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HIST 290 The Historian's Craft
MW 2:00-3:20 in 192 Anstett

Description and objectives: This course is required for the History major. Its goal is to introduce you to some of the key methods of the historical discipline and thereby improve your performance in all of your history courses. Unlike courses whose primary objective is to convey information about a specific historical place, period, or theme, this course treats the subject matter – in our case, the Russian Revolution – as a means to the end of learning about the practice of history. You undoubtedly will learn something about the Russian Revolution, a complex and interesting historical event, in the class, but the main focus will be research skills and analytical techniques. As readers of history, you should improve your ability to recognize authors' arguments, assess their use of evidence and reason, and place their work within the context of other scholarship on the same subject. As writers of history, you should strengthen your ability to formulate historical questions, carry out research, evaluate and analyze evidence, properly cite primary and secondary sources, and communicate your findings in two different formats, the extended research paper and the poster.

Grades will be based on the following components:

- Class participation, completion of assigned reading, and all activities and exercises done in class (15%)
- On-time submission of other assignments, worksheets, and exercises, including the paper proposal and rough draft (35%)
- Peer review of research paper rough drafts (5%)
- Final research paper (10-12 pages) (35%)
- Poster (10%)

The participation/in class activities component of the grade will be graded primarily on the basis of effort. Thus, if everyone puts in a good faith effort every day, everyone could conceivably get an A on this portion of the class. Discussions are liveliest and most interesting if everyone participates rather than the same couple of students every time, so I encourage you to try to insert your voice into the wider conversation. I want you to know that I value every student's ideas and believe strongly that everyone deserves to be heard. We will also be utilizing small groups for some activities to ensure that everyone is engaging in active learning. If you believe that your class participation doesn't reflect the work that you have done preparing for class, please come talk to me about it.

The remaining components will be graded on the basis of performance. This to say that I will be evaluating the quality of your submitted work, and although the degree of effort you put into it will naturally affect the quality of the final product, there may not be a one-to-one relationship

between effort and performance. For this portion of the grade, I adhere to the rubric posted on the History Department website at <https://history.uoregon.edu/undergraduate/grading-policy/>. I will be posting and talking more about the final research paper over the course of the quarter, but I can say now that the paper grade will be based on separate grades for three dimensions of your work: 1) argument; 2) research; and 3) organization, writing, and format.

Attendance policy: This course emphasizes practice, or learning through doing. Accordingly, it has less assigned reading and more exercises, research, and writing assignments than the typical history course. Virtually every class period will include exercises, which figure into your grade as listed above. Attendance is mandatory and will be recorded daily. That said, **please stay home if you are sick or if you need to quarantine**, and I understand that there are other legitimate reasons for absence. Let me know if you have such a reason, in which case the absence will be an excused absence and we will figure out a way for you to make up missed material and activities. Unexcused absences will lower your final grade as follows:

- 1 unexcused absence: no penalty
- 2 unexcused absences: Participation/in-class component of grade no higher than 90%
- 3 unexcused absences: Participation/in-class component of grade no higher than 75%
- 4-5 unexcused absences: Participation/in-class component of grade = 0.
- 6 or more unexcused absences: course grade of F

Covid policy: The course adheres to university guidance regarding Covid. I've posted some information about this as a page on Canvas.

Books and assigned readings: There will be a few readings on the Canvas site, and we will occasionally use the website *Seventeen Moments in Soviet History* (soviethistory.msu.edu). Much of your reading for the class will be individual reading connected to your research paper. Three assigned books are available for purchase at the Duck Store. The first two are required, but the Fitzpatrick book is optional to purchase, since the UO library has an eBook edition of it.

Mark D. Steinberg, *The Russian Revolution, 1905-1921* (Oxford University Press, 2016)
William Kelleher Storey, *Writing History* (Oxford University Press, 2016). (5th ed.)
Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution* (Oxford University Press, 2017). (4th ed.)

Class schedule

Week 1

Mon., Sept. 27 Introduction to the course. In-class exercise: reading a primary source. Introduction to the *Seventeen Moments* website.

Wed., Sept. 29 "They Say, I Say": identifying author's arguments even when you don't know much about the subject. Reading: Fitzpatrick, *Russian Revolution*, 1-40; Mark D. Steinberg, *The Russian Revolution, 1905-1921*, 1-12, 47-67. ***If possible, bring the books to class.**

Things to think about before class: What does each author claim as their particular contribution to our understanding of the Russian revolution? How does each author present the previous scholarship on the revolution? Are there specific arguments that they are trying to

refute, or do they present themselves as correcting an imbalance or filling in holes in the scholarship?

How similar do these works appear to each other in their overall interpretation of the Russian revolution? What about their view of prerevolutionary Russia?

Week 2

Mon., Oct. 4 Interpretations of 1917. Reading: Fitzpatrick, 41-68; Steinberg, 68-93. Be prepared to talk about the similarities and differences in the two authors' treatment of the revolutionary year, 1917. In addition, your assignment is to read and be prepared to discuss (in small groups) at least one topic from each of the four main headings of the *Seventeen Moments* website for 1917 ("Events," "Four Kinds of States," "Disintegration of the Old Society," "Creation of the New Society"). Please look at all the materials on the site for your topics, including texts, images, and audio or video materials as well as the main subject essay. ***If possible, bring a computer to class.**

Wed., Oct. 6. The Russian civil war. Reading: Fitzpatrick, 69-93; Steinberg, 92-122. Due before the start of the class period: quiz on the Russian Revolution and civil war and the two authors' interpretations (Canvas).

In-class exercise: individuals in the Russian Revolution. ***If possible, bring a computer to class.**

Week 3

Mon. Oct. 11 Reading: Steinberg, 123-170. Note: You may want to read ahead, so as to lighten the very heavy reading load for Thursday, but this is all that we will be discussing today. After we discuss the chapter, we will be doing a second research exercise on the person you were assigned on Thursday, with the same partner. ***If possible, bring a computer to class.**

Wed. Oct 13. Reading: Steinberg, 170-358. No in-class exercises today; prepare for class discussion of the book.

Week 4

Mon. Oct. 18 Due by the start of class: Topics worksheet #1 (submit on Canvas). We will be spending part of this class period at the Knight Library, where you can get started on Topics worksheet #2 (fill out on paper and hand in on Wednesday).

Wed. Oct. 20 Reading: *Writing History*, chaps. 1 and 2 (you may skip pp. 5-7). Note: Our library does not actually have a subscription to Oxford Bibliographies Online, as described in *Writing History*. This chapter nonetheless has some good suggestions for developing a research topic, identifying sources, crafting a research proposal, and preparing an annotated bibliography. We will be discussing the proposal assignment in class.

In-class exercises: Selecting secondary sources, or "Eeny meeny miney mo"; using Web of Science to identify key works on a topic.

Week 5

Mon. Oct. 25. Paper proposal due in class, with initial bibliography. Please bring two hard copies of your proposal (one for me, one for use in class discussion). I will respond to your

paper proposals via email as quickly as I can. Small group discussion of topics, with response checklist.

Wed. Oct. 27. Reading: *Writing History*, chap. 4. In addition, you need to choose a primary source that is connected to your research project, read it, and (if possible) bring it to class. This source can be long, such as a book by an individual you are studying, or short, such as a table of economic data or a newspaper article or two. In class, we will be using this source in an exercise. We will also introduce book reviews.

Week 6

Mon. Nov. 1. Due on Canvas by the class period: Book review of the most important historical book on your topic. Refer back to pages 5-6 of *Writing History* for guidance on book reviews. Aim for around 1000 words. Do not read a professional book review of your book before writing your own review. In class: introduction to 30-minute drill. ***If possible, bring computer to class.**

Th. Nov. 3 Assignment: 30-minute drill: Choose another history book connected to your project that you have not yet read. Spend exactly 30 minutes (put yourself on a timer) figuring out as much as you can about the book: the book's subject, argument, sources, contribution to scholarship, significance, tone, structure, approach to specific topics within the subject, as well as who wrote it and when. Now write a short (200-400 word) review of the book based solely on those thirty minutes. Do not read a professional book review of the book beforehand. Short review due on Canvas by the class period.

In class: Movie time! After we go over the assignment, we will watch and discuss the beginning of a classic film of the Russian revolutionary era, Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin*.

Week 7

Mon., Nov. 8 No assigned reading. Work on your research projects. Watch and discuss the remainder of the film.

Wed. Nov. 10 Writing an introduction: strategies. Reading: *Writing History*, chap. 5. Assignment due in class: Introductions worksheet (on Canvas). This worksheet obliges you to find three scholarly articles related to your topic and identify the techniques used in their introductions to 1) hook the reader; 2) situate the project; and 3) identify main research question and argument. You will need to provide either a screenshot or printout of the three introductions. In addition, the worksheet asks you to articulate a tentative thesis for your paper and come up with two possible approaches to introducing your paper.

Week 8

Mon. Nov 15 Narrative writing. Reading: *Writing History*, chap. 6 and excerpt from Orlando Figes, *A People's Tragedy* (on Canvas). In class: discuss Figes excerpt with a special focus on narrative strategies.

Wed. Nov. 17 Reading: *Writing History*, chap. 3. In class, discussion and exercises on footnotes and plagiarism. **Rough drafts due 4:00 p.m. Sunday.**

Week 9

Mon. Nov. 22 Introduction to posters. Assignment: I'll ask you to look up some history posters online so as to give you some ideas about effective presentation in this format (websites TBA). In addition, download and read the information pdf on creating a poster at <https://undergradsymposium.uoregon.edu/content/poster-presentations>. This gives directions for constructing a poster with PowerPoint, the simplest of the design platforms. Feel free to explore other poster software. UO has a subscription to Adobe Creative Cloud, so you have free access to InDesign and Adobe Illustrator. Today's class period is a poster workshop, assisted by Tillie Trebon from ASURE (Affiliated Students for Undergraduate Research and Engagement). She will go over the nuts and bolts of how to make a poster, and we'll also discuss strategies for making it visually appealing and effective. **Bring a computer to class** if at all possible, as well as some visuals you might want to include on the poster and either actual texts or an outline of written portions so that you can map out the poster.

Wed. Nov. 24. **No class – happy Thanksgiving!** But... you do need to read and comment on your assigned rough drafts, using the peer review function on Canvas, before Monday's class session. Make sure to open up the rubric and provide comments, as well as a numeric grade on each part of the rubric. In addition, you should think about things you might discuss with the author in class.

Week 10

Mon., Nov. 29 Reading: *Writing History*, chaps. 7-9. Rough draft session. Prepare to discuss your rough draft with the students who read and commented on it. You might begin by telling them, in a few minutes, what you were trying to do and how you went about it, and then open up discussion for their comments and questions.

Wed., Dec. 1 Poster exhibit and class party (location TBA). Submit poster for printing at the College of Design Output Room no later than 10:00 a.m. Tuesday. Prizes for posters: Jury Award, People's Choice.

Finals week.

Final research paper due at 10:00 Thursday, Dec. 9 on Canvas.