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**HISTORY 347: THE SOVIET UNION AND CONTEMPORARY RUSSIA**  
**MWF 12:00-12:50, 32 Tykeson**

**Description:** This is a lecture survey course on the history of Russia and the Soviet Union since 1917. It is open to all interested undergraduates, without prerequisite. The Soviet Union had a tremendous impact on world affairs in the twentieth century, and this course meets general education requirements both by virtue of its breadth and because it introduces students to key aspects of history as a discipline. Topics include the causes and course of the Russian Revolution and the political consolidation of communism; social, cultural, and economic change; Stalin's "revolution from above"; Stalinist terror; the experience of the Second World War in the Soviet Union; the Cold War; Soviet society and culture in the late Soviet period; the collapse of the USSR; the post-Soviet transition in Russia; and domestic politics and international entanglements of Putin's regime.

**Course objectives:** Students should come out of this course with knowledge of the major events in Russian and Soviet history, as listed above. They should be able to analyze the causes of several major events in Russian and Soviet history and gain a better understanding of how historians approach the issue of causality. They should improve their ability to sift factual information for its significance. They should be able to draw connections between different spheres of historical experience, such as economy, society, culture, politics, and foreign affairs. They should improve their research skills and develop their ability to execute a research project in history.

**Grades** will be based on five on-line quizzes (14% each), a topic proposal with bibliography (5%), and an 8-page research paper (25%). In addition, active, thoughtful participation may raise your final course grade by up to 1.5 percentage point (e.g. from an 88.5 to a 90). Plagiarism on a quiz or paper will result in a grade of zero for that assignment. Grades will be recorded on Canvas. This course follows the standard History Department grade rubric. For a description of each grade, see <https://history.uoregon.edu/undergraduate/grading-policy/>

**Quizzes:** This course divides neatly into five chronological and thematic periods: the revolutionary period; the interwar Stalin years; the war and its legacy; the later 1950s to 1970s; the Soviet collapse and post-Soviet Russia. Each quiz will focus on one of those periods. In most cases, there will be a synthetic essay and an essay that centers on a specific text that we read during the two weeks covered by the quiz. In some cases, you may have a choice of questions. All quizzes are open book. I will post the prompts in advance so that you can write your essays and cut and paste into the text boxes of the quiz. Because the quizzes are akin to an essay on an in-class exam, you are not required to provide page number citations unless specifically requested to do so. On all of the essays, you must show that you have done the assigned reading, mastered course material from class, and put serious thought into the questions. Each essay will be graded on the basis of a rubric, as follows:

**Argument:** Do you have a clearly stated thesis? If so, how well does it respond to the prompt? How powerful and sophisticated is your argument? Do the paragraphs of your essay correspond to logical components of the argument? Do you articulate your ideas well with respect to grammar and phrasing? (50% of essay grade)

Information: Do you know what you are talking about? Do you provide appropriate information to support each part of your argument? Is this information detailed, accurate, and consistently relevant to your points? Are you missing anything important? Is it clear that you did the reading and mastered assigned course material? (50% of essay grade)

**Research paper:** This assignment requires you to do some research on a topic of your own choosing. The restrictions on the topic are that it must concern some aspect of Soviet history between the years 1945 and 1991 and that it must utilize the website *Seventeen Moments in Soviet History* (<http://soviethistory.msu.edu/>). A more detailed research assignment will be posted on Canvas. The research paper is due on paper at my office (351 McKenzie) by 10:15 Wednesday, March 18, and you must also submit it on Canvas. Papers should be roughly 2000 words in length (roughly 8 double-spaced pages in Times New Roman, 12 point) and must include footnote citations to your sources.

**Topic proposal with bibliography:** This assignment is connected to the research paper. You will need to write up a 300-word description of your topic, including preliminary information about the topic, how it relates to one or more topic on the *Seventeen Moments* website, and one or more question that will frame your research. Along with this statement of the topic, you are expected to submit an alphabetized list (by author's last name) of ten of the following kinds of sources on your topic, together with a brief annotation (1-2 sentences describing the source): specialized academic history books (minimum three of these), scholarly articles (at least three), book chapters from edited volumes, and materials from the *Seventeen Moments* website. You are welcome to use other sources in addition to these ten, such as documentary films, YouTube videos, or primary sources found in other places, but the main requirement for the bibliography is secondary sources as listed above.

**Required readings** available at the bookstore:

Peter Kenez, *A History of the Soviet Union from the Beginning to Its Legacy*  
Geoffrey Hosking, *Rulers and Victims: The Russians in the Soviet Union*  
Lydia Chukovskaya, *Sofia Petrovna*  
Natalya Baranskaya, *A Week Like Any Other*

Additional readings will be placed on Canvas or available online through the UO Library website. We will also be using the website *Seventeen Moments in Soviet History* (<http://soviethistory.msu.edu/>).

## CLASS TOPICS

**Week 1. Revolution.** Reading: Kenez, 1-40; Hosking, 1-35.

M Jan 6 Introduction: Russia before the revolution

W Jan 8. The Russian Revolution of 1917. Prepare Kenez, 1-33, and Hosking 1-35.

F Jan 10 Russia's civil war. Read Kenez, 33-40, and Hosking, 36-69; this will be important background for the class exercise. Today's class will center on a group exercise on the civil war. Each table group will be assigned to present an aspect of the civil war to the class. Bring laptops and/or phones to class so that you can come up with information about your assigned topic during the first part of the class period.

**Week 2. The new regime.** Reading: Kenez, 41-89; Hosking 70-112; Agrippina Korevanova, "My Life" (Canvas).

M Jan. 13 The New Economic Policy and the making of the USSR. Prepare Kenez, 41-79; Hosking 70-89.

W Jan. 15 Two women's experiences of the revolutionary era. Discuss Korevanova, "My Life" and "The Story of Maria Fedotovna Filipovna" (*Seventeen Moments in Soviet History* / 1917 / The New Woman / Texts).

F Jan. 17 Collectivization and terror in the villages. Prepare Kenez, 80-89; Hosking, 90-112.  
**Quiz #1 due by 11:00 p.m. today.**

**Week 3. Stalin's "revolution from above."** Reading: Hosking 90-135; Kenez, 90-102; *Seventeen Moments* 1929: Magnetic Mountain (all texts and materials); Bukharin letter (Canvas); *Seventeen Moments* 1936: The Great Terror/Texts/ "Attacks on Bukharin and Rykov" and "Bukharin and His Trial."

M Jan. 20 **No class. Martin Luther King Day.**

W Jan. 22 Industrialization. Read Kenez, 90-102; Hosking 112-23. Read and prepare for discussion all of the texts, images, etc. associated with the topic "Magnetic Mountain" on *Seventeen Moments* (under the year 1929).

F Jan. 24 The start of the "Great Terror": the Kirov murder and show trials. Prepare Hosking, 123-35 and the Bukharin letter and trial materials.

**Week 4. Stalinist terror and society.** Reading: Hosking, 135-88; Kenez, 103-26; Lydia Chukovskaya, *Sofia Petrovna* (finish by Friday's class).

M Jan. 27 Mass operations, nationalities, the Gulag. Prepare Hosking, 135-54; Kenez, 103-111.

W Jan. 29 Soviet society in a time of terror. Prepare Hosking, 154-88; Kenez, 111-26.

F Jan. 31 A literary account of the Great Terror. Discuss *Sofia Petrovna*. **Quiz #2 due by 11:00 p.m. today.**

**Week 5. The Great Patriotic War.** Reading: Hosking, 189-223; Kenez, 126-54; Timothy Snyder, pp. 155-187 from *Bloodlands* (on Canvas).

M Feb. 3 Stalin's foreign policy, the German invasion, and the Holocaust in the Soviet Union. Discuss the excerpt from *Bloodlands*. Also prepare Kenez 126-37.

W Feb. 5 How the Soviet Union won. Prepare Kenez, 137-54.

F Feb. 7 The Soviet army, society, and total war. Prepare Hosking, 189-223.

**Week 6. From war to peace.** Reading: Hosking, 224-67; Kenez, 154-83; Kennan and Molotov long telegrams from the volume *Origins of the Cold War*, ed. Kenneth Jensen. These are available digitally through the UO Library website. To get to them, go to the main library search page and type in "jensen origins of the cold war". The third item listed will be our book. It is listed as a print book, but below you will see the link "Check availability in HathiTrust." Click on that, and it will bring up a record showing that this book has been digitized. At the bottom of the record, you can click on "Full View" from either University of Michigan or University of Illinois. The

Novikov telegram begins on page 3 of the book but p. 25 of the digital document, and the Kennan telegram on p. 17 of the book or p. 39 of the document.

M Feb. 10 The origins of the Cold War. Prepare Kenez, 154-65 and the Kennan and Molotov “long telegrams” (see explanation above). Take notes on the main arguments of Kennan and Molotov. If possible, bring a laptop or copy of the text to class for use in small group discussion.

W Feb. 12 Soviet society after the war. Prepare Hosking, 224-67 and Kenez, 165-83.

F Feb. 14 Khrushchev and the modernization of Soviet society. Prepare Hosking, 268-314; Kenez, 184-203. **Quiz #3 due by 11:00 p.m. today.**

**Week 7. Khrushchev’s Thaw and the Soviet Sixties.** Kenez, 184-213; Hosking, 268-314; Andrei Sakharov et al., “Manifesto II” (on Canvas).

M Feb. 17 From the Thaw to the dissident movement. Prepare Sakharov, “Manifesto II” for discussion, along with Kenez, 210-13, 222-29 and Hosking, 352-6.

W Feb. 19 Soviet foreign policy after Stalin: the West, the Eastern Bloc, and the Third World. Prepare Kenez 203-210, 233-42.

F Feb. 21 \*\* Optional class. Professor Hessler will be at a conference. Workshop with GEs on framing your final paper and locating sources; also tips for improving your grades on the last two quizzes.

**Week 8. “Developed socialism” or “stagnation”?** Reading: Hosking, 314-371; Natalya Baranskaya, *A Week Like Any Other*, 1-62.

M Feb. 24 Environmental degradation. Hosking, 356-67. **Paper topic proposal due in class.**

W Feb. 26 Soviet women’s history in the post-Stalin era. Discuss *A Week Like Any Other*, 1-62.

F Feb. 28 The Soviet war in Afghanistan and the “era of stagnation.” Prepare Hosking, 314-71; Kenez, 214-22, 229-33. Begin watching *My Perestroika* in class and discuss.  
**Quiz #4 due by 11:00 p.m. today.**

**Week 9. Glasnost’, perestroika, and the Soviet collapse.** Reading: Kenez, 243-99; Hosking, 372-409.

M Mar. 2 Glasnost’ and perestroika: introduction. Reading: Kenez, 243-61. Watch more of *My Perestroika* and discuss.

W Mar. 4 The collapse of the USSR. Reading: Kenez, 261-277; Hosking, 372-92.

F Mar. 6 Russia in the Yeltsin era: flawed privatization, incomplete democratization. Prepare Kenez, 278-299.

**Week 10. Post-Soviet Russia.** Reading: Kenez, 299-335 (and work on your papers!)

M Mar. 9 Finish *My Perestroika*.

W Mar. 11 Finish discussing *My Perestroika* if needed. Lecture on political stabilization in an illiberal state. Reading: Kenez, 299-335.

F Mar. 13 Russia and the world under Putin. **Quiz #5 due at 11:00 p.m.**

**Wednesday, March 18: Research paper due at 10:15 a.m. Bring a hard copy it to my office, 351 McKenzie.** If I am not there when you arrive, leave it in the slot on the door or slide it under the door. If you leave town before Wednesday, keep in mind that you are required to submit a hard copy of the paper and must either submit it early or make arrangements to have someone else submit it for you. You must also submit your paper on Canvas for a Vericite plagiarism check.

**SAMPLE ONLY**