LEGACIES OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE AND SOVIET UNION
Harriman Institute Core Colloquium

History/Political Science G8445, Spring 2013
Mondays 6:10 – 8pm, Room 1219 IAB

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Course Description

“Legacies of the Russian Empire and Soviet Union” is an interdisciplinary course that examines some of the major issues surrounding the changes experienced by the countries that once comprised the Soviet bloc—Russia, the non-Russian republics of the former USSR, and East Central Europe—in light of the legacies of the imperial and Soviet traditions and in relation to the conceptual, methodological, and theoretical developments undergone by Soviet studies and related disciplines.

Course Requirements

1. Students are expected to attend all sessions and participate in class discussions. At least one comment per class is expected.
2. Each student must present his or her research-in-progress at one of the weekly class meetings in the form of a coherent 20-minute presentation that directly engages the readings from that week’s class.
3. Each student must write a substantive research paper (exactly 15 pages, 12-point font, double-spaced) on the topic of his or her presentation in class. Papers are due on the last day of class.

Grading

Participation in class discussions 33.3%
Class presentation 33.3%
Paper 33.3%

Readings

All students should read Michael Karpovich, *Imperial Russia 1801-1917* and Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past* in preparation for the course. The Karpovich book (out of print) is on reserve at Butler Library. The Suny book is available at Book Culture for purchase.

All the class readings are available on www.courseworks.columbia.edu.
Schedule

January 28: Sovietology, Post-Sovietology, and Politics


Catharine Nepomnyashchy, “The Russian Institute: The Formative Years.”


February 4: Interdisciplinarity, Narratives, and Evidence


David D. Laitin, Identity in Formation, chap. 1.


February 11: History and Memory as Fields of Contention


Thomas Sherlock, Historical Narratives in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Russia, pp. 149-168.


S'nizza, "Gimn SSSR." http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZOKG3m8Z_Rg

February 18: Totalitarianism and Its Discontents


George Orwell, 1984, part 1, chap. I. http://www.george-orwell.org/1984/0.html

February 25: The Mechanisms of Communist Rule

Seweryn Bialer, *Stalin’s Successors*, chap. 8.
John Scott, *Behind the Urals*, part 5.

March 4: Living under Stalinism


March 11: The Dynamics of Soviet-type Economies

Mikhail Gorbachev, *Perestroika*, chap. 1.

March 18: No Class

March 25: Sex, Gender, and Power


A. Solzhenitsyn, “The Right Hand,” in *Stories and Prose Poems*.

**April 1: Opposition and Dissent**

Hélène Carrere d’Encausse, *Decline of an Empire*, chap. 8.


Vaclav Havel, “The Power of the Powerless.”


Slawomir Mrozek, “Children.”


Yevgeni Yevtushenko, “Babii Yar.”

http://famouspoetsandpoems.com/poets/yevgeny_yevtushenko/poems/22483

**April 8: Russians, Non-Russians, and Empire**


**April 15: The Collapse of Communism**


Valerie Bunce, *Subversive Institutions*, chap. 7.


http://www.historyguide.org/europe/kennan.html


Evgenii Zamyatin, *We*, record 24-25.


**April 22: Russia, Europe, and the West**
Aleksandr Blok, “Scythians.”
http://web.mmlc.northwestern.edu/~mdenner/Demo/texts/scythians_blok.html
www.kremlin.ru/eng/speeches/2007/02/10/0138_type82912type82914type82917type84779_118135.shtml
Alfred Rieber, “Persistent Factors in Russian Foreign Policy,” in Hugh Ragsdale, ed., Imperial Russian Foreign Policy.

April 29: Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Former Soviet Bloc

http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2011/12/19/111219fa_fact_remnick?printable=true&currentPage=all

May 6: Stability and Instability in Russia

Murray Feshbach, “Potential Social Disarray in Russia due to Health Factors.”
http://www.wilsoncenter.org/docs/staff/Feshbach_socialdisarray.pdf
http://www.harrimaninstitute.org/MEDIA/01383.pdf
Charles King and Rajan Menon, “Prisoners of the Caucasus: Russia’s Invisible Civil War,”
Foreign Affairs, July-August 2010.
Amy Knight, “Finally, We Know About the Moscow Bombings,” NY Review of Books, November 22, 2012, pp. 56-59.
A.Motyl, “Fascistoid Russia: Whither Putin’s Brittle Realm?”
Vladimir Putin, “Address to the Federal Assembly,” December 12, 2012,
http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/4739