stites, *A History of Russia* (36-62)
- Walicki, “The Slavophiles” (92-114) [*A History of Russian Thought*]
- “Peter Ia. Chaadaev’s Critical Comments on Russian History and Culture, 1829” (246-52) [Dmytryshyn]
- “Statute and Rules of the Cyril-Methodius Society,” (261-63) [Dmytryshyn]
- “A Report to Nicholas I by Count A. F. Orlov, Chief of Gendarmes, Concerning the Activity of the Saints Cyril and Methodius Society, May 1848” (264-66) [Dmytryshyn]

Week 6

October 10 – Provincial Life during the Reign of Nicholas I – OR – Russian Imperialism in the Americas

- Readings TBA

October 12 – Russian Imperialism in the Caucasus

*****Deadline for two-page interpretive essay*****

- Kappeler, *The Russian Empire* (168-85)
- Excerpts from *The Shining of Daghestani Swords* (11-16, 19-23, 25-30, 35-42, 61-70)
- “Population Transfer: Negotiating the Resettlement of Chechen Refugees in the Ottoman Empire” (60-68) [*Russian-Arab Worlds*]

Week 7

October 17 – European Geopolitics: The Revolutions of 1848 and the Crimean War

*No readings – review for exam.

October 19 – IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAMINATION

(The exam will cover material from weeks 1-6.)

Week 8

October 24 – The Abolition of Serfdom and the Great Reforms

- Evtuhov and Stites, *A History of Russia* (98-118)
- Zakharova, “The Reign of Alexander II: A Watershed?” (593-616) [*The Cambridge History of Russia*, vol. 2]
- “The Emancipation Manifesto, March 3, 1861” (307-11) [Dmytryshyn]
- “Opposition to the Emancipation” (596-97) [*A Source Book for Russian History*]
- “The Popular Response to the Emancipation, from the Memoirs of Prince Kropotkin, 1861” (126-27) [*The Russia Reader*]

October 26 – Gradual Emancipation and Village Life in Late Imperial Russia

- Tian-Shanskaia, *Village Life in Late Tsarist Russia* (62-73, 116-67)

Week 9

October 31 – Populism, Terrorism, and Political Awakening

- Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire* (345-66)
- “Alexander Herzen defends the ‘Hidden Russia,’ 1851” (329-40) [*Major Problems in the History of Imperial Russia*]
- “The Catechism of a Revolutionary, 1868” (350-54) [Dmytryshyn]
- Breshkovaskaia, “Going to the People” (344-57) [*Readings in Russian Civilization*, vol. 2]
- “The Program of the Land and Freedom Group, October 25, 1878” (662-63) [*A Source Book for Russian History*]

November 2 – Marxism and Imperial Russia

- “Letter from Marx to the Editor of *Otechestvennye zapiski* (*Notes of the Fatherland*), 1877” [marxists.org]
- Marx and Engels, “Preface to the Russian Edition of 1882” (471-72) [*The Marx-Engels Reader*]
- Marx and Engels, “Manifesto of the Communist Party” (473-500) [*The Marx-Engels Reader*]
- “Letter from Vera Zasulich to Karl Marx, February 16, 1881” [marxists.org]
- “Karl Marx: The Reply to Zasulich, March 8, 1881” [marxists.org]
- “Program of Plekhanov’s Group for the Emancipation of Labor, 1884” (400-05) [Dmytryshyn]

*****Assignment distributed: Letter to Karl Marx, due November 21*****

Week 10

November 7 – Reaction and/or Reform during the Reign of Alexander III

- Evtuhov and Stites, *A History of Russia* (142-57)
- “Pobedonostsev’s Criticism of Modern society,” (382-99) [Dmytryshyn]

November 9 – The Social and Economic Dimensions of Industrialization

- Evtuhov and Stites, *A History of Russia* (158-78)
- “S. I. Kanatchikov Recounts His Adventures as a Peasant-Worker-Activist, 1879-1896” (528-48) [*Major Problems in the History of Imperial Russia*]

Week 11

November 14 – The Politics of Nation and Religion in Late Imperial Russia

- Kane, *Russian Hajj* (47-119)

November 16 – Russian Imperialism in the Far East and Central Asia

- Geyer, *Russian Imperialism* (86-100)
- Sahadeo, “Epidemic and Empire: Ethnicity, Class, and ‘Civilization’ in the 1892 Tashkent Cholera Riot” (117-39)

Week 12

*****Letter to Karl Marx due November 21*****

November 21 – The Russo-Japanese War and the Revolution of 1905

- Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire* (398-423)
- Kappeler, *The Russian Empire* (328-48)

November 23 – NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK

***Consider seeing the film *Napoleon*, which comes out in theaters on November 22.

Week 13

November 28 – Constitutional and Agrarian Experiments

- Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire* (424-52)
- “Programs of Russian Political Parties” (425-50) [Dmytryshyn]
 - The Bolsheviks (426-31)
 - The Socialist Revolutionaries (431-38)
 - The Constitutional Democrats, a.k.a. “Cadets/Kadets” (438-444)
 - The Union of the Russian People (444-50)

November 30 – The Russian Empire and the First World War

- Von Hagen, “The First World War” (94-113) [*The Cambridge History of Russia*]
- “Letters from the Front, 1917” (326-330) [*The Russia Reader*]
- “Miliukov’s Speech in the Duma, November 1, 1916” (870) [*A Source Book for Russian History*]
- “Buchanan’s Audience with the Tsar, December 30, 1916” (875-76) [*A Source Book for Russian History*]
- “The Abdication Manifesto of Nicholas II, March 2, 1917” (882-83) [*A Source Book for Russian History*]

Week 14

December 5 – The February and October Revolutions

- Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution* (40-67)
- “Lenin’s Call for an Uprising” (52-53) [*A Documentary History of Communism in Russia*]
- “The Declaration of Revolutionary Intent—Trotsky” (54-55) [*A Documentary History of Communism in Russia*]
- “The Decision to Seize Power” (55-56) [*A Documentary History of Communism in Russia*]
- “Bolshevik Opposition to the Insurrection” (56-57) [*A Documentary History of Communism in Russia*]
- “Voices of Revolution, 1917” (336-37) [*The Russia Reader*]

December 7 – Imperial Collapse or Suspension?

- Smith, *Red Nations* (17-52)
- Hrushevskii, “A Free Ukraine” (227-38) [*Towards an Intellectual History of Ukraine*]
- The Four Universals of the Ukrainian *Rada*, 1917-18

Week 15

December 12 – Red Threads: Looking backwards from 1917

- Burbank, “An Imperial Rights Regime: Law and Citizenship in the Russian Empire” (397-431)
- Hrushevskii, “The Traditional Scheme of ‘Russian’ History and the Problem of Rational Organization of the History of the East Slavs”
- Putin, “On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians”

FINAL EXAM: Friday, December 15 at 7:25pm-9:25pm