



HISTORY 436.01E
RUSSIA FROM PETER TO PUTIN
COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2025



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COURSE INFORMATION

Course Description:

This course will provide an examination of the history of Russia and the Soviet Union from the reign of Peter the Great to Vladimir Putin. Providing an overview of the period, the course will focus on issues such as the emergence of the Russian and Soviet Empires, the relationship of Russia and the Soviet Union to the world, the nature of autocratic and totalitarian regimes and resistance to them, state and social transformation through reform and revolution, and the lived experiences of workers, peasants, women, and minority groups in Russia. Prerequisites: Non-majors may enroll with consent of the department.

In light of the ongoing war in Ukraine, this class will also consider the ways that the Putin regime has used history as a justification for its aggression, how we can sort through the cacophony to develop narratives based on fact, and how and why historical narratives are created.

Course Materials:

Required books for this course are listed below. They are available at the bookstore:

- Kivelson and Suny, *Russia's Empires*
- Chukovskaia, *Sofia Petrovna*

Additional readings will be posted to the D2L shell

Optional Materials: There are numerous textbooks that will provide you with the background and context for the issues we will be discussing in this class. If you feel you need additional background material to better contextualize our class discussions and readings, please consider one of these:

- Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, 9th edition recently updated by Mark Steinberg (Oxford University Press, 2018) or any edition.
- Bushkovitch, *A Concise History of Russia* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).
- Thompson, *Russia: A Historical Introduction from Kievan Rus' to the Present*, 8th edition updated by Christopher Ward (Routledge, 2017), or any edition.
- Moss, *A History of Russia*, vols. I and II, 2nd ed. (Anthem Press, 2004) or any edition.

Course Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes:

As a 400-level course, students this semester will focus on honing their analytical abilities. We will practice analyzing primary sources, develop an understanding of different historical perspectives on a given topic, develop a research question, and perfect citation in Turabian/Chicago style. By advancing these skills, students will (1) gain factual knowledge about the period under discussion; (2) develop the specific skills and points of view needed by historians; (3) improve skills needed for oral and written expression; (4) be able to place the present in a historically based context; and (5) learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view. This course will also teach students to evaluate and analyze materials and to link cultural representations to the underlying historical realities that helped shape them. By the end of the semester:

1. Students will be able to construct and support an argument based on appropriate primary and secondary sources.
2. Student communication will follow conventions of grammar, syntax, and citation appropriate to the audience, purpose, and message.

Students' ability to meet the objectives and learning outcomes of this course will be evaluated through written assignments.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments

Below are the required assignments for the class. Please read these carefully, make notes about due dates in your calendars, and ask for any clarifications you require. More details about these assignments, as well as specific readings, are available on the MyLeo Online course page.

Engagement

Attendance is required. You are responsible for all material covered in our class meetings, regardless of your physical presence in the room, but it will be more fun if you are present. Students are expected to come prepared to engage with and discuss the assigned material. This means preparing the assignment before class and bringing the reading material with you to class. It is especially important for small group work that all students are in attendance each class meeting. I expect all students to participate in

our class discussions and to contribute their thoughts, ideas, and questions to our collective exploration. I especially encourage you to bring your questions to class. I will create, and expect you to uphold, an intellectual environment in the classroom where we can listen to and consider others' arguments and opinions with an open mind and where we respect viewpoints other than our own. Your engagement grade will be based on your engagement in our class discussions and be guided by the following rubric:

- A = Always prepared, frequently participates, rarely absent
- B = Always prepared, participates only when called on, rarely absent
- C = Usually prepared, rarely speaks, rarely absent
- D = Often unprepared, several absences
- F = Usually unprepared, frequent absences

For more information about the university's attendance policy, please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#). Students who are disruptive, clearly distracted, or non-communicative will be asked to leave and will be marked absent for the day's meeting.

Written Assignments

Written work for this course is set out specifically below. All written work should be submitted to the professor through the MyLeo Online course site by the due dates indicated. Late work will be accepted at the discretion of the professor. Please note that all written work (this excludes any in-class writing, quizzes, etc.) must be submitted to pass this class; any student missing written work will earn a D or F for this class.

Research Paper:

The Research Paper is designed to address the following SLOs: deepen factual knowledge about a particular period in Russian history; develop awareness of different perspectives expressed by different historians; analyze and assess primary and secondary sources; develop an argument based on sources; improve written communication skills; and solidify knowledge of the Turabian/Chicago citation method.

For the major research paper this semester, students will be divided into two groups, and will work together to consider two different sets of documents, from which they will each develop an individual research question and resulting research paper. This project will be scaffolded across the semester and submitted in stages. Please see D2L and the course schedule for additional details.

Final papers should be 10-12 pages in length, formatted in Times New Roman 12 pt font or equivalent (default MS Word font is fine), double-spaced, with pages numbered and margins of one inch (or default margins). Use MS Word, please. All submissions will be made through MyLeo Online and must be in Word document format. The Research Paper should have a title but does not need a title page. All sources used in the paper should be included in a bibliography. All citations for material used in the paper, and all ideas that are not your own, should be placed in footnotes. All citations, in notes and bibliography, must be formatted in Turabian/Chicago style (see the Department Style Guide for any questions, or ask, or refer to your copy of Turabian/Chicago). DO NOT fudge the margins or formatting; be honest with your presentation. Information about conducting historical research will be available on MyLeo Online and discussed in class meetings. The Research Paper will be graded according to a rubric. Final papers should be the product of students and reflect student work; nothing submitted should be generated by AI.

Document Response Analyses

On a regular basis, students will write short document analyses in class on designated discussion days. More instructions will be provided in class. Students will need to be sure to have prepared the assigned reading before the discussion, so they are prepared to write their document response. There are 11 designated discussion days. The lowest two discussion responses will be dropped from the final grade.

Final Exam

Exam will evaluate students' factual knowledge and ability to express themselves in written communication. Students will take one final exam on the final exam date/time assigned for this class. The exam will be in essay format and will be comprehensive.

Extra Credit

Students can receive extra credit by watching the Russian films listed in the course schedule and writing a one-page response. The films are pegged to the weeks in which they are relevant. Many of these films may be difficult to locate (sorry). I have copies of some that could be borrowed (often on VHS, very useful, I know). We can discuss other options as well. The goal with the extra credit is to expose students to some of the more classic elements of Russian and Soviet culture, and to think about the ideas that are presented in those cultural works. This could also be accomplished through reading works of Russian literature. If you would like to take that route, please let me know. Extra credit will be applied as necessary for a student's grade, and can be used to offset discussion responses, but cannot substitute for missed assignments.

Grading

Grades for the semester will be determined according to the following breakdown:

Research Paper	40%
Exam	20%
Discussion Responses	20%
Engagement	20%

Each assignment will be evaluated for its specific requirements according to a specific rubric. This general rubric forms the basis for the evaluation of written work:

- A = Mastery of reading and class material; factual accuracy; thoughtful, historical argumentation demonstrating ability to synthesize and/or some originality of thought; technically clean; proper and error-free citation format
- B = Good to excellent command of most reading and class material; accuracy; good level of historical argumentation; reasonable thesis statement; proper citation format with minimal errors
- C = Good command of class material; accuracy; ability to articulate a historical point of view, even if it is not compelling or is poorly reasoned; proper citation format with some errors
- D = Poor command of required assignments; errors; ahistorical or narrow reasoning; incorrect citation format

The grading scale used for this course is as follows:

90-100 =	A
80-89 =	B
70-79 =	C
60-69 =	D
59 or less =	F

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS, ACCESS, AND NAVIGATION
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LMS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.etamu.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@etamu.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a ETAMU campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here: <https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Turnitin:

Students must submit all written work to Turnitin. Work is submitted through the dropbox in MyLeoOnline. All student work must be turned in through MyLeo Online and will automatically be submitted to Turnitin. Please let me know if you have any problems.

Interaction with Instructor Statement

Students are encouraged to contact the professor for any and all reasons whatsoever. The more you let me know what is going on with you, the better I can help you out when necessary. Beyond the classroom, the best way to get in touch with the professor is through email. If necessary, we will coordinate a meeting either in person or via Zoom. Please talk to me about any concerns you might have and about any problems or issues that arise during the semester. I can be very understanding but only if I know what is going on with you.

Questions or concerns should be addressed to the professor via email, and I will communicate with you via your university-registered email account, usually through MyLeo Online. If you prefer to use a different account, you will need to change your preferences with the university.

All emails sent to the professor will be answered as quickly as possible, and you will receive a response within 24-48 hours, excluding weekends. No emails will be answered after 10:00pm.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide and a contract between student and instructor. It sets out the requirements and policies of the course and should be your reference for the semester. As instructor, I promise to adhere to the information as set out in this document. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

Classroom Behavior

All students are expected to observe basic tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment, whether in person or online (The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#), Policies and Procedures, Conduct). Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: [Netiquette http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html](http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html). During class time, I expect your undivided attention. This means turning off cell phones, pagers, iPods, and other devices, and putting away newspapers and other forms of distraction, for the duration of the class period (exceptions will be allowed for emergencies with advance permission of the professor). Please come to class on time and plan to stay for the entire period. Coming late and/or disrupting the learning environment shows disrespect for me, your colleagues, and the educational endeavor in which you are engaged. If you must leave early, please let me know at the beginning of class. I can be very understanding of problems that might arise over the course of the semester, but only if I know what is going on with you. I encourage you to come to my office hours, to get to know me, and to keep me informed of any issues you might have that would affect your performance in this class.

If we hold synchronous virtual meetings online, students should mute themselves except for when they are speaking. Although it is preferred to have video turned on, allowances will be made for those whose internet access does not allow for video interaction, or who are unable to turn on video for whatever reasons. Students are welcome to use a green screen background if they choose. Students attending online meetings should maintain the same respect and decorum they would in a traditional classroom. Students should pay attention to the class material, and not engage in other activities during class time. Students who are clearly distracted, disruptive, or non-communicative will be marked absent for that day.

For more information about the University's attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

Late Papers

All written assignments are due on the date listed in the Course Schedule below. Late assignments may be accepted only with the advance approval of the professor and will be assessed a penalty of one full letter grade per week. If you have a problem with a due date because of a specific emergency, please notify the professor in advance or plan to turn the assignment in early. *I can be very understanding and flexible with you, but only if you come to talk to me in advance.* **To pass this class, all written**

assignments must be completed. Any missing written assignments (excluding quizzes and discussion forums) at the end of the course will result in an automatic overall course grade of D or F.

Statement on Student Grievances

Students who have questions or concerns about the instructor's course policies or the conduct either of the instructor or a classmate should first consult with the instructor. In the event of a lack of resolution or satisfaction on the matter, the student may bring their concerns to the head of the History Department, Sharon Kowalsky (Sharon.Kowalsky@etamu.edu). If this does not result in a satisfactory conclusion to the matter, students may bring the issue to the attention of the Associate Dean of Students per procedures outlined on pp. 15-19 of the Student Guide Book.

Academic Honesty

In all courses, we expect that all work that you do and turn in is your own. It is the policy of the University, the History Department, and myself that no form of plagiarism, cheating, collusion, or any other form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. Plagiarism is defined as deliberately taking the words or ideas of someone else and passing them off as your own. Cheating is obtaining unauthorized assistance on any assignment. Collusion is the selling of academic products with the intention that they be submitted to satisfy an academic requirement. Students are expected to uphold and support the highest academic standards at all times. Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty will automatically fail the assignment in question, will likely fail the entire course, and will be subject to disciplinary action by the University (See East Texas A&M University Code of Student Conduct 5.b[1,2,3] and the Academic Integrity and AI Use Policy below). Further information on the History Department plagiarism policy can be found on the History Department web page. If you are even unclear about what constitutes plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please ask.

Writing Center

Students are encouraged to take advantage of the resources of the Writing Center for assistance with drafting their papers. The Writing Center is a resource for you. They will not write your paper; they will help you improve your writing skills. If you use the Writing Center, please plan ahead. They can only help you if you see them in advance and have time to incorporate their suggestions into the final paper.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.etamu.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

ETAMU Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.etamu.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.etamu.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)
[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.etamu.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

<http://www.etamu.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

AI Use Policy

East Texas A&M University acknowledges that there may be legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course. Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism). Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructor's guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed. In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Email: studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.etamu.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and East Texas A&M Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.etamu.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all East Texas A&M campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

East Texas A&M Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.etamu.edu/counsel

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

This schedule will guide you through the semester and indicates when your assignments are due. It should be referred to often. I will do my best to adhere to this schedule, but I reserve the right to make adjustments to it during the course of the semester as such circumstances arise. Please check the course page in MyLeo Online as the latest updates will be posted there.

Week 1: Introductions

Read: Chapters 1-3

August 26—Introduction to the Class

August 28—Background: Russia before Peter

Week 2: The Empire of Peter the Great

Read: Chapter 4; Pushkin *Bronze Horseman* (D2L), Table of Ranks, etc

September 2—Peter the Great Reforms Russia

September 4—Discussion

Week 3: Russian Enlightenment

Read: Chapter 5; Gorbатов, "Voltaire and Russia in the Age of Enlightenment"; Catherine's Nakaz; Radishchev Selections; Polish partition; etc

September 9—Catherine the Great as Enlightened Absolutist

September 11—Discussion

Russian Ark

Week 4: Revolt and Repression

Read: Chapter 6; Nechaev, Dostoevsky; Pestel; Gogol, "The Nose"
September 16—The Decembrists and the Formation of the Third Section
September 18—Discussion

Week 5: War and Reform

Read: Chapter 7; Turgenev *Sketches from a Hunter's Notebook* (selections)
September 23—The Crimean War and the Great Reforms
September 25—Discussion

Week 6: The People's Will

Read: Chapter 8; Documents
September 30—Post-Reform Society
October 2—Discussion
Film: *Katya Ismailova (Lady Macbeth of Mtensk)*

Week 7: The War to End All Wars

Read: Chapter 9
October 7—Russia in World War I
October 9—Discussion
Film: *Battalion*

Week 8: Revolutionaries Victorious

Read: Kowalsky; Documents
October 14—The Bolsheviks Seize Power
October 16—NO CLASS
Film: *Battleship Potemkin*

Week 9: Socialism in One Country

Read: Chapter 10; Documents
October 21—Building the Revolution
October 23—Discussion
Film: *Dr. Zhivago/Tsirk*
Research Question Due

Week 10: The GULag

Read: *Sofia Petrovna*
October 28—Purging Soviet Society
October 30—Discussion
Film: *Burnt By the Sun/Andrei Rublev*

Week 11: The World At Arms

Read: TBD; Documents
November 4—The Great Patriotic War
November 6—Discussion
Film: *My Name is Ivan/Cranes are Flying/Alexander Nevsky*
Preliminary Bibliography and Rough Outline Due

Week 12: Postwar Cold War

Read: Chapter 11; Trifonov

November 11—After Stalin

November 13—Discussion

Film: *The Death of Stalin/Diamond Arm/S legkim parom (Irony of Fate)/Ivan Ilych Changes his Profession*

Week 13: The Empire Collapses

Read: Voices of Chernobyl excerpts

November 18—The End of the Soviet Union

November 20: NO CLASS

Film: *Little Vera/Interdevochka/Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears/Anna from 6 to 18*

Week 14: Thanksgiving

November 25: NO CLASS

November 27: NO CLASS

Week 15: Putin's Russia

Read: Chapter 12; Documents

December 2—Post-Soviet Society

December 4—Discussion

Film: *Brat (any one)/Solaris*

Final Research Paper Due

Week 16: Final Exam

Final Exam TBD