History of the USSR and Post-Soviet Russia

HIST 133

Spring 2025

Matthew Lenoe

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Office hours: M, W, 1:15-3:00 or by appointment

Mode of address: Professor Lenoe

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| W 1/22 | Introduction | Lecture: Imperial Russia |
| F 1/24 | Marxism: Discussion | Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, at <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/> (Skip Preface, read only Preamble and Parts I and II). |
| M 1/27 | Revolutionary Russia and World War I, 1905-1917. Lecture | Kenez, 1-13. V. I. Lenin, “The Principles of Socialism and the War of 1914-1915,” at <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1915/s-w/ch01.htm> . Stop at “The Example of Belgium.” |
| W 1/29 | The February and October Revolutions, 1917-1918. Lecture. | Kenez, 14-33.  |
| M 2/3 | Revolutionary Voices. Discussion. | Steinberg, *Voices of Revolution* (on e-reserve). **Short paper due.** |
| W 2/5 | Civil War and Initiation of NEP. Lecture. | Kenez, 33-53. In class: View excerpts from Vertov film, “Man with a Movie Camera” |
| M 2/10 | *Cement* I. Discussion. | *Cement*, Chapters 1-11. |
| W 2/12 | *Cement* II. Discussion. | *Cement*, Chapters 12-17. |
| M 2/17 | New Economic Policy - Towards the Great Break, 1923-1930. Lecture. | Kenez, 53-82. Shliapnikov and Tararukhin political autobiographies on electronic reserve. |
| W 2/19 | Collectivization. Lecture. | **Political autobiographies due.** |
| M 2/24 | Collectivization. Discussion. | Kenez, 83-89. “December 1932 CC Collectivization Decree” (e-reserve). Letter from Feigin to Ordzhonikidze, 1932 at <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/archives/trans-aa2feign.html> . Lev Kopelev, “The Last Grain Collections (1933),” on e-reserve. |
| W 2/26 | Industrialization | Kenez, 88-102. Lecture |
| M 3/3 | High Stalinism and Terror, 1934-1938. Lecture. | Kenez, 103-131. |
| W 3/5 | “Great Retreat,” 1934-1941. Lecture/Discussion | No reading. In class: view excerpts from films “Volga, Volga,” “Aleksandr Nevskii.” Discussion of excerpts. |
| M 3/17 | The Great Patriotic War I. Lecture. | Kenez, 125-159 |
| W 3/19 | Great Patriotic War II. Discussion. | Translated soldiers’ letters and morale reports on e-reserve (under heading “Eastern Front: Soldiers’ Letters and Diaries”). “Leningrad Siege: Supplementary Documents” on e-reserve. |
| M 3/24 | Late Stalinism and Cold War Origins. Lecture | Kenez, 160-184.  |
| W 3/26 | The Thaw, 1956-1964. Lecture. | Kenez, 184-214.  |
| M 3/31 |  | **EXAM** |
| W 4/2 | “Stagnation,” 1965-1985. Lecture. | Kenez, 214-242. |
| M 4/7 | Growing Up Under Khrushchev and Brezhnev. Discussion. | Excerpts from oral histories in Donald Raleigh, *Russia’s Sputnik Generation: Soviet Baby-Boomers Talk About Their Lives* (e-book at U. of Rochester library website – specific excerpts TBA). |
| W 4/9 | The Brezhnev era… a novel. Discussion. | Erofeev, *Moscow to the End of the Line* |
| M 4/14 | Gorbachev, *Perestroika* and Collapse / Lecture | Kenez, Chapter 10 |
| W 4/16 | Gorbachev, *Perestroika* and Collapse / primary sources | “Ogonyok: *Small Fires* Excerpts” on e-reserve |
| M 4/21 | The Russian Federation / Search for Stability, 1991- 2014. Lecture | Kenez, 278-299.  |
| W 4/23 | Russian nationalism and transformations | In class view documentary “Red Army” on Soviet hockey team’s star “Russian Five” and their path from *perestroika* to the early 2000s. |
| M 4/28 | Discussion | Lukyanov, “Perestroika 2014” translated by Lenoe, on e-reserve. |
| W 4/30 |  Discussion | Putin Victory Day speeches. |

**There will be a final exam, as scheduled by the registrar.**

Books you must get hold of – available at university bookstore.

Kenez, Peter.  A History of the Soviet Union from its Beginning to its Legacy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.  Third Edition. **Be sure to get this edition.  Not available in electronic edition or at Rush Rhees in e-format.**

Gladkov, Fyodor.  Cement.  Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1994. ***This edition only.***

Erofeev, Venedikt.  Moscow to the End of the Line.  Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1992. **This edition only**.  If you read Russian, you are welcome to purchase any Russian edition (Москва-петушки is the title).

Written assignments and grading

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| Assignment |  |
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| 4-5 page paper on “Voices of Revolution” (due 2/3). | 20% |
| 3-5 page political autobiography of a Soviet alterego (2/19). | 20% |
| Exam (3/31). | 20% |
| Final Exam … date and location to be determined by registrar. | 25% |
| Discussion participation | 15% |

**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 policy will not be an excuse if you get involved in charges of plagiarism, etc.

If you have questions about the policy, ask me.

**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:** Ten percent of your grade will be based on my evaluation of class participation as well as your attendance. If you say nothing or nearly nothing (like one comment per month) you will receive a zero for participation. 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. Three is even OK, if for good reasons. 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, physical or otherwise - 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.