

GO 227 : From Genghis Khan to Gorbachev: Power and Politics in Russian History
Fall 2010
K. Graney
Tuesday/Thursday 2:10-3:30 in Ladd 206

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OFFICE HOURS: TBA

This course uses the case of Russia to examine themes and questions that are of enduring and contemporary interest to political scientists as well as mere mortal human beings. There is no better place than Russia to examine the question of what the proper balance of power between a state and its people should be, or to try to understand why and how extreme imbalances of power between these two sometimes occur (and endure). There is also no better place than Russia to examine the influence on political development of two very different types of forces—concrete forces, in the form of geography and climate, and intangible forces, in the form of ideas and ideologies. The story of Russia from Genghis Kahn to Gorbachev is not only dramatic and heartbreaking, it is also fascinating and instructive, if only for its cautionary aspects.

This class is reading and writing intensive--you will gain extensive practice in reading and analyzing different types of primary texts (official decrees, speeches, memoirs) and different genres of historical literature (poems, fiction), and you will gain extensive practice in writing well-argued, grammatically-correct essay papers.

REQUIRED BOOKS (available for purchase at Skidmore Shop):

A Documentary History of Communism in Russia edited by Robert Daniels

The Soviet Colossus, by Michael Kort (6th Edition)

The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union, by Martin McCauley

Behind the Urals: An American Worker in Russia's City of Steel, by John Scott

A Day In The Life of Ivan Denisovich, by Alexander Solzhenitsyn

Fathers and Sons, by Ivan Turgenev

Required Additional Readings: On E-Reserve, available through the Skidmore Library at the following address: <http://www2.skidmore.edu/library/reserves/index.cfm>

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Class Participation and Classroom Comportment (20%): INFORMED participation in classroom discussions, **in-class simulations** (including most importantly the simulation and 2-page paper due on OCTOBER 12), **in-class quizzes and writing assignments (unannounced, probably will be about 10 or so, both multiple choice and short answer)**. Adherence to the Government Department Comportment Code enhances your grade for this section of the class, failure to adhere to it will negatively impact your grade. Please see the **GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT COMPORTMENT CODE** at the end of this syllabus for explication of expectations regarding civility.

2-4. THREE 5-7 Page Analytical Essay Papers (20% each; 60% total) (See checklist for assessment of papers at end of syllabus):

FIRST PAPER DUE **THURSDAY OCT 14**
SECOND PAPER DUE **TUESDAY NOVEMBER 16**
THIRD PAPER DUE **THURSDAY DEC 2**

5. Take Home Final Exam (20%): Handed out Thursday December 4: **DUE MONDAY DECEMBER 20 @ 4:30 in my office box.**

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

CLASS EMAIL LIST:

I will be sending out reading and discussion questions on the class email list before every class (I will also try to post them on Blackberry. We'll see.) **It is TRULY in your best interest to use these questions to help guide your reading and your preparation for class EVERY DAY.** The questions for the periodic and unannounced quizzes that are part of your class participation grade will be drawn directly from these email questions, and you will be able to use any notes you have taken for these quizzes (though you may not use the readings/ books themselves).

POLICY ON LAPTOPS / TEXTING / SURFING IN CLASS: Unless you have an accommodation documented by the Coordinator for Students with Disabilities, in the Office of Student Academic Services, the use of laptops during this class, for taking notes or otherwise, is strictly prohibited, as is the use of cell-phones or any other texting or web-surfing device.

ATTENDANCE: I expect you to be here every day, ready to participate. Absences are keenly noted (I take attendance) and will adversely affect your class participation grade. Sports team related absences must be requested in writing and all classroom work must be made up. In general, documentation is useful, but not always sufficient, for absolution of absences

DUE DATES FOR PAPERS:

Papers are due at the beginning of class, on time, on the day indicated in the syllabus. If your paper is going to be late, it is INFINITELY better for you to come to class that day and then turn in the paper later. Skipping class on the due date to finish a paper will result in a larger reduction in your grade than had the paper simply been delivered late.

PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING

Don't do it. I and other faculty members have become sensitized to the popularity of internet paper services, and routinely employ services such as those found at "**plagiarism.com**" and other websites to prevent plagiarism.

GRADING

As noted in the *Skidmore College Catalogue* on page 51, Grades are assigned on the following basis (NB: a "B" is "superior work", it's official college policy !):

- A -- Distinguished work
- A-, B+, B -- Superior work
- B-, C+, C --Satisfactory work
- C-, D+, D--Passing but poor quality work

Schedule of Readings and Assignments:

Th Sept 9: Introduction to Russia and Course

- Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime*, p.1-24, **E-Reserve**
- Rowley, *Exploring Russia's Past*, selections, **E-Reserve**
- Michael Kort, *Soviet Colossus*, Chapter Two, "The Autocratic State", p.8-12

Tu Sept 14: Imperial Russia : Land of the Tsars and Serfs

- Michael Kort, *Soviet Colossus*, Chapter Two, "The Autocratic State", p.12-18
- "Reorganization of Russia by Peter the Great", **E-Reserves**

Th Sept 16: Imperial Russia, Continued

- Catherine the Great's "Instructions", **E-Reserves**
- "Childbirth, Christening and Wife-beating", from *Village Life in Late Tsarist Russia*, **E-Reserve**

Tu Sept 21: Intellectuals Arise : Slowly But Surely

- Michael Kort, *Soviet Colossus*, Chapters 3, 4, 5 ("The Nineteenth Century Crisis", "The People", and "The Intelligentsia"), p.19-44.
- "War of 1812", (p. 190-195), **E-Reserve**
- "The Decembrist Movement", (p.207-229), **E-Reserve**
- Begin reading *Fathers and Sons*

Th Sept 23: Rise of Intelligentsia, Continued

- Steven Marks, from his *How Russia Shaped the Modern World*, Chapter One "Organizing the Revolution: Russia's Terrorists", **E-Reserve**
- Sergei Nechaev, "Catechism of a Revolutionary", **E-Reserve**
- Continue reading *Fathers and Sons*

Tu Sept 28: Discuss *Fathers and Sons*

Th Sept 30: Marxism and Lenin : Bolsheviks and Mensheviks

- Michael Kort, *Soviet Colossus*, Chapters 6 and 7 ("Capitalism Comes to Russia" and "The Revolutionaries Regroup"), p.47-73.
- Marx and Engels, *Communist Manifesto*, **E-Reserve**
- Robert V. Daniels, *A Documentary History of Communism*, p.4-17

Tu Oct 5: 1905 and World War One in Russia

--Michael Kort, *Soviet Colossus*, Ch. 8, (“The Final Years and Last Stand”), p.74-88.

--“Concessions of Nicholas II to the 1905 Revolution”, Nicholas II "Speech from the Throne”, **E-Reserve**

Th Oct 7: The Russian Revolution : FEBRUARY 1917

--Kort, *Soviet Colossus*, Ch. 9, “Russia’s Two Revolutions”,p.87-top 99

--McCauley, *Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union*, p. 34-45

--Robert V. Daniels, *A Documentary History of Communism*, p.42-top 47

Tu Oct 12: The Russian Revolution : OCTOBER 1917 : IN-CLASS SIMULATION ON DUAL POWER : 2-PAGE PAPERS DUE

--Kort, *Soviet Colossus*, Ch. 9, “Russia’s Two Revolutions”, 99-103

--McCauley, *Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union*, p. 34-45

--Robert V. Daniels, *A Documentary History of Communism*, p.52-72

Th Oct 14 : Civil War / War Communism **FIRST 5-7 Page Paper Due**

--McCauley, *Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union*, p. 46-68

--Robert V. Daniels, *A Documentary History of Communism*, p.mid 72-73, mid 80-85, 91-96

**RECOMMENDED: Michael Kort, *The Soviet Colossus*, Ch. 10 (“Into the Fire: Civil War”)

Tu Oct 19: Building the Soviet State : Multicultural and Gender Policy

--McCauley, *Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union*, p. 69-98

--Robert V. Daniels, *A Documentary History of Communism*, p.107-113 and 102-top of 104

**RECOMMENDED: --Michael Kort, *The Soviet Colossus*, Ch. 11 (“New Problems, New Policies”)

Th Oct 21: 1920s : NEP / Death of Lenin/ Rise of Stalin

--McCauley, *Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union*, p. 99-116

-- Robert V. Daniels, *A Documentary History of Communism*, p. 117-118, p. bottom 144-mid 147, mid 158-159, mid 162-mid 164

**RECOMMENDED: Michael Kort, *The Soviet Colossus*, Ch. 12 (“Bolshevism Without Lenin”)

Tu Oct 26 Stalin Revolution : COLLECTIVIZATION

- McCauley, *Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union*, p. 137-151
- Robert V. Daniels, *A Documentary History of Communism*, p.170-173, bottom 177-179, bottom 188-mid 190

Th Oct 28: Stalin Revolution : INDUSTRIALIZATION

- McCauley, *Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union*, p. 152-172
- Robert V. Daniels, *A Documentary History of Communism*, p. bottom 180-middle 183
- John Scott, *Behind the Urals*, Introduction, 2-50, 137-70

Tu Nov 2: INDUSTRIALIZATION CONTINUED and CULTURAL REVOLUTION:

- McCauley, *Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union*, p. 203-217
- Robert V. Daniels, *A Documentary History of Communism*, p. 193-198

Th Nov 4: Terror and Purges :

- McCauley, *Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union*, p. 173-202
- Robert V. Daniels, *A Documentary History of Communism*, p. bottom 205-217

Tu Nov 9: Life in the GULAG :

- Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*
- Anne Applebaum, *GULAG: A HISTORY*, "Introduction", **E-RESERVE**

Th Nov 11: Gulag Continued ; Road to WW2, WW2 in Russia

- Solzhenitsyn, continued.
- McCauley, *Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union*, p. 218-251
- Robert V. Daniels, *A Documentary History of Communism*, p. 228-235
- **RECOMMENDED: --Michael Kort, *The Soviet Colossus*, Ch. 14 ("Trial by Fire: The Great Patriotic War")

Tu Nov 16: End of an Era ? Birth of Cold War, Stalin, Hitler and Mao

****SECOND 5-7 PAGE PAPER DUE****

- McCauley, *Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union*, p. 252-314

Th Nov 18: Rise of Khrushchev : De-Stalinization and Thaw

--McCauley, *Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union*, p. 315-346

--Robert V. Daniels, *A Documentary History of Communism*, p.mid 254-bottom
258, bottom of 275-279

Tu Nov 23: Brezhnev and Stagnation

--McCauley, *Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union*, p. 347-361

--Robert V. Daniels, *A Documentary History of Communism*, p.280-283

Th Nov 25 : HAPPY THANKSGIVING : NO CLASS

Tu Nov 30: Life in the Brezhnev Era, Dissidents: Solzhenitsyn Redux

--Hedrick Smith, *The Russians*, Excerpts, **E-Reserve**

--Robert V. Daniels, *A Documentary History of Communism*, bottom 290-top 302

Th Dec 2: Rise of Gorbachev / Perestroika and Glasnost : 1985-1990

****THIRD PAPER DUE****

--McCauley, *Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union*, p. 397-mid 421

--Robert V. Daniels, *A Documentary History of Communism*, p.337-341, bottom
347-351

****RECOMMENDED:** --Michael Kort, *The Soviet Colossus*, Ch. 19 (“Gorbachev:
From Restructuring to Destruction”)

Tu Dec 7: Collapse of Empire : Fall of Gorby and Rise of Yeltsin : 1990-1991

--McCauley, *Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union*, p. mid-421 to 436; 1-23

-- Robert V. Daniels, *A Documentary History of Communism*, p.bottom 373-377,
383-392

Th Dec 9 : Autopsy on the Soviet System : TAKE-HOME HANDED OUT

--McCauley, *Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union*, p. 437-452

M Dec. 20 @ 4:30 pm : Take-Home Final Due in My Office Box

**DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT
SKIDMORE COLLEGE**

**POLICY ON CIVILITY AND COMPORTMENT IN THE
CLASSROOM**

FALL 2005

The classroom experience is the heart of liberal education, and as such is the most important aspect of your Skidmore College education. Presumably, if you did not agree you would not be attending Skidmore. The faculty of the Government Department takes this understanding as the basis of our educational efforts. It is in an attempt to honor the centrality of the classroom experience that we offer this department policy on civility and comportment.

As is stated in the *Student Handbook*, your presence at Skidmore College is contingent upon your acceptance of, and full adherence to, the Skidmore College Honor Code. This honor code is distinct from the oath you take when writing a paper or taking an exam – it is in fact much more all-encompassing, and much more demanding.

The Code includes the following statement: “*I hereby accept membership in the Skidmore College community and, with full realization of the responsibilities inherent in membership, do agree to adhere to honesty and integrity in all relationships, to be considerate of the rights of others, and to abide by the College regulations.*” Elsewhere, the Code also calls all Skidmore students to “*conform to high standards of fair play, integrity, and honor.*”

What does it mean to do act honestly, with integrity, and according to high standards of fair play, particularly in the classroom? In our view, it includes, minimally, the following.

1. No student shall lessen the learning experience of others in the classroom by arriving late to class.
2. No student shall lessen the learning experience of others in the classroom by leaving the classroom while class is in session, except for true medical emergencies.
3. Cell phones must be turned off during class.

4. No student shall disrupt the learning experience of others in the classroom by talking to a neighbor, writing notes to other students, reviewing one's mail, reading the newspaper, completing homework for other classes, or playing with the laptop computer, while class is in session.
5. No student shall disrespect other Skidmore students, professors or the housekeeping staff by putting feet on the desks or other furniture in the classroom, or by leaving trash, food, or recyclables in the room at the end of the class session.

While we will hold all students to these minimal expectations, we also have some suggestions for those who seek to go beyond the bare minimum of civil classroom comportment to become the type of mature, responsible, active learners who are an asset to any classroom and society at large. These include the following.

6. Every student should take copious and meaningful notes both on assigned readings and during classroom sessions. Note taking is an important skill—if you do not already possess it, you should acquire it.
7. Every student should take some time to review the notes that he or she has taken on the day's assigned reading before each class meeting. You will be amazed how much more invested and engaged in the class you will feel if you go into the classroom well-prepared.
8. Disruptions in class can be a significant impediment to learning, and no member of the Skidmore community—including faculty and students—should tolerate them. Thus every student should take responsibility for holding his or her peers and classmates to both high academic standards and high standards of civility. If people around you are chatting, passing notes or otherwise detracting from the overall quality of YOUR classroom experience, don't let them get away with it.
9. Individual faculty members in the Government Department will determine the level of sanctions for disruptive behavior.