

## HUM 260-1 RUSSIAN MODERN HISTORY 3 credits

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Semesters spring semester  
Day and time Tuesday, Thursday 10:30-11:45

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed as an overview of major stages in Russian history from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> through the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Centuries, with a general introduction to early Russian history, religion and culture. The roots of the Russian revolution are tracked through the concepts of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century populists and leftist extremists which brought the Empire to collapse. Lenin's social initiatives and Stalin's authoritarian rule are reconsidered in the context of world history with a special focus on the ideology of totalitarianism. The postwar crisis of the Soviet regime is shown as a prerequisite for Gorbachev's Perestroika reforms, eventually leading to the fall of the USSR and the emergence of the new democratic Russian Federation. Scrutinizing analyses of Putin's current policies brings the course to a conclusion.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Introduce students to the milestones of New Russian History and Culture.
2. Develop students' analytical thinking and critical approach to the problems of history.
3. Explain the place of Russia as a political and military superpower in the globalizing world.

### STUDY MATERIALS

D. MacKenzie, M.W.Curran **"Russia and the USSR in the Twentieth Century"**,  
4<sup>th</sup> edition.  
Special video materials.

### ASSESSMENT

Percentage of each grading item

Homework assignments 100 points	25%
Participation in discussion 100 points	20%
Final examination 200 points	55%

Total number of points 400

## **EXPECTED ACADEMIC BACKGROUND**

Sufficient English proficiency (EAP – 3 level and above)

## **POLICIES**

Attendance is required.

Interest in the subject is encouraged.

Presentation skills are appreciated.

Learning Russian language is considered an advantage.

## **FORMAT AND ACTIVITIES**

Lecture/seminar with regular presentations and discussions.

Viewing additional documentaries (optional).

## **CLASS SCHEDULE**

### **1. Background and Early History**

Geography and Historical Contacts – The Family of Nations – Religious Roots – The Emergence of Russian State – Kiev Russia - Russian Heartland and the Concepts of Imperial Power – The Dynasties.

### **2. From the Middle Ages to the End of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century.**

The Mongol Yoke and the Retarded Pace of Historic Evolution – Moscow and the Final Liberation of the Nation – Ivan the Terrible and his Age – Peter the Great and his Age – Russia and Europe – Catherine the Great and her Age.

### **3. 19<sup>th</sup> Century – The Golden Age of Russian Culture**

The National Patriotic War against Napoleon's Invasion – The First Liberalist Movements – Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol and other great writers - The Major Reforms – The Formation of Russian Intelligentsia.

### **4. The Revolutionary Trends in the Late 19 – Early 20<sup>th</sup> cc.**

Revolutionary Populism – The Development of Marxism – From Populism to the Socialist Revolutionaries – The Emergence of the Revolutionary Terrorism – Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and other Humanists.

### **5. Revolution, Reaction and Reform (1904-1914)**

Russo-Japanese War and its Consequences – The First Russian Revolution of 1905 – Creation of the Duma (Parliament) Monarchy – Political Development and the Rise of the Leftist Parties – Economic and Social Growth of the Nation.

**6. The Silver Age of Russian Culture (Late 19 – early 20<sup>th</sup> cc.)**

Literature – Painting – Architecture – Music – The Most Advanced Culture of the Intellectuals and the Conservative Masses.

**7. Presentations and discussions**

**8. Russia in the World War 1 and the Bourgeois Revolution**

Russian Empire in the World War 1 – Wartime Diplomacy and Alliances – The Degrading Army – Bolsheviks and the Home Front – The Total Crisis of the Administration – The March Revolution and the Abdication of the Tsar.

**9. From March to November 1917**

The “Dual Power” – The Bolsheviks under Lenin’s Leadership – Kornilov and the Rightward Shift – The Leftist Push – The November Revolution as a Perfect Coup d’état. – The Power of Terror.

**10. Civil War and War Communism (1917-1921)**

First Steps of the Bolsheviks – The Beginning of the Civil War – The Reaction of the West and the Antanta Invasion – Further Developments – The Bloody Victory.

**11. The New Economic Policy and Power Struggle (1921-1927)**

Economic and Political Controls of NEP – Lenin’s Last Years – The Struggle over Succession – The Advent of Stalin.

**12. Presentations and discussions**

**13. The Soviet Union under Stalin’s Rule 1**

Struggle in the Communist Party and Stalin’s Triumph (1929-1934) – The Great Purges – The Policy of State Terror – Oppressed Religions – Totalitarian Machine and the Nation – The Cult of Personality – The Realm of Fear.

**14. The Soviet Union under Stalin’s Rule 2**

The Great Industrialization Debate (1924-1928) – The Five Year Plans – Playing on the Enthusiasm – Forced Collectivization and the Tragedy of Russian Peasantry – The Totalitarian Abuse of Culture – Ideological Press – Stalin’s “Cultural Revolution” in Education – Anticosmopolitan Policy and the Arts.

**15. Soviet Foreign Policy and World War 2**

The USSR versus the West (1917-1927) – Neoisolationism (1928-1933) – Steps to Collective Security (1934-1937) – Soviet-Japanese Conflicts – The Nazi-Soviet Pact (1939-1941) – The German Invasion – The 1942 Campaign and the Turning

Point of the War – Soviet Offensives and Allied Victory - The USSR and the Far Eastern War.

**16. From Postwar Stalinism to Khrushchev Era (1945 – 1964)**

The Establishment of Socialist Regimes in Eastern Europe – Stalin’s New Purges – The Crusade against Intellectuals – The Access to Nuclear Power – The Beginning of the Cold War – The Death of Stalin and Khrushchev’s De-Stalinization Policy – A Failure in the Agriculture Reforms – Confronting the West – Khrushchev’s Fall.

**17. The Brezhnev’s Era (1964-1982)**

Brezhnev’s Rise – Nationalism and Dissent – Cold War Concepts - Military Expenses – The Exploration of Space – Stagnation in Economy – Failing Ideology – Culture under Brezhnev - Soviet Intellectuals and the West – Out of Vicious Circle.

**18. The Soviet Gerontocracy Rule (1982-1985)**

From Brezhnev to Andropov – The Attempts of the Reforms – From Andropov to Chernenko - Degrading Economy – Total Crisis of Soviet Socialist System.

**19. Gorbachev and Perestroika Reformation (1985-1991)**

Gorbachev’s Way to Power – “Openness” and Political Freedom – The Rise of Nationalism in the Soviet Republics – The Restoration of Russian Orthodox Church - Perestroika’s Impact on the Economy – Social Changes – The Dissolution of the Socialist Block – The End of the Cold War.

**20. The Collapse of the USSR (1991)**

Gorbachev’s Promises and Reality - Yeltsin’s Rise and the Phantom of Democracy – Political Struggle and the Nations – The August Communist Coup – The Demise of the Soviet Union: Sacrificing the Country to Personal Ambitions – The Fall of Gorbachev - The Still-born Commonwealth of Independent States.

**21. Presentations and discussions**

**22. The Yeltsin Era (1991-1999)**

The Legacy of Soviet Communism – Dismantling the Political System – Dismantling the System of Social Security – Dismantling the System of Academic Research - The Privatization Reforms as the Greatest Fraud in History – From Populist Democracy to Populist Autocracy – Chaos in Economy – The Rise of Criminal Structures – The Legacy of Total Corruption – Chechen Revolt.

**23. The Putin Presidency (1999- c/t)**

Putin’s Career and the Way to the Top – Chechen War – A Stake on the KGB (FSB) Power – Consolidation of the State – Controversial Economic Policy – A Dialogue with the West – Natural Resources and Russia’s Economic Progress –

Stratification of the Society – Prospects of Further Growth – Russia with Putin and after him.

## **24. Final Examination**