

HISTORY 39
PICKING UP THE PIECES: RUSSIA UNDER YELTSIN AND PUTIN
FALL 2014

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Office Hours: MT 1-3
Th 10-12
By Appointment

This course explores the legacy of communism in Russia after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. We start with an examination of the impact of Stalinism and then turn to the efforts of Mikhail Gorbachev to resuscitate the ailing Soviet Union. The bulk of the course focuses on the impact of the policies of Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin on the economy, culture, society, and politics of Russia since 1991. Students will work on group projects designed to illuminate some aspect of post-communist life in Russia.

Two Five-Page Papers (20 percent each)
Help Lead Discussion in One Class (15 percent)
Presentation on Research Project (15 percent)
Twelve-Page Final Paper (30 percent)
Class Attendance and Active Participation
Students Must Complete All Assignments to Receive a Grade

All students are expected to read the College's policy on academic honesty and integrity that appears in the Swarthmore College Bulletin. The work you submit must be your own, and suspected instances of academic dishonesty will be submitted to the College Judiciary Council for adjudication. When in doubt about citing sources, please check with me.

I will not accept late papers and will assign a failing grade for the assignment unless you notify me and receive permission from me to submit the paper after the due date. Finally, students are required to attend class on a regular basis in order to pass the course.

All documents and articles are on Moodle. The following books are available for purchase and are on class reserve:

Murray Feshbach, *Ecocide in the USSR: Health and Nature Under Siege* (Basic Books, 1993)
Masha Gessen, *The Man Without a Face: The Unlikely Rise of Vladimir Putin* (Riverhead Trade, 2013)
Emma Gilligan, *Terror in Chechnya* (Princeton University Press, 2010)
David Satter, *Darkness at Dawn: The Rise of the Russian Criminal State* (Yale University Press, 2003)

Lilia Shevtsova, *Yeltsin's Russia: Myths and Reality* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999)

You may find the following websites particularly valuable when searching for information about contemporary events in Russia. These sites also have archives of previously published essays.

Russian History Blog: <http://russianhistoryblog.org/>

All the Russias' Blog of NYU Jordan Center for the Advanced Study of Russia: <http://jordanrussiacycenter.org/all-the-russias/>

Pussy Riot Archives of NYU Jordan Center for the Advanced Study of Russia: <http://jordanrussiacycenter.org/tag/pussy-riot/>

Sean's Russia Blog: <http://seansrussiacyblog.org/>

Johnson's Russia List: <http://www.russialist.org/>

Week One (September 3): Introduction

John Bushnell, "The 'New Soviet' Man Turns Pessimist" **M**

James Millar, "The Little Deal" **M**

Tatiana Zaslavskaya, "The Novosibirsk Report" aka "The Gathering Crisis"

Week Two (September 10): Confronting Soviet Communism

Read in Order:

Mikhail Gorbachev on Reform

Nina Andreyeva, "I Cannot Give Up My Principles"

Andrei Sakharov, "The Inevitability of Perestroika"

The Shatalin Plan (500 Days Plan)

Democratization of Politics

Boris Yeltsin, "There Won't Be a Civil War"

Set of Documents

The Last Party Platform

S. Frederick Starr, "Soviet Union: A Civil Society"

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1148614>

Week Three (September 17): The Empire Collapses

David Remnick, *Lenin's Tomb: The Last Days of the Soviet Empire*, pp. 431-542.

Victoria Bonnell and Gregory Freidin, "Televorot: The Role of Television Coverage in Russia's August 1991 Coup" <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2499653>

Gail Lapidus, "The Soviet Nationality Question"

Ronald Suny, "Nationalities and Nationalism"

Film: *The Singing Revolution* (97 minutes)

Week Four (September 24): The Promise of Reform: Yeltsinism and the Meaning and Practice of Democracy in the 1990s

Lilia Shevtsova, *Yeltsin's Russia: Myths and Reality*

Film: *Boris Yeltsin: Legacy of Change*

Week Five (October 1): The Challenges of the Environment and Health

Murray Feshbach, *Ecocide in the USSR: Health and Nature Under Siege*

Film: *Burnt by the Sun* (135 minutes)

Week Six (October 8): The Wild, Wild West: Kleptocracy and the Fleecing of the Economy

David Satter, *Darkness at Dawn: The Rise of the Russian Criminal State*

Week Seven (October 22): Putin Comes to Power

Masha Gessen, *The Man Without a Face: The Unlikely Rise of Vladimir Putin*

Week Eight (October 29): Putin Shows His Real Side: The Bombing of Civilians in Chechnya

Emma Gilligan, *Terror in Chechnya*

Week Nine: (November 5): Putinism and the Revival of Russia

Eliot Borenstein, *Overkill: Sex and Violence in Russian Popular Culture*, pp. 1-97
(Available as Ebook on Tripod)

Week Ten (November 12): Meetings on Research

Week Eleven (November 19): Presentations

Week Twelve (November 26): Presentations

Week Thirteen (December 3): TBA

Final Paper Due on December 19 at Noon