COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

The modern history of the countries of the Former Soviet Union has been that of formidable changes and social experiments. In less than a century, they went from being a backward Russian Empire to modern socialist Soviet states and to struggling but independent capitalist states. Truly vast geographically, this region once covered 1/6 of the world’s land surface and its population was the third largest after China and India. While all things Soviet are commonly equated with Russian, the population of the former Soviet Union was only half ethnically Russian. It comprised over a hundred ethnicities who spoke over two hundred languages and practiced over 40 religions (including various kinds of Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Judaism). In this part of the world, traditions fused with modernity, quest for justice clashed with brutal repressions, and gigantic construction projects unfolded in the midst of overcrowded living quarters. The cutting edge technology coexisted with labor intensive agriculture, the largest in the world factories and hydropower plants grew while consumer goods were scarce, and gender equality intertwined with the everyday patriarchy. In the end, building the future free of capitalist exploitation gave way to rebuilding capitalism. Or is it too soon to end the history here?

In this course we will learn about and try to understand the many contradictions of the former Soviet Union and its successor states. We will juxtapose their complex social, political, ethnic, cultural, economic, and environmental geographies with everyday lives of people. The course will help you to understand the current geopolitical developments involving Russia and Central Asia, appreciate their history and culture, grasp the differences between socialist and capitalist societies, see the negative and positive legacies of the Soviet era and envision an international career that focuses on this region.
GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

Fulfills Pluralism and Diversity “group A” OR “group D” and Stage 3 Focused Exposure: Social or Natural Science, but does NOT fulfill the "W" requirement.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

On-line histories of Central Asia. The Eurasia Program, Social Science Research Council (SSRC) http://onlinehistories.ssrc.org/centralasia/. The required readings will be assigned for each topic. They will be available on reserve.

CALENDAR FOR Fall 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F Aug 27</td>
<td>First class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Sept 10</td>
<td>No class</td>
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<tr>
<td>T Sept 14</td>
<td>Class meets, Friday schedule</td>
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<tr>
<td>F Sept 17</td>
<td>No class</td>
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<tr>
<td>F Nov 26</td>
<td>No class, Thanksgiving break</td>
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<tr>
<td>F Dec 10</td>
<td>Last class</td>
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<tr>
<td>T Dec 15 11:30 - 1:30 pm</td>
<td>Final exam</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

MAP quizzes          To be announced 1 week in advance
Midterm exam         To be announced 1 week in advance

WEEKLY TOPICS

Please see BB for Class Schedule for details. This schedule is subject to change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weeks</th>
<th>Topics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Physical environment and natural resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>History and geopolitics of Russia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>History and geopolitics of Central Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Soviet political and economic system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Democratization and transition to capitalism</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Cultural geography: Ethnicity</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Cultural geography: Religion and education</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Indigenous peoples of Russian North</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Gender relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Social problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Focus: Russia and energy resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Focus: Chechnya</td>
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</table>
COURSE FORMAT AND EXPECTATIONS

- Course web page and BB are always updated. Please check regularly both pages. It is your responsibility to keep up with all the postings. Course web page can be accessed 1) from BB; 2) by typing the URL above; 3) from Department of Geography website’s listing of current courses; 4) from Dr. Pavlovskaya's home web page.
- Lectures will be combined with student discussions.
- You are expected to attend all classes, read all assigned material, participate in discussions, fulfill all the assignments, and take lecture notes. Homework assignments are due before the class. Late assignments will be marked down. Once graded assignments are handed out, late assignments will no longer be accepted. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to read the assigned literature, complete the assignments, and get lecture notes from your peers. Missed assignments, quizzes, or exams result in zero points.
- Please absolutely no talking during lectures, no eating, and no cell phones or texting.
- The class begins and ends on time. Important announcements and attendance will take place in the beginning of the class. Three missed classes result in one less point towards your final grade and so will three late arrivals.
- College policies regarding plagiarism will be strictly followed. Plagiarized papers result in F grade and so possibly may the course.

REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class project</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercises</td>
<td>30%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Midterm exam is a take home exam.
Final exam consists of short-answer, multiple choices, short essay questions and map-based questions.

**Exercises:**
- **Map exercises** will include coloring maps according to the instructions.
- **Map quizzes** involve identifying key geographic features (e.g. rivers, cities, etc.) on a blank map. Some map quizzes will be stand alone, others included into the exams. Placename lists and blank maps for practicing are provided.
- **Reaction papers** are short written commentaries on the assigned readings or films – either in class or prior to class.
News reports are three minutes presentations about the latest events in the region using The Moscow Times website (http://www.themoscowtimes.com/index.php).

Class project (see project Guidelines on BB for details) is a group research project on one of the “focus topics” that culminates in producing a written paper (approximately 10 pages long) and presenting it to the class. Each student’s grade will be an average of the two grades: for the individual contribution (research, writing, editing, putting together a presentation, presenting, designing, etc.) and for the entire report.

Class participation includes attendance, discussion leading and participation in the discussions of the assigned readings and videos.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures. Plagiarism, dishonesty, or cheating in any portion of the work required for this course will be punished to the full extent allowed according to Hunter College regulations.

RECOMMENDED READINGS/RESOURCES:


Articles in Post-Soviet Geography and Economics (available in Hunter library).

**ELECTRONIC SOURCES and websites of interest:**

Website built by Hunter College student Stefanie Gray as a resource for Geography of Russia and Central Asia class: [http://www.Geografiya.net](http://www.Geografiya.net)
English Russia (information in English about Russia) [http://englishrussia.com/?p=1906#more-1906](http://englishrussia.com/?p=1906#more-1906)

**News and analysis**

- Radio Free Europe (brief summaries of the current events in the republics of the former Soviet Union and Eastern and Central Europe) [http://www.rferl.org/section/News/422.html](http://www.rferl.org/section/News/422.html)
- BACK ISSUES OF RFE/RL Newsline are at [http://www.rferl.org/newsline/search/index.html](http://www.rferl.org/newsline/search/index.html)
- STRATFOR source of international news and analysis: [http://www.stratfor.com/](http://www.stratfor.com/)
- **THE CENTRAL ASIA - CAUCASUS INSTITUTE** [http://www.sais-jhu.edu/caci/](http://www.sais-jhu.edu/caci/)
- Institute for war and peace reporting: [http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl5?home_index.html](http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl5?home_index.html)

**Newspapers**


**Information and statistics:**

- World flags and their brief description: [http://www.3dflags.com/](http://www.3dflags.com/)
- The Virtual Library of Ethnic Relations in CEE and NIS: [http://www.osi.hu/cgi/ethnic](http://www.osi.hu/cgi/ethnic)
- INCORE guide to Internet sources on conflict and ethnicity in Russia: [http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/eds/countries/russia.html](http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/eds/countries/russia.html)
- Russian Feminism Resources [http://www.geocities.com/Athens/2533/russfem.html](http://www.geocities.com/Athens/2533/russfem.html)
History and culture:

New York Public Library "Russia Engages the World, 1453-1825" [http://russia.nypl.org/];
and "The Romanovs: Their Empire, Their Books"
[http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/slv/exhibit/roman.html].

Chernobyl

August 25, 2009, Tarusa Journal
Revealing Secret Spots That Evoke Dark Secrets By ALISON SMALE

Cities and places

St. Petersburg


Maps:

[http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/cds/countries/russia.html#maps]