



**HISTORY 497.01E  
MODERN RUSSIA  
COURSE SYLLABUS: FALL 2014**

**Instructor:** Dr. Sharon Kowalsky

**Office Location:** Ferguson Social Sciences 105

**Office Hours:** Monday and Wednesday, 12:30-2:00; 3:30-5:00, or by appointment

**Office Phone:** 903-886-5627

**University Email Address:** Sharon.Kowalsky@tamuc.edu

**COURSE INFORMATION**

**Course Description:**

This course will provide an in-depth examination of the history of the Soviet Union from its origins in the 1917 Revolutions to its collapse in 1991. Major topics that will be addressed include: the Russian Revolutions, Stalinism, the Post-War Soviet Order, the Collapse of the Soviet Union, Women and Gender, and Nationalism. Students will learn not only about the basic events of the time, but also the debates and arguments that shape our historical understanding and interpretation of the time and the events. In addition, students will become aware of the Soviet perspective on recent events such as the Cold War and World War II. By the end of the semester, students should be able to answer the following questions, among others:

- Why did the Russian Revolution occur?
- How did ordinary people react to the revolutionary upheaval?
- What was Stalinism?
- How did Stalinism affect Russian society?
- Why did the Soviet Union collapse?

Students will examine a variety of sources to come to their own conclusions about the events we study. Students will also hone their writing skills through essay assignments designed to enhance analytical and interpretive skills.

Prerequisite and/or Corequisite Majors: Hist 253. Non-Majors: may enroll with consent of instructor.

**Course Materials:**

The following required books are available at the bookstore:

- Riasanovsky and Steinberg, *A History of Russia*, eighth edition, volume 2 (Oxford University Press, 2011), ISBN: 978-0-19-534199-7.
- Mochulsky, *Gulag Boss* (Oxford University Press, 2011), ISBN: 978-0-19-993486-7.
- Zamyatin, *We*, trans Mirra Ginsburg (Harper Voyager, 2012), ISBN: 978-0-380-63313-5. You may obtain any edition or version of this work by this translator.
- Geifman, *Death Orders* (2010) ISBN 978-0275997526.
- Gessen, *Words Break Cement* (2014) ISBN 978-1594632198.

Any additional materials will be distributed in class by the professor or made available to students through eCollege.

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

This course will 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 form substantive and evidence-driven arguments to propose solutions to problems or explain phenomena.
2. Student communication will follow conventions of grammar and syntax appropriate to the audience, purpose and message.

The objectives of this course include: (1) to gain factual knowledge about the period under discussion; (2) to develop the specific skills and points of view needed by historians; (3) to improve skills needed for oral and written expression; (4) to be able to place the present in a historically based context; and (5) to learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.

Students' ability to meet the objectives and learning outcomes of this course will be evaluated through essays and research projects.

<b>COURSE REQUIREMENTS</b>
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### **Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments**

#### *Attendance and Participation*

Attendance is strongly encouraged. You are responsible for all material covered in our class meetings, regardless of your physical presence in the room. 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. 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 participation 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

Any quizzes or smaller writing assignments given in class from time to time will be included as part of the participation grade. We will have a 3-4 week online unit where instruction will be delivered primarily through eCollege. We may still meet in class during that time; such meetings will be announced in advance.

#### *Written Assignments*

Each student will choose a topic, in consultation and with approval from the professor, of interest to them to write a short research paper. Details and requirements for this assignment can be found on the eCollege site. Additional short writing assignments may be assigned at the discretion of the professor and will be counted as part of the participation grade.

### *Exams*

Students will take two exams and one final over the course of the semester, covering the major themes we will be addressing. For each, students will be asked to develop analytical essay responses to questions posed by the professor. Portions of the exams may be take home, on eCollege, or in-class. The exams will be worth 15 percent of the final grade; the final exam will count for 20 percent.

### **Grading**

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

Research Paper	40%
Exams	50%
Participation/Attendance	10%

Your grades for written work will be determined based on the following rubric:

- A = Mastery of reading and class material; factual accuracy; thoughtful, historical argumentation demonstrating ability to synthesize and/or some originality of thought; technically clean
- B = Good to excellent command of most reading and class material; accuracy; good level of historical argumentation; reasonable thesis statement
- 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
- D = Poor command of required assignments; errors; ahistorical or narrow reasoning

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**

The following information has been provided to assist you in preparing to use technology successfully in this course:

### *Word Processing:*

You will need access to a word processor to prepare written exams and research projects. You should be able to insert footnotes in your papers.

### *eCollege:*

This course is web-enhanced through eCollege, the Learning Management System used by Texas A&M University-Commerce. To access eCollege you will need an internet connection, preferably high speed, and your CWID and password. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, please contact Technology Services at 903-468-6000 or [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu). To get started with the course, go to: <https://leo.tamuc.edu/login.aspx>. eCollege will be used to send you announcements and reminders, to post grades, and to provide access to course materials (except required readings) such as handouts and assignments. In addition, eCollege will be the primary means for me to communicate with you outside the classroom. Be sure that you can access the email account the university has on record for you. You should get into the habit of checking the eCollege site for this course on a daily basis.

*Turnitin:*

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

**Please note:** This syllabus is your contract with me, the professor, for the semester. By enrolling in this class you agree to the policies and requirements set out below. These terms are non-negotiable and will remain in effect for the duration of the semester. If you have any questions about anything in this syllabus, please ask.

## COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

**Interaction with Instructor:**

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. I am also available during my office hours. Please come to 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.

**Librarian:**

Our librarian for Humanities and Social Sciences is Megan Beard. She is available to assist you in your research, whether it is using the library or identifying and locating sources. Please take advantage of this assistance as you need it. Her contact information is as follows:

Megan Beard, Reference Librarian  
Gee Library  
Megan.Beard@tamuc.edu

## COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

***Classroom Behavior***

All students are expected to observe basic tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive leaning environment (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct). 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.

***Late Papers***

All written assignments are due to the dropbox 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 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 assignments must be completed. Any missing

assignments at the end of the course, excluding pop quizzes, will result in an overall course grade of D or F.

### ***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 Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct 5.b[1,2,3]). 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. More information can be found at <http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/litlang/CSC/>.

### ***Students with Disabilities***

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**  
**Texas A&M University-Commerce**  
**Gee Library 132**  
**Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835**  
**Fax (903) 468-8148**

[StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu)  
[Student Disability Resources & Services](#)

## **COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR**

This schedule will guide you through the semester. 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. More specifics about daily assignments and topics will be provided in advance as we proceed through the semester.

Week 1

August 25: Introduction

August 27: Russia under the Old Regime

Read: Riasanovsky, Chapters 29-30, pages 363-399

Week 2

September 1: no class, Labor Day

September 3: Politics and Revolution

Read: Riasanovsky, Chapter 31, 400-420

Week 3

September 8: Terrorism

Read: Geifman

September 10: Terrorism

Read: Riasanovsky, Chapters 32-33, pages 421-463

Week 4

September 15: 1905 and World War I

Read: TBA

September 17: Revolution

Read: Kowalsky (EC); Riasanovsky, Chapter 34, 464-478

Week 5

September 22: Revolution continued/Film

Read: TBA

September 24: Film

**Due: Exam I**

Week 6

September 29: The Early Soviet Union/NEP

Read: Riasanovsky, Chapter 35-36, 479-510

October 1: Family Policy

Read: TBA (EC)

Week 7

October 6: Film

October 8: Early Soviet Realities

Read: Zamyatin, *We*

Week 8

October 13: Stalinism

Read: Riasanovsky, Chapter 37, 511-528

October 15: Stalinism II

Read: Gulag Boss

Week 9

October 20: World War II (14)

Read: Chapter 38, pages 529-546

October 22: World War II Continued

Read: TBA on EC

Week 10 (online component begins this week)

October 27: Post-War Society

Read: Riasanovsky, Chapter 39, pages 547-558

October 29: **Exam II (on eCollege)**

Week 11

November 3: Khrushchev and Social Change

Read: TBA on EC

November 5: Brezhnev's Stagnation

Read: Chapter 40, pages 559-587

Week 12

November 10: The Cold War

Read: TBA on EC

November 12: Post-Stalin Soviet Society

Read: Riasanovsky, Chapter 41, pages 588-616

Week 13

November 17: Gorbachev

Read: Riasanovsky, Chapter 42, pages 617-640

November 19: Collapse

Read: TBA on EC

Week 14

November 24: Post-Soviet Russia

Read: Riasanovsky, Chapters 43-44, pages 641-710

November 26: No class, Thanksgiving Break.

Week 15

December 1: Pussy Riot

Read: Gessen

**Due: Research Paper**

December 3: Conclusions

Read: TBA on EC

**Final Exam: Monday, December 8, 1:15-3:15**