Ukraine, Russia: History and History Wars

History 238/238W

University of Rochester

Spring 2025

Professor Matthew Lenoe

Rush Rhees 378A

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Office Hours: M, W 1:15 – 3:00 or by appointment.

Mode of Address: Professor Lenoe

Wedn 1/22 … INTRODUCTION / Kyiv/Kiev through early Mongol period, 900-1300.

Friday, 1/24… Lecture. The Rise of Muscovy and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to the Union of Lublin (1569) / Orthodoxy and Catholicism. Plokhy, Chapters 7-9.

Monday, 1/27 … Discussion / Lecture. Cossacks, the Commonwealth and Muscovy**.**  “Don Cossack Documents” (e-reserve – Vernadsky I, 274-279). “Cossacks and Peasants in the Commonwealth” (e-reserve - Vernadsky I, 292-295.) “Documents Related to the Church Union of Brest (e-reserve, Vernadsky, I, 285-287). **Map Quiz**

Wedn, 1/29 … Discussion. The Great Rebellion. Plokhy, Chapter 10. “Treaty of Pereiaslavl” (e-reserve ). “Khmelnytsky Documents” (e-reserve).

Monday, 2/3 … **STUDENT PRESENTATIONS: CONTEMPORARY TALES OF UKRAINE**

Wedn, 2/5 … Lecture (recorded, available on course Blackboard site) … From the Ruin to the Partitions of Poland 1660s-1790s**.** Plokhy, Chapters 11-12.

Monday, 2/10 … Discussion: “ Bendery Constitution” (e-reserve). “Prokopovych (e-reserve). “Ukrainian Nobles’ Submissions to Legislative Commission” (e-reserve). “Abolition of the Sich and Introduction of Serfdom” (e-reserve).

Wedn, 2/12 … Lecture: The Age of Romantic Nationalism. Plokhy, Chapters 13-14. Excerpts from the “History of the Rus” (e-reserve)

Monday, 2/17 … *Taras Bulba* (Chapters to be decided)

Wedn 2/19 … Finish *Taras Bulba.* “Gogol Letters” on e-reserve.

Monday, 2/24 … History Wars. “Russian Primary Chronicle” (e-reserve), 51-53. Kostomarov, “Books of the Genesis” (e-reserve). “Kliuchevsky,” (e-reserve), 182-top of 185, second half of 189-end). Michael Hrushevsky, “The Traditional Scheme” (e-reserve). In-class writing work.

Wedn, 2/26 … Lecture: Industrialiation and Mass Politics. Plokhy, 232-280.

Monday, 3/3 … **PAPER DUE**. Discussion.

Wedn, 3/5 … Discussion. Faith Hillis, *Children of Rus’: Right-Bank Ukraine and the Invention of a Russian Nation* (available as e-book in Rush Rhees Library catalogue), Chapter 4, first two sections of Chapter 5.

Monday, 3/17 … Lecture: The Long World War and Ukrainian Independence, 1914-1920. Plokhy, Chapters 18 and 19.

Wedn, 3/ 19 … Discussion: ”Makhno” (e-reserves), 265-271. Readings from Isaac Babel, *Red Cavalry* (to be decided). “Hrushevsky on Minorites plus Rada” (e-reserve).

Monday, 3/24 …. Lecture: Bolshevik Nationalities policies and the *Holodomor*. Plokhy, Chapters 20-21.

Wedn, 3/26 … Discussion: “Kopelev: Last Grain Collection” (e-reserve). Letter from Feigin to Ordzhonikidze, 1932 at <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/archives/trans-aa2feign.html> . “Stalin to Kaganovich” (e-reserve). “December 1932 CC Collectivization Decree” (e-reserve). “Klid: *Holodomor Reader*” (e-reserve), documents on p. 14 (the first document begins at the bottom of 13).

Monday, 3/31 …. Discussion: Dmitro Dontsov, Ukrainian Fascism and the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists. “Erlacher Dontsov” (e-reserve), Abstract (p. iii). Introduction, up to not including “Historiography” (1-6), 239-268, 471 to end (including “Epilogue”). “Himka. Lviv Pogrom.” (e-reserve)

Wedn, 4/2 … **In-class essay exam.**

Monday, 4/7 … Lecture: WWII. Plokhy, Chapters 22-23

Wedn 4/9. Karel Berkhoff, *Harvest of Despair: Life and Death in Ukraine Under Nazi Rule* (available as e-book in Rush Rhees catalogue). Introduction, Chapters 5 and 9.

M, 4/14 … Discussion: “Weiner: Making Dominant Myth” (e-reserve). “Underbelly of Canadian Multi-Culturalism” (e-reserve). “Ukrainian Red Army Soldiers” (e-reserve).

W, 4/16 … Lecture: Perestroika and Independence. Plokhy, Chapters 24-25.

M, 4/21 … Discussion: “*Rukh* Platform” (e-reserve), 341-358 (Do not read beyond the section heading “Ethics”). *Small Fires: Letters from the Soviet Peope to Ogonyok, 1987-1990* (at Internet Archive), 192-216.

W, 4/23 … Lecture: After Independence. Plokhy, Chapters 26-28

M, 4/28 …. Discussion. Read “Russian 2010 Defense White Paper Excerpted” (e-reserve); “Lukyanov” (e-reserve); Mearsheimer (e-reserve); Michael McFaul, “Why Putin Invaded Ukraine” at <https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/1/oa_edited_volume/chapter/3881915> .

W, 4/30 … Discusssion of Putin article, “On the Historic Unity of Russians and Ukrainians,” July 2021 at <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181> . **Writing intensive students paper due.**

**FINAL EXAM:** As scheduled by registrar.

**GRADING**:

Regular Students

Attendance and participation: 15 %

Map Quiz – 5%

Presentation on “Modern Tales of Ukraine” – 10 %.

Paper (about 7 pages): 25%

In-class exam: 20%.

Final exam: 25%.

Writing Intensive Students

Attendance and Participation: 15%

Presentation on “Modern Tales of Ukraine”: 9%

Paper on *Taras Bulba*: 19%

In-class exam: 19%

Paper on Putin article: 19%

Final Exam: 19%.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY:** All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Rochester's Academic Honesty Policy.

I DO NOT TOLERATE CHEATING OR PLAGIARISM (PRESENTING SOMEONE ELSE’S SCHOLARLY WORK AS YOUR OWN). I WILL PURSUE THE UNIVERSITY DISCIPLINARY PROCESS AGAINST STUDENTS WHO PLAGIARIZE OTHERS’ WORK. AT A MINIMUM, STUDENTS WHO PLAGIARIZE WILL RECEIVE A “0” ON THE ASSIGNMENT IN QUESTION. I AM HAPPY TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT PLAGIARISM. USE OF AI TO COMPOSE ESSAYS IS PLAGIARISM.

Use of grammar and spell checks is acceptable. Use of AI programs to compose whole sentences, paragraphs or essays is not.

You are required to read the American Historical Association’s “Defining Plagiarism” at <https://www.historians.org/resource/defining-plagiarism/#:~:text=The%20AHA's%20Statement%20on%20Standards,or%20interpretations%E2%80%9D%20without%20proper%20citation>.

You are expected to know the University’s Academic Honesty policy. Ignorance of the police will not be an excuse if you get involved in charges of plagiarism, etc.

If you have questions about the policy, ask me.

**REQUIRED BOOKS**:

Nikolai Gogol. *Taras Bulba.* Modern Library Classics edition. Available at university bookstore.

Serhii Plokhy. *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine*. Edition published in 2021. Available at university bookstore.

**TURN OFF IPHONES, ANDROIDS AND OTHER MOBILE DEVICES BEFORE CLASS. YOU ARE WELCOME TO BRING A LAPTOP TO CLASSES. HOWEVER, I ASK THAT YOU NOT USE SOCIAL MEDIA, CHECK EMAIL, DO WORK FOR OTHER CLASSES OR BROWSE THE WEB WHILE CLASS IS IN SESSION.**

**READINGS:** Readings are due on the day they are listed on the syllabus. When a reading is from a particular book, I refer to that work by author or editor name.

For a number of discussion classes there are several different documents assigned. Keeping track of these different sources for the class discussions is the biggest challenge of reading for the course. I would recommend noting down for yourself the date and authorship/provenance of each source, so you can place each in context and differentiate one from another during class discussions. Be sure to differentiate between primary sources and scholarly secondary sources.

**CLASS PARTICIPATION:** Fifteen percent of your grade will be based on my evaluation of class participation as well as your attendance. If you say nothing in class you will receive a zero, as you will if you make almost no comments (for example, one comment per month). I’d hope for a minimum of 2 comments per class from each student – more participation than that is great and helps move the course forward. I will often ask students early in discussion to offer any thoughts at all they had about the reading. This is your chance, if you are shy, to have formulated something beforehand and to offer it for discussion.

I include a participation component in the grade because one part of a liberal arts education is learning, even if one is a reserved person, to express oneself in public settings.

***About ½ of class time will be devoted to discussion of documents and active student participation is fundamental for learning. Much of the information and many of the key concepts for the class will emerge in discussion, and so paying attention to the classroom dialogue is key for high performance in the course.***

**ATTENDANCE:** You need to attend class regularly. My experience shows that students who do not do poorly on assignments. Missing one or two classes is OK. If you miss more than one third of classes (more than eight) you will fail the course. (with one narrow exception -see below). Without being in the classroom, it is very difficult to learn the course material adequately. The reason for missing the classes does not matter. If you are facing a situation where for whatever cause – health problems, family crisis, overwork, etc. – you will miss more than eight classes, you need to consider your choices. These might include withdrawal, taking medical leave from the university, etc.

In cases where a severe and extended crisis - basically very serious health problems - in the second half of the semester prevents a student from attending, I may consider an exception to the “failure” rule defined above. A student will need to show documentation of the crisis and pass a 20-minute oral final exam with me. The purpose of this last is to ensure that they have mastered the basic concepts conveyed in the course and know the most important facts of the history we are studying.

There are no “extra credit” options should you have do poorly on a paper, miss many classes, etc.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDYING IN GENERAL.** You may have the impression that you can skate through or entirely ignore lectures and discussions, and just do readings when it is time to write your papers. This would be a mistake. Take notes on lectures, which will cover material not in any of the readings. Also take notes on discussions, when an important topic or concept comes up (you don’t need to transcribe all of class discussion!!). I will expect you to show mastery of all course materials in your papers, including lectures and concepts that we explore during discussion

**CREDIT HOURS:** The College’s credit hour policy on undergraduate courses is to award 4 credit hours for courses that meet for the equivalent of 3 periods of 50 minutes each week.  Students enrolled in History 208/208W are expected to devote a number of hours each week outside of class to reading, identifying the main lines of argument in readings, preparing for class discussion, writing papers, etc.

**INCLUSION STATEMENT:** The University of Rochester, this course, and I are committed to inclusion, and welcome students of all backgrounds and abilities. Services and reasonable accommodations are available to students with temporary and permanent disabilities, to students with DACA or undocumented status, to students facing mental health issues, other personal situations, and to students with other kinds of learning needs. Please feel free to let me know if there are circumstances affecting your ability to participate in class or your full participation in this course. Some resources that might be of use include:

* Office of Disability Resources. (disability@rochester.edu; (585) 276-5075; Taylor Hall)
* Undocumented/DACA Student Support Contacts <https://www.rochester.edu/college/ccas/undergraduate/daca/index.html>
* University of Rochester CARE Network <https://www.rochester.edu/care/>

**TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENT FOR COURSE:** A laptop with webcam, 8 GB of memory and 256 GB of local storage.

**MODERN TALES OF UKRAINE ASSIGNMENT**

Choose one of the following summary accounts of Ukrainian history from the web and prepare a five minute presentation on it, answering the following questions.

1. What is the earliest time for which the piece uses the word “Ukraine” or “Ukrainian,” and does it refer to a physical space (land), a person or people, an ethnic group, or a political unit? How are these terms used throughout the piece and for which historical periods?
2. Where does the piece place the origins of “Ukrainian” as an ethnic group or ethnic identity?
3. How does the piece characterize the relationship of “Ukrainians” to other ethnic groups and/or polities (political units such as “Poland” or “Russia” or “Muscovy”)?
4. How does the piece characterize the relationship of “Ukraine/Ukrainians” to “Russia/Russians”? Does it present them as separate, identical or as parts of a single hole?
5. What main themes of “Ukrainian” history does the piece focus on?
6. Who might the audience for the piece be?
7. What organization published the piece? Can you draw connections between that organization’s place in the world (political, place of origin) and the answers to questions 1-6.
8. What other comments on the piece do you have?

“Origins and History of Ukraine” / Ukrainian government website … <https://ukraine.ua/explore/origins-history-of-ukraine/>

“The Mother of Rus Towns: How a Legendary Russian City Ended up in Ukraine.” rt.com / Russian government English-language news agency. <https://www.rt.com/russia/600169-kiev-history-two-nations/>

“Background Notes: Ukraine.” U.S. Department of State. <https://1997-2001.state.gov/background_notes/ukraine_0005_bgn.html>

“How Putin’s Denial of Ukraine’s Statehood Rewrites History.” *Time Magazine*. Feb. 22, 2022. <https://time.com/6150046/ukraine-statehood-russia-history-putin/>

“Putin Says Russia, Ukraine Share Historical ‘Unity’. Is He Right?” *Al Jazeera* (independent Arab news channel, Qatar). <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/25/history-of-ties-between-ukraine-and-russia>

“Ukraine’s Fraught Relationship with Russia: A Brief History.” *The Week.* December 9, 2023. <https://theweek.com/history/ukraine-russia-history-relationship> .

National Geographic Kids, “Ukraine,” “History” section. <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/geography/countries/article/ukraine>

“History.” Columbia University Ukrainian Students’ Association. <https://www.columbia.edu/cu/ukrainian/webpage/pages/history.htm>

“Email to Lenoe re: ‘Fact-checking Putin’s Claims that Ukraine and Russia are ‘One People.’’” Provided by Lenoe