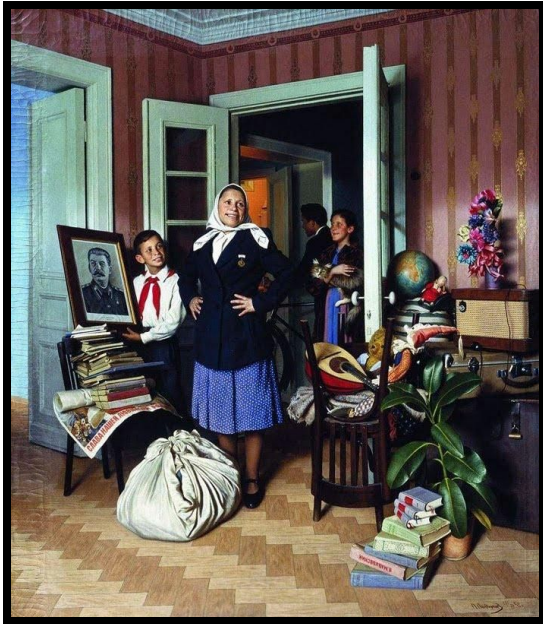


Revolutionary Russia and the Soviet Union, 1856-2000



Dr. Julia Fein

Tuesday / Thursday 1:20-2:50

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Real support in a genuine struggle is given to those who strive for the maximum.

— Vladimir Il'ich Lenin

The children of the Soviet seventies chose Pepsi in the same way that their parents chose Brezhnev.

— Viktor Pelevin, *Generation P*

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Dear historians!

Welcome to modern Russian history. From the nineteenth-century Great Reforms through Perestroika, the long experiment in enacting revolutionary change in the Russian Empire and Soviet Union was about creating an alternative to existing modes of production, exploitative social relations, and autocratic political structures. It was also about transforming the natural and built environments, and bringing “culture” (comprising everything from poetry and ballet to soap and changes of underwear), along with political consciousness, to a huge, largely agrarian country with an ethnically and religiously diverse population. This class will give you an introduction to a range of problems and periods in Russian imperial, Soviet, and post-Soviet history. What you learn in this class will serve as a foundation for further study of Russian/Soviet history, literature, or culture, or as comparative context for courses in European, East Asian, or Cold War history. You will also acquire and explore a range of analytical categories for thinking about history—such as resistance, consumption, the everyday, and subjectivity—that you can take take with you into your later studies.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Give an informed overview of Russian late imperial, Soviet, and 1990s Russian geopolitical, social, domestic political, cultural, and economic history.

2. Interrogate diverse primary sources from the 19th and 20th centuries. What kinds of questions do we as historians pose to different kinds of texts and objects? How do we analyze the language in which people wrote about the world around them in order to understand the values of an unfamiliar civilization like Stalinism? How did people's understandings of their country and of their own lives change to fit new times? *Two informal response papers on primary source texts of your choice will allow you to practice this questioning approach to source analysis.*
3. Approach historical narratives critically, with an appreciation of the political and cultural stakes in telling a story one way and not another. How is historical scholarship itself a product of history? How did the Cold War, Perestroika, and the dissolution of the U.S.S.R. shape understandings of Russia's trajectories in the Reforms, revolutionary years, Civil War, Stalin years, and so on? *Two informal response papers on scholarly articles or book sections of your choice will allow you to practice this.*
4. Exercise analytical skills to posit arguments about historical changes, continuities, and their significance, and use evidence from texts to defend these arguments. These skills will be modeled during class, which is why class preparation and participation are so important. *Two six-page formal papers will require you to demonstrate these skills through a synthesis of two or three primary sources to make an argument about the nature and meaning of historical change in a particular area of modern Russian history (e.g. gender; violence; the West; imperial governance).*

SELECTED TOPICS AND THEMES

- Russia's peasant legacy in agriculture and culture
- Empire, nationalities policy, and ethnic / religious diversity
 - Meanings of "the West" in Russian history
- High politics: repression, reform, and military and economic security
- Women's lives and gender relations in revolutionary ideology and reality
 - Privilege, the Party, and social mobility from the 1920s-1980s
 - Individual subjectivities, belief, and the question of resistance
 - The environment in Russian / Soviet history

REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS

1. Attendance and participation: 200 points

This is a mixed lecture and discussion class, so your voices will be heard on a regular basis. It is therefore essential to keep up with the assigned reading of primary and scholarly texts, highlight and make notes on these, and bring them to class. Productive participation means not just answering my questions, but also: posing your own questions; listening to your fellow students and responding to their comments and questions; and having specific passages in the assigned reading underlined or highlighted in order to illustrate your points when you speak in discussions. **Bringing the assigned reading with you to class is essential to all of the above (see note below on the textbook).** One absence during the semester is excused, no questions asked, but you may have no more than three unexplained absences in order to pass the class.

We will mostly be using the Rowley textbook as background reading. You should read the entire book by the end of the course, but the "Eurasian context" sections and primary source extracts are

the most important to keep up with on a weekly basis. You do not need to bring the textbook to class except when there is a primary source reading assigned in it.

2. *Two six-page (double-spaced) papers: 200 points each*

You are encouraged to discuss these papers with classmates, but all written work must be your own. I am happy to meet with you in office hours before these deadlines, and to give feedback on outlines and/or introductory paragraphs (not complete drafts) up to 24 hours before the due date. General topics are introduced in the syllabus (see below). Further instructions will be provided approximately ten days before the deadlines.

3. *Four two-page (double-spaced) informal response essays: 50 points each*

Over the course of the semester you will write four brief thought pieces focusing on *one reading* for that day. At least one and no more than two must be done sometime in Weeks 1-4, another one in Weeks 5-7, and the final one or two at any time, leaving at least one until after spring break. Response papers may include general reactions, address any confusion about the reading, and offer thoughts about how the text connects to other readings, discussions, and themes in the course. You should also offer one or two questions for class that prompt discussion: these are not questions that can be answered simply with additional facts; they are questions on which people can defend their answers but can also disagree. These will not be graded for composition or organization, but must be written in complete sentences and paragraphs.

Two of these must be on primary sources, and two on scholarly articles or book sections. They are due by email to me by 11 a.m. on the day of the class for which they are written.

4. *Final exam: 200 points*

The final exam will consist of: ten directed, topical questions of which you should answer eight of your choice in a short paragraph, and an essay. You may bring to the exam one sheet of notebook/printer paper covered front and back with notes. This piece of paper may include notes or an outline for the essay question, distributed in advance, but the essay must be written during the exam block on May 7 from 1:30-3:30.

POLICIES AND SUPPORT

If you are struggling in the class, you should first consult me and/or one of your classmates. While it is important that you let me know if you feel you are struggling, you may wish to go directly to the [Macalester Academic Excellence \(MAX\) Center](#), located in Kagin Commons. The MAX Center has peer tutors available for students in all stages of their writing. Hours are 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., Sunday through Thursday. You may drop in or call 651-696-6121 during the day or 651-696-6193 in the evening to schedule an appointment.

Students with disabilities are accommodated and protected from discrimination at Macalester College. Please coordinate communication about any problems with me and with the [Disability Services](#) office.

Maintaining academic integrity and abiding by the rules of scholarly inquiry are central to the college experience. This class will follow [Macalester's policies and procedures](#) for dealing with plagiarism or other breaches in academic integrity.

Macalester College is committed to fostering a safe and productive learning environment for all students. As a faculty member, it is my goal that you feel able to share information about your experiences as a student; however, please know that I am required to report any disclosure of harm to self or others, or any reported sexual misconduct of any kind, to the appropriate college personnel who are responsible for responding to such reports.

BOOKS FOR PURCHASE

- David Rowley, *Exploring Russia's Past: Narratives, Sources, Images* Volume 2 (Pearson)
- Eugenia Ginzburg, *Journey into the Whirlwind* (HBC Trade)
- Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (Penguin)
- Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted* (Oxford)

SCHEDULE OF READINGS, TOPICS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1

- David Rowley, *Exploring Russia's Past*, 1-50 (not required of students who took *History of Russia to 1855* in the Fall)

JANUARY 21. Introductions

In class: Syllabus
Russian state and society at the end of the Crimean War

- Joseph Brodsky, "Spoils of War," 6-9

Week 2

- David Rowley, *Exploring Russia's Past*, 55-75

JANUARY 26. The Great Reforms

Lecture: Presentation of the issues facing the state at Alexander II's accession
The Great Reforms of 1861-1874

- Catherine Evtuhov, *Portrait of a Russian Province*, 145-164
- Gregory Freeze, ed., *From Supplication to Revolution: A Documentary Social History of Imperial Russia*, 106-107, 122-126, 143-147, 178-179 and 190-196

JANUARY 28. Ideas and action in the 19th century

Lecture: "Fathers and Children": revolutionary movements, big ideas, and practical actions of the 1860s-1890s

- Ivan Turgenev, *Fathers and Sons*, 3-43
- Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, 1-14, 16-18, 20-35

Week 3

- David Rowley, *Exploring Russia's Past*, 79-101

FEBRUARY 2. Rural, urban, and imperial in the late 19th century

Lecture: Sergei Witte and industrialization
The villages, famine, and cholera in the 1890s

Peoples of the Russian Empire

Russian conservatism, the Orthodox Church, and Russification

- Olga Semyonova Tian-Shanskaia, *Village Life in Late Tsarist Russia*, 50-61 and 139-169
- Jeff Sahadeo, "Epidemic and Empire: Ethnicity, Class, and 'Civilization' in the 1892 Tashkent Cholera Riot," *Slavic Review* 64, no. 1 (2005): 117-139

FEBRUARY 4. Revolutions of 1905 in European Russia and in the Empire

Lecture: The Russo-Japanese War
 Workers' and peasants' 1905 in European Russia
 1905 in the Caucasus in regional context
 The state's responses, 1905-1907

- Gregory Freeze, ed., *From Supplication to Revolution: A Documentary Social History of Imperial Russia*, 221-222, 236-237, 241-244, 277-280 and 291-292
- Georgii Gapon, "Workers' Petition," in Robert Weinberg and Laurie Bernstein, eds., *Revolutionary Russia: A History in Documents*, 23-27
- "The Fundamental Laws of Imperial Russia, 1906," in textbook, 96-98
- Timothy Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil*, 31-39 and 45-54

Week 4

FEBRUARY 9. Debating Russia's pre-revolutionary direction

Lecture: The Stolypin reforms and the Duma period
 The Resettlement Administration and the new face of Russian Empire
 Introduction to the Haimson-Yaney debate

- Alfred Rieber, "The Sedimentary Society," *Russian History* 16, nos. 2-4 (1989): 353-376
- K. P. Pobedonostsev, "The Falsehood of Democracy," in Thomas Riha, ed., *Readings in Russian Civilization* 2, 390-401

In class: Russian Silver Age painting / music

FEBRUARY 11. Russian Social Democracy in the early 20th century

Lecture: Marxist theory on classes and peasants
 The Bolshevik-Menshevik split and its manifestations after 1905
 Anti-imperialism and feminism in Russian revolutionary doctrine

- Vladimir Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism*, chapters VI, VII and IX (online)
- Aleksandra Kollontai, "The Social Basis of the Woman Question" (online)

In class: *Red Empire* documentary on Lena goldfields massacre and strikes

*** First response paper due ***

Week 5

- David Rowley, *Exploring Russia's Past*, 106-126

FEBRUARY 16. Russia's World War I

Lecture: Introduction to WWI issues: home front; economy; military; royal family

- Pavel Durnovo, "Memorandum to the Tsar"

In class: *Red Empire* documentary on World War I and 1916 uprisings in Central Asia

FEBRUARY 18. 1917

Lecture: February through October events
 The debate on continuing the war

- Viktor Shklovsky, *A Sentimental Journey: Memoirs, 1917-1922*, 7-30
- Sheila Fitzpatrick and Yuri Slezkine, eds., *In the Shadow of Revolution: Life Stories of Russian Women from 1917 to the Second World War*, 49-65

Week 6

- David Rowley, *Exploring Russia's Past*, 131-151

FEBRUARY 23. From Revolution to Civil War

Lecture: The Civil War in the heartland
Civil war in the Caucasus, Central Asia, Siberia, and Russo-Polish War
The Party and people under War Communism

- Viktor Shklovsky, *A Sentimental Journey: Memoirs, 1917-1922* (1923), 59-82 and 97-105
- Sheila Fitzpatrick and Yuri Slezkine, eds., *In the Shadow of Revolution: Life Stories of Russian Women from 1917 to the Second World War*, 113-117
- Peter Holquist, "Violent War, Deadly Marxism? Russia in the Epoch of Violence, 1905-21" *Kritika* 4, no. 3 (2003): 627-652

Film screening outside of class, *At Home among Strangers* (for brief discussion in next class, and again in 1970s context)

FEBRUARY 25. NEP and the battle for the Party

Lecture: X Party Congress
How transformative was War Communism?
High politics after Lenin
NEPmen, the peasantry, and the scissors crisis

- "The Debate about NEP" in Robert Weinberg and Laurie Bernstein, eds., *Revolutionary Russia: A History in Documents*, 112-117
- Walter Benjamin, *Moscow Diary*, 9-12, 17-38, 46-56, 60-69, 70-71, 82-85, 90-92, 104-105 and 110-116

In class: Excerpts from *Man with a Movie Camera* and *One Sixth Part of the World*

Week 7

- David Rowley, *Exploring Russia's Past*, 155-176

MARCH 1. Early Soviet nationalities policy

Lecture: Affirmative action empire?
Trajectories and explanations: from 1920s indigenization to 1930s deportations

- Iosif Stalin, "Report on National Factors in Party and State Affairs," in textbook, 146-147
- Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland*, 18-51 and 84-117

MARCH 3. Cultural Revolution

Lecture: Cultural Revolution in the professions, academies, and arts
Cultural Revolution in the peripheries: women as the "surrogate proletariat"
War on the old *byt*

- Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism, Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, 75-88
- Marianne R. Kamp, "Three Lives of Saodat: Communist, Uzbek, Survivor," *Oral History*

Review 28, no. 2 (Summer-Autumn 2001): 21-58

- Yuri Slezkine, "From Savages to Citizens: Cultural Revolution in the Soviet Far North, 1928-1938," *Slavic Review* 51, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 52-76

In class: Excerpts from *First Song about Lenin*

*** Second response paper due ***

Week 8

MARCH 8. Industrialization, collectivization, famine

Lecture: The Great Break as policy
Genocidal famines in Ukraine and Kazakhstan

- Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism, Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, 24-38
- Sheila Fitzpatrick and Yuri Slezkine, eds., *In the Shadow of Revolution: Life Stories of Russian Women from 1917 to the Second World War*, 305-321 and 219-234

In class: *Red Empire* documentary on industrialization and collectivization

MARCH 10. The 1930s: discussion

Lecture: The daily life of the Soviet industrial economy
Education and social mobility
The Great Break as repression

- John Scott, *Behind the Urals*, 3-51
- Mukhamet Shayakhmetev, *The Silent Steppe: the Story of a Kazakh Nomad under Stalin*, pages TBD

FIRST FORMAL PAPER DUE, MARCH 13: WHAT – AND WHEN – WAS THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION?

- Using our class readings as evidence, make an argument about what you think the most significant turning points were in the thing we call the "Russian Revolution," from the Great Reforms era through World War II. When did it begin? When was it fulfilled? When did it end? You may focus on: 1) high politics, political culture, and/or the economy; 2) everyday life (e.g. social relations; gender; the social meaning of goods in Russian/Soviet life); or 3) individual subjectivities/psychologies. Be sure to make clear in your papers that not all sources are alike: you cannot pose the same questions to a decree on housing as to a memoir.

SPRING BREAK: NOTE LONG READING FOR MARCH 24

Week 9

- David Rowley, *Exploring Russia's Past*, 180-201

MARCH 22. 1930s contradictions and review

Lecture: Stalinist privilege and the Party
"Great Retreat"? in domestic politics and in Stalinist visual culture
The Kirov Murder and purges of Old Bolsheviks
European and East Asian politics and international fears
Changing strategies in the Comintern: the Popular Fronts

- Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*, 19-37 OR 75-98

- Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism, Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, 42-50, 67-71, 90-109 and 152-162

MARCH 24. Stalin and the Purges

Lecture: The Purges: why and how?
The question of belief
“Totalitarianism” as a label

- Eugenia Ginzburg, *Journey into the Whirlwind*, 1-270
- Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism, Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*, 164-172 and 190-199

Week 10

MARCH 29. The Great Patriotic War

Lecture: The Non-Aggression Pact with Germany and its consequences
Short-term disadvantages and long-term advantages for the Red Army
The home front in the western borderlands, and heartland
Central Asia, deportations, and evacuations

- Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland*, 192-225
- Ilya Ehrenburg, “The Justification of Hate,” Konstantin Simonov, “Smolensk Roads,” Aleksei Surkov, “Scout Pashkov,” and Aleksandr Tvardovsky, “Vasilii Tyorkin”
- Shostakovich’s 7th Symphony with footage of the Siege of Leningrad and survivors’ testimonies

MARCH 31. Postwar Stalinism

Lecture: Postwar international politics through the Berlin Crisis
Famine, currency reform, and Zhdanovshchina
The “Big Deal” and postwar gender (femininities)
Stiliagi, new cultural seepage from the West, and postwar gender (masculinities)

- Elena Zubkova, *Russia after the War: Hopes, Illusions, and Disappointments, 1945-1957*, 11-39, 68-87, 109-116 and 130-148

AND EITHER

- Mark Edele, “Strange Young Men in Stalin’s Moscow: the Birth and Life of the Stiliagi, 1945-1953,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 50, no. 1 (2002): 37-61

OR

- Vera Dunham, *In Stalin’s Time: Middleclass Values in Soviet Fiction*, 3-5, 11-23 and 41-58

Week 11

- David Rowley, *Exploring Russia’s Past*, 207-227

APRIL 5. De-Stalinization, science, and gender

Lecture: Nikita Khrushchev: background
Technological competition with the U.S. in space, military, and home
New exposures to the Bloc countries and to the West

- Nikita Khrushchev, “The Secret Speech” (excerpts, online)
- A. Topchiev, “A Great Victory of Soviet Science (Sputnik)” (online)
- Susan Reid, “Cold War in the Kitchen: Gender and the De-Stalinization of Consumer Taste in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev,” *Slavic Review* 61, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 211-252

In class: The “Kitchen Debate”

APRIL 7. The Thaw and its limits

- Lecture: The Khrushchev years, domestically: legality, agriculture, culture, economy
 The problem of “post-totalitarianism”
 Decolonization and the Cold War: the Soviet stance
- Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*

Week 12

- David Rowley, *Exploring Russia’s Past*, 233-252

APRIL 12. Dissidence and conformity under Brezhnev

- Lecture: From the failure of the Virgin Lands, Novocherkassk massacre, and social/educational policy to Khrushchev’s ouster
 Prague Spring and Brezhnev Doctrine
 Agriculture, urbanization, and social mobility in the 1970s
- Natalya Baranskaya, *A Week like Any Other* (read)
 - OR
 - *Moscow does not Believe in Tears* (watch online)

In class: *Red Empire* documentary on Sinyavsky-Daniel Trial

APRIL 14. Soviet environmental problems, legislation, and environmentalism under Brezhnev

- Lecture: Overview of Soviet approaches to nature since Stalin
 Health, nuclear energy, and environmental disasters, e.g. the Aral Sea
 The Helsinki Accords and new domestic pressures
 The question of civil society in late Soviet Russia
- Valentin Rasputin, *Siberia, Siberia!*, 119-177

Week 13

- David Rowley, *Exploring Russia’s Past*, 257-278

APRIL 19. The end of détente to Perestroika, 1979-1984

- Lecture: *Nomenklatura* and the end of the Big Deal?
 Facing corruption in the republics
 The succession and reform attempts from Brezhnev to Gorbachev
 War in Afghanistan
- Andrei Sakharov, *Memoirs*, pages TBD

APRIL 21. Perestroika

- Lecture: Perestroika, uskorenie, demokratizatsiia, glasnost’
 Ending the Cold War
- Nina Andreeva, “I Cannot Waive Principles”
 - Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970-2000*, 1-9 and 31-72
- In class: *Red Empire* documentary on 1980s events in the Baltics and the Caucasus

Film screening outside of class, *My Perestroika*, for addition to April 26 discussion

Week 14**APRIL 26. The end**

- Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970-2000*, 73-112
- *Letters to Gorbachev: Life in Russia through the Postbag of Argumenty i Fakty*, 7-8, 11-13, 22-23, 31-34, 49-55, 69-70, 79-87, 97-99, 107-109, 111-112, 132-135, 162-163 and 197

APRIL 28. From Yeltsin to Putin

- Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970-2000*, 113-220

*** Final response paper due ***

SECOND FORMAL PAPER DUE, MAY 2: THE PROBLEM OF REFORM

- Since World War II and Stalin's decline and death, none of the ruling elite thought that the U.S.S.R. should continue unreformed, though ideas of what this reform should consist of varied widely. Demonstrating a clear understanding of chronology of events and major political figures since the 1930s, analyze two or three class readings to make an argument about the most meaningful measures and the most meaningful failures in reforming Soviet life. Could the U.S.S.R have survived? You may focus on everyday life and consumption, society and a "public sphere," the Soviet Union in the world, urbanization and the economy, Party and state, or another area of your choice.

FINAL EXAM, MAY 7