

**ATH/HST/POL/REL/RUS 254**  
**Introduction to Russian and Eurasian Studies:**  
**Russia, Central Asia, and the Bonds of Empire**

Spring 2008

TR 12:30-1:45 – 210 Harrison Hall

Professor: Daniel Prior, History

Office & hours: 270 Upham, W 1:30-3:30, R 10:00-11:00 or by appointment

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Introduction to Russian and Eurasian Studies is a multidisciplinary course that examines major developments that have shaped the culture, society, and politics of Russia and the larger Eurasian region over the last millennium. For purposes of this course, the term *Eurasia* denotes Russia and all those independent states as well as ethnic and cultural groups that were, until 1991, part of the Soviet Union.

The course consists of two units: one on Russia and the Soviet Union as a whole, and one that focuses on a distinct world region that was for a time a crucial part of the Russian and Soviet empires: Central Asia. Under the general heading “The Bonds of Empire”, our inquiry will focus on understanding Central Asia’s distinctiveness as well as the long-standing relationships and interactions (for good or ill) between Russia and the region that today comprises the five independent “Stans”: Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan.

Both units are structured chronologically, while incorporating perspectives from history, anthropology, folklore, literature, music, politics, and religion. In each of these units, students will use both primary and secondary texts as well as film, music, and material on art and architecture.

This semester there are a lot of planned events around campus concerning Russia, the Soviet Union, and Central Asia, including lectures, films, a scholarly symposium on Uzbekistan, and a week-long residency and performance of “Ecstasy with the Pomegranate” by Ilkhom Theatre of Tashkent. Your participation in the course will include attendance at a number of these events.

**Course requirements:**

This is a reading and writing intensive class, so plan accordingly.

1. Basic knowledge of the geography of Russia and Eurasia is essential in order to understand the readings and lectures. The **map quizzes** in Weeks 3 and 11 will be based exactly on maps displayed and explained in class.
2. This course will rely heavily on your **participation** and engagement. You are expected to have completed the readings before class and prepared to discuss them. Your attendance will be noted, and so will your participation in our discussions and the level of this participation (for example, how well you foster the discussion, how often you participate, and the analytic content of this participation will be considered). Be generous with your attention and input to the rest of the group. Your participation is expected in a number of important ways outside the classroom as well. There are special evening and weekend events in late April, and you will be asked to complete evaluation forms for your classmates’ presentations and posters (see below) as another part of your participation grade.

3. Towards the end of the semester each student will do an individual **presentation** and paper. Choose one of these two “tracks” for the presentation project before March 27:

- A. Poster session plus 6-8 page final paper. Topic: concerning Central Asian history, culture, politics, religion, or literature, to be chosen in consultation with the instructor. You will present your research at a poster session during the symposium “Uzbekistan at the Crossroads,” Saturday, April 26.
- B. In-class presentation plus 8-10 page final paper. Topic: concerning Russian or Central Asian history, culture, politics, religion, or literature, to be chosen in consultation with the instructor. You will present your research in class April 22, April 29, or May 1.

4. Your **writing** will take a variety of forms in this course. In addition to the **final paper** (above), during the Russia unit you will be asked to write two 5-7 page **synthesis papers** on topics to be announced. In addition, you must turn in four 1-2 page **response papers** (one on the Uzbekistan symposium special lecture, one on either the morning or afternoon symposium session, one on “Ecstasy with the Pomegranate”, and one on a Havighurst Colloquium lecture of your choosing).

(Here is a schedule of the events outside class; see the requirements above for details about how these dates affect you:)

Mondays, 12:00-1:30, 209 Harrison: Havighurst Colloquium. (See schedule for dates and topics: <http://www.units.muohio.edu/havighurstcenter/events/documents/ColloquiaSpring08.pdf>)

MTWR April 21-24, 7:00-9:00, 204 Harrison : Evening film series on Uzbekistan.

Friday April 25, time TBA, MacMillan Great Room: Special lecture on Uzbekistan (presenter TBA).

Saturday April 26, all day: Symposium, “Uzbekistan at the Crossroads”; Student poster sessions (morning and afternoon).

Saturday April 26, 7:30, Gates-Abegglen Theatre: “Ecstasy with the Pomegranate.” Ilkhom Theatre.

### **Grade structure:**

Your grade will be calculated as follows:

Two map quizzes	10%
Participation:	15%
Presentation or poster	15%
Four 1-2 page response papers	10%
Two 5-7 page synthesis papers	30%
Final paper	20%

The following grade-percent values will be used in calculating grades: A ≥ 93%; A- = 90-92.9%; B+ = 87-89.9%; B = 83-86.9%; B- = 80-82.9%; C+ = 77-79.9%; C = 73-76.9%; C- = 70-72.9%; D+ = 67-69.9%; D = 63-66.9%; D- = 60-62.9%; F = 59.9% or below.

### **Readings:**

The three required books have been ordered in the bookstores (additional required readings, which are noted in the Course Outline, will be coming online in Blackboard in installments):

1. Roger Bartlett, *A History of Russia* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).
2. Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini, *Russia’s Orient* (Indiana University Press, 1997).
3. Jeff Sahadeo and Russell Zanca, *Everyday Life in Central Asia* (Indiana University Press, 2007).

**Policies:**

**1. Academic Integrity.** All individual work you turn in must be your own. Plagiarism and cheating are forms of academic misconduct, and the Miami University Student Handbook provides for serious penalties in verified cases of academic misconduct. If you are not sure what this means, consult the Student Handbook or ask for help; I will be happy to answer your questions.

**2. Timeliness.** You must take the quizzes and turn in the assignments at the scheduled times, and attend all classes. Turning in late work, and being absent from class more than a time or two, will normally have a detrimental effect on your grade. Lateness may be considered as absence. Requests for exceptions to these rules (they will be rare) should preferably come before the class date, and you must adhere to the make-up schedule and terms offered, which may include grade reductions.

**Suggestions:**

Have a question or comment? Email me ([priordg@muohio.edu](mailto:priordg@muohio.edu)). Call me (529-7148). Drop in to my office hours (W 1:30-3:30, R 10:00-11:00, 270 Upham). If those times aren't convenient, make an appointment and I'll see you then.

**Disability Services**

Students are encouraged to consult the Office of Disability Resources regarding any conditions that may affect their performance in class, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their accommodation needs.

## Course Outline

### UNIT 1: RUSSIA

#### Week 1.

**Tuesday, January 15.** Introduction. What is “Russia”? What is “Eurasia”? Geography, peoples, and religions.

**Thursday, January 17.** Origins of the Russian state; Mongol conquest and rule.

Reading:

Bartlett chapter 1; “The Tale of Igor”; “Boris and Gleb”.

#### Week 2.

**Tuesday, January 22.** Cultural, spiritual, and political revival; Ivan IV and the Russian monarchy.

Reading:

Bartlett chapter 2.

**Thursday, January 24.** Orthodoxy, aristocracy, and society.

Reading:

Epiphanius the Wise, “The Life, Acts, and Miracles of Our Blessed and Holy Father Sergius of Radonezh”; epistles of Prince Andrew Kurbsky and Ivan IV.

#### Week 3.

**Tuesday, January 29.** Crisis and recovery; Peter I and the birth of the Russian Empire.

Reading:

Bartlett chapter 3.

**Thursday, January 31.** Humanistic and imperialistic trends.

Map Quiz 1.

Reading: Druzhina-Osoryin, “The Life of Yuliana Lazarevsky”; “The Tale of the White Cowl”.

#### Week 4.

**Tuesday, February 5.** Religious schism and its effects.

Reading:

Avvakum, “The Life of Avvakum”.

**Thursday, February 7.** Synthesis paper 1 due in class.

The empire at its prime and in decline; Russia’s changing society.

Reading:

Bartlett chapter 4; Pushkin, “The Bronze Horseman”.

#### Week 5.

**Tuesday, February 12.** Romantic and modern cultural currents.

Reading:

Pushkin, “The Queen of Spades”; Gogol, “The Overcoat”.

**Thursday, February 14.** Expansion, internationalism and reform: Insurmountable challenges?

Reading:

Bartlett chapter 5.

#### Week 6.

**Tuesday, February 19.** Satirizing empire and personalizing individual life.

Reading:

Leskov, “Lefty”; Chekhov, “Lady with the Lapdog”.

**Thursday, February 21.** Revolution and the new Russia; Lenin and Stalin build socialism.

Film: “Moscow’s 800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary”.

Reading:

Bartlett chapter 6; Metropolitan Sergii, “Letter to Shepherds and the Flock”.

**Week 7.**

**Tuesday, February 26.** The U.S.S.R. as superpower; Stagnation and decline.

Reading:

Bartlett chapter 7.

**Thursday, February 28.** Voices of dissent and dissatisfaction; Glasnost.

Film: “Soviet Disunion” (part).

Reading:

Brodsky, “Less Than One”; “Single Young Women Workers in Moscow”; “Freedom for the Kitchen?”.

**Week 8.**

**Tuesday, March 4.** Russia after the Soviet Union; Putin as “antidote” to democratization and market reform?

Film: “Soviet Disunion” (part).

Reading:

Bartlett chapter 8; Kotkin, “Trashcanistan”; Hill, “Russia: The 21<sup>st</sup> Century’s Energy Superpower?”

**Thursday, March 6.** Reflecting on recent history; Summary and review.

Reading:

Bradatan, “A Time of Crisis, a Crisis of (the Sense of) Time”; Dawisha, “Communism as a Lived System of Ideas”.

## **UNIT 2: CENTRAL ASIA**

**Week 9.**

**Tuesday, March 11.** **Synthesis paper 2 due in class.**

Introduction to Central Asia; Geography and peoples; Russia and its Orient.

Reading:

*Everyday Life in Central Asia* chapter 1; *Russia’s Orient* chapter 2.

**Thursday, March 13.** Crossing and prodding the religious divide.

Reading:

*Russia’s Orient* chapter 1; Geraci, “Going Abroad or Going to Russia?”; “Russian Relations with Tatars and Kalmyks”.

### **Spring Break.**

**Week 10.**

**Tuesday, March 25.** The Russian presence and nomadic life.

Reading:

*Everyday Life in Central Asia* chapter 2; *Russia’s Orient* chapter 12; “Russian Policy in Regard to Indigenous Peoples”.

**Thursday, March 27.** Conquest and military rule in Turkistan.

Reading:

*Russia's Orient* chapters 6, 9; "The Gorchakov Circular".

**Decisions on presentation "tracks" due today.**

**Week 11.**

**Tuesday, April 1.** Tashkent before the Revolution (setting the stage for "Ecstasy with the Pomegranate").

**Map Quiz 2.**

Reading:

Sahadeo, "War, Empire, and Society, 1914-1916".

**Thursday, April 3.** Gender in Soviet Central Asia.

Reading:

*Everyday Life in Central Asia* chapters 6, 7; "Soviet Gender Politics in Central Asia".

**Week 12.**

**Tuesday, April 8.** Islam and the hazards of authorship in Soviet Central Asia.

Reading:

Fitrat, "Judgment Day" (2 versions)

**Thursday, April 10.** Central Asians and the "Friendship of Peoples".

Reading:

Short fiction by Chingiz Aitmatov (TBA)

**Week 13.**

**Tuesday, April 15.** Political independence and the dynamics of daily life.

Reading:

*Everyday Life in Central Asia* chapters 10, 11.

**Thursday, April 17.** New intricacies of identity.

Reading:

*Everyday Life in Central Asia* chapters 5, 18.

**Week 14.**

**Monday, April 21.**

**Evening film:** TBA.

**Tuesday, April 22.** Islamic reawakening in Uzbekistan; presentations.

Reading:

*Everyday Life in Central Asia*, chapter 20.

**Evening film:** "You Are Not an Orphan".

**Wednesday, April 23.**

**Evening film:** "The Orator".

**Thursday, April 24.** Aspects of contemporary Central Asia.

**Guest appearance:** Members of the Ilkhom Theatre company.

*Everyday Life in Central Asia* chapter 13; "Hearts of the new Silk Roads".

**Evening film:** "End of an Era: Tashkent".

**Friday, April 25.**

**Required lecture:** TBA.

**Saturday, April 26.**

**Symposium and Poster Sessions:** “Uzbekistan at the Crossroads”, MacMillan Hall. Schedule TBA.

**Performance:** Ilkhom Theatre, “Ecstasy with the Pomegranate”. Gates-Abegglen Theatre, 7:30 p.m.

**Week 15.**

**Tuesday, April 29.** Discussion of “Ecstasy with the Pomegranate”; religion in Central Asia; presentations.

**Reading:**

*Everyday Life in Central Asia*, chapter 22.

**Thursday, May 1.** Central Asia and Russia at the crossroads; presentations.

**Reading:**

McGlinchey, “Autocrats, Islamists, and the Rise of Radicalism in Central Asia”; Olcott, “The Great Powers in Central Asia”.

**Monday, May 5, 4:30 p.m.: Final papers due in 254 Upham Hall.**

### **This Course and the Principles of the Miami Plan:**

**Critical Thinking:** This course offers students an opportunity to examine a culturally complex region in terms of power relationships, differential economic development, intercultural contact, and social organization. Students must manage the perspectives of diverse communities within the region as well as Western conceptions of that same region. Course assignments will prompt students to reflect on the diverse aspects of Russia and the larger Eurasian region in a systematic and critical way. To highlight the relationship between Russia and other communities of Eurasia, some of the required readings will focus on Russia and the Soviet Union as empires.

**Understanding Contexts:** The course is specifically structured to explore the region within a variety of contexts. Students will have an opportunity to understand and compare the region from the perspective of different historical periods, cultural and political communities, and social strata. Presentations by people from different disciplines and intellectual traditions will offer students an opportunity to see how disciplinary context affects understanding of similar phenomena. Class discussions will challenge students to make comparisons that highlight contextual differences.

**Engaging with Other Learners:** Students will engage with other learners through class discussions, interactions with the different presenters, and through their participation in the programs organized each semester by the Havighurst Center. The interdisciplinary nature of the course will allow and encourage students to bring a number of different perspectives to the discussions. All class sessions will be interactive in format: discussions on specific themes, questions from readings, in-class dialogue between students focusing on different communities of the region.

**Reflecting and Acting:** The different perspectives offered by the course, combined with the course assignments, will invite students to reflect on the formation and transformation of political and cultural identity and the factors that affect those ideas. The course will allow them to look closely at the interaction among the many communities in the Eurasian region and between those communities and the outside world. It will also open the way for them to follow those interests into other courses that deal with specific aspects of Russia and Eurasia in greater depth, and to become active in pursuing other lines of inquiry about the Eurasian region and the world.

## Grading Criteria for Undergraduate History Classes:

The History Department supports that faculty members create different types of assignments, written and/or oral, depending on the goals of the class, differing methodologies, and differing styles of teaching. Within this variety, we agree on the following criteria.

**A = Overall:** Superior performance; consistent excellence in both written assignments and class participation. Essays (exams, papers, reviews): Answers the question directly or states and explains a thesis. The argument is clear, coherent and complete, with a structured analysis and clear explanations of analytic points along the way. Presents a synthesis of the ideas and the details. The evidence used to support the analysis is accurate and appropriate to the point it is illustrating. The best essays demonstrate mastery of class themes and materials but go beyond them to readings and knowledge gained elsewhere. Few or only minor errors.

**B = Overall:** Good performance in both written and oral work. All assigned work is completed accurately and well; both written and oral work demonstrate knowledge and understanding of principles in spite of occasional errors. Essays (exams, papers, reviews): Answers the question directly but lacks depth of analysis of some aspect of the theme or clear support. Writing is clear and generally shows logical organization, but may not answer the question entirely or integrate the material as well as an A essay. Evidence is used to support the analysis but not as effectively or directly as in an A essay. May be strong on analysis with factual inaccuracies or contain weaker arguments with only minor inaccuracies.

**C = Overall:** Adequate performance in both written and oral work. Shows understanding of many of the basic concepts of the course but there is frequent inaccuracy or error. Essays (exams, papers, reviews): Doesn't answer the question, has a weak thesis, contains many errors or simply presents undigested facts -- student has demonstrated that he/she has learned from the class but not understood the historical context of that knowledge. Could also be written work which is generally good, well-argued but containing crucial factual errors, or lacking supporting details.

**D = Overall:** Poor performance in both written and oral work. Work demonstrates some familiarity with basic concepts but is only barely acceptable. Essays (exams, papers, reviews): Barely shows new knowledge or understanding of that knowledge. Few facts, little evidence, little coherence or many mistakes. Doesn't answer the question or address the theme. Writing skills prevent understanding of the argument.

**F = Overall:** Unacceptable performance in written and oral work. Work is missing or fundamentally deficient. Essays: No effort shown, totally inaccurate or showing minimal relation to class goals. Plagiarized work.

### Summary points about grading written work.

Written work is graded on the level of the:

1. analytical thinking -- is the argument well-developed?
2. organization and style -- is the language clear and correct, are the sequence of points in the argument clear and logical?
3. understanding materials -- is the information used, the historical chronology and the details of events accurate and accurately applied?
4. context -- are the connections shown between the information and the arguments?
5. attribution -- are the sources accurately attributed?