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HIST 105-01, Soviet Russia - History and Literature, Fall 2007

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Authors	Buscher, Frank M.
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SYLLABUS

HIST 105.01; Soviet Russia - History and Literature (4 credit hours)

Fall 2007

Meets the following Foundation requirements: F2 (writing intensive), F3 (historical forces)

MWF 8:00-8:50 in Clough 313

Instructor: Frank Buscher

Office: Clough 310

Office Hours: MWF 10-11; T,Th 11-12 (feel free to stop by anytime)

Teaching Schedule: MWF 8-8:50, 2-2:50; T, Th 9:30-10:45

Office Phone: 843-3554

Email: BUSCHERF@rhodes.edu

Required Readings:

Bulgakov, *The White Guard*

Dziewanowski, *Russia in the Twentieth Century*

Trifonov, *The House on the Embankment*

Shalamov, *Kolyma Tales*

Chuikovskaya, *Sofia Petrovna*

Voinovich, *The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of Private Ivan Chonkin*

Zamyatin, *We*

Course Description:

The Soviet Union is unlike many periods in history; it has a definite beginning (1917) and a definite end (1991). Under the Soviet regime, the citizens of this vast country endured incredible hardships and enormous suffering. This applies particularly to the Stalin period, when millions died due to famine, terror and forced labor. With the exception of a short thaw under Khrushchev, the USSR's rulers relied on political repression to rule their citizens. Although freedom of expression and speech did not exist, Soviet authors did produce intriguing prose and poetry of high quality. While the official Soviet style of "socialist realism" produced largely worthless literature, many writers who dared to resist the official line wrote works that are considered classics. This course will examine the history of the USSR and the representation of different periods of that history by some of the best Soviet authors.

Course Goals and Assessments:

- To familiarize students with the history of the Soviet Union (lectures, discussions, writing assignments, presentations).
- To help students develop their written and oral communication skills (various writing assignments, discussions, exams, presentations).
- To assist students in framing persuasive arguments (exams, writing assignments, discussions, presentations).
- To familiarize students with the historian's craft (document analysis, historiography, writing assignments, discussions).

- To instill in students the conviction that the study of history is fascinating, valuable, and useful.

Course Structure:

This course is an introductory seminar, not a traditional lecture course. Hence, the emphasis will be on discussion and the free exchange of ideas. Seminars can function only when all participants come to its meetings prepared, having completed the assigned readings and eager to contribute. All students need to participate. In addition, each member of the seminar has the duty to ensure that each meeting is conducted in an atmosphere allowing for frank and open discussion.

Exams:

There will be two examinations: a midterm and a final. Both will be essay exams.

Oral Participation:

To make this a successful course, consistent and enthusiastic student participation is of the essence. Participation takes many different forms and includes questions.

Writing Assignments:

This is a writing-intensive seminar in a discipline that places a premium on excellent written communication skills. Good writing and the ability to analyze, interpret, and contextualize data are at the heart of a liberal arts education. They are also vital for success in life after college. The following assignments provide students with opportunities to hone their skills as writers:

- *Brief analytical papers:* Students will write four brief papers analyzing the primary source documents we will be discussing in class. Each must be **600 words** (two pages) long, typed (font: Times New Roman; font size: 12), double-spaced, and submitted to the instructor as an attachment to an email. Each paper is due in class on the day of the discussion (see Schedule of Classes below). The purpose of this assignment is to encourage students to read carefully several prominent primary source documents and to analyze their contents in writing. This requires accuracy, clarity, attention to detail, hard work, and persistence.
- *Reaction papers:* Students will write three reaction papers. Each must be **1,500 words** (five pages) long, typed (font: Times New Roman; font size: 12), double-spaced, and submitted to the instructor as an attachment to an email. In each paper students will respond to what they have read about certain periods in Soviet history in two of the assigned novels (please find guidelines for the writing of reaction papers on the Academic Server).

- *Final paper*: The final paper must be **2,500 words** (about eight to nine pages) long, typed (font: Times New Roman; font size: 12), double-spaced, and submitted to the instructor as an attachment to an email. Students have two options:

Option 1: Students choosing this option will write a historical research paper on one of the following (please find guidelines for the writing of a research paper on the Academic Server):

- a Soviet author or poet (e.g. Mayakovski, Dudintsev, Voinovich, Pasternak, Bulgakov, Akhmatova, Romanov, Sholokhov, Solzhenitsyn, Chuikovskaya, Grossman, Bunin etc.);
- a Soviet literary movement (e.g. Fellow Travelers, Socialist Realism, Serapion Brothers, Futurists, Symbolists etc.);
- Soviet literary policy at certain points in that country's history (e.g. during the Brezhnev years) or the role of the *samizdat*, the underground press.
- **The topic must be discussed and cleared with the instructor.**

Option 2: Students choosing this option will write an essay based on the documents located on the Academic Server. At minimum, the paper is to address the following:

- What do the documents reveal about change and continuity in Soviet history?
- Do they permit you to identify major historical turning points? If so, what were these watershed events and what was their significance?
- Which document impressed you the most? Why did it leave such an impression?
- How does this particular document resonate with professional historians? Discuss the recent analysis and interpretation by at least two experts on Soviet history.
- Do the documents permit one to draw conclusions as to why the Soviet Union failed as a state and a society? If so, what are your conclusions?

Presentations:

Each student will give one 10-minute presentation to the seminar. S/he can choose from the list of topics available for Option 1 of the final paper.

Final Grade:

The final grade will be determined in the following manner:

- midterm exam = 10%
- final exam = 10%
- participation = 15%
- brief analytical papers = 10% (2.5% each)
- reaction papers = 30% (10% each)
- final paper = 15%
- presentation = 10%

What do the grades mean?

Grade	Rhodes Catalog	What is required?
A, A-	excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • near-perfect attendance and on-time records • consistent high-quality contributions to class discussions • superior writing skills featuring an effective style, correct syntax and grammar, and clearly formulated theses reflecting a high level of maturity • clean, carefully proofread papers and exams • outstanding intellectual curiosity and strong interest in the subject • willingness to exceed the course requirements and to be a leader
B+, B, B-	good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • near-perfect attendance and on-time records • regular contributions to class discussions • above-average writing skills featuring an effective style, correct syntax, and clearly formulated theses • clean, proofread papers and exams • willingness to fulfill the course requirements • interest in the subject and in improving academically
C+, C, C-	satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good attendance and on-time records • some contributions to class discussions • ability to write an essay, albeit with some style and syntax problems • proofread papers and exams • willingness to fulfill the course requirements
D+, D, D-	passing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adequate attendance and on-time records • few contributions to class discussions • ability to write an essay, albeit with major style and syntax problems • poorly proofread papers and exams • insufficient willingness to fulfill the course requirements • inadequate readiness to work to improve academic weaknesses
F	failure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor attendance and on-time records • no contributions to class discussions • inability to write an essay and reluctance to work to improve academic weaknesses • refusal to fulfill course requirements

Plagiarism:

Cases of deliberate plagiarism must and will be referred to the Rhodes College Honor Council. Article III, Section 2 of the Honor Council Constitution states the following:

B. The term “cheating” is defined as the attempt or act of willfully giving or receiving unauthorized aid from any source on academic course work.

C. “Cheating” includes plagiarism. Plagiarism is an act of academic dishonesty. A student must not adopt or reproduce ideas, words, or statements of another person without appropriate acknowledgment. A student must give credit to the originality of others and acknowledge an indebtedness whenever he or she does any of the following:

1. Quotes another person’s actual words, either oral or written.
2. Paraphrases another person’s actual words, either oral or written.
3. Uses another person’s idea, opinion, or theory.
4. Borrows facts, statistics, or other illustrative material unless the information is common knowledge.

It is the student’s responsibility to consult the professor, an Honor Council member, or writing handbooks for procedure for properly acknowledging sources.¹

Students may also wish to consult “What is plagiarism?” on the Honor Council FAQ site.²

Carelessness in documenting sources, even if not technically plagiarism, will be penalized as the instructor deems appropriate.

Attendance:

Students who have **four (4) absences** during the semester will receive a grade of `F' for the course. Further, please be on time for all class sessions. Tardiness is disruptive, and repeated tardiness is bound to leave a bad impression with the instructor and fellow students.

Disabilities:

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services at x3994 as soon as possible.

¹<http://www.rhodes.edu/CampusCommunity/PoliciesandProcedures/StudentHandbook/Constitutions/loader.cfm?url=/commonspot/security/getfile.cfm&PageID=22477>

²<http://www.rhodes.edu/CampusCommunity/Students/StudentJudiciaries/Honor-Council-FAQs.cfm>

Schedule of Classes

August

- 22 Introduction to the course
- 24 How to write well and cite correctly!
- 27 The Russian Empire at the start of the 20th century; Dziewanowski, Ch. 1-3
- 29 Two wars, three revolutions: Russia, 1905-17; Dziewanowski, Ch. 4-6
- 31 Discussion of primary sources: Lenin's *April Theses* and Nicholai Bukharin's *The Russian Revolution and its Significance* (Academic Server)
Brief analytical paper due

September

- 03 Labor Day
- 05 The consolidation of the Bolshevik Revolution; Dziewanowski, Ch. 7
- 07 The bloody struggle between the Bolsheviks and their enemies: Russia's dreadful Civil War, 1918-1921; Dziewanowski, Ch. 8
- 10 Discussion of Bulgakov, *The White Guard*
- 12 Economic ruin and recovery: War Communism and New Economic Policy, Dziewanowski; Ch. 9
- 14 The international outcast: early Soviet foreign relations; Dziewanowski, Ch. 10
- 17 Lenin's death and the struggle for power, 1924-27; Dziewanowski, Ch. 11-12
- 19 Discussion of Zamyatin, *We*
- 21 The Soviet literary scene in the 1920s (**student presentations**)
First reaction paper due
- 24 Stalin's policies to radically transform the Soviet Union: rapid industrialization, the collectivization of agriculture, and economic planning; Dziewanowski, Ch. 13
- 26 Discussion of primary sources: Stalin's *Concerning the Policy of Eliminating the Kulaks as a Class* and *The Tasks of Economic Executives* [esp. pp. 527-531] (AS)
Brief analytical paper due

28 Stalin's purges; Dziewanowski, Ch. 14

October

01 Discussion of Shalamov, *Kolyma Tales*

03 The forging of a Soviet society and nation: cultural and nationality policy in the Stalin years; Dziewanowski, Ch. 15

05 From isolation to collective security: Soviet foreign policy from the 1920s to the mid-1930s; Dziewanowski, Ch. 16

08 Soviet foreign policy and the road to World War II; Dziewanowski, Ch. 17

10 From "Barbarossa" to Stalingrad: the Soviet Union in World War II, 1941-42; Dziewanowski, Ch. 18

12 Midterm exam

15 Fall Recess

17 From Stalingrad to total victory: the Soviet Union in World War II, 1943-45; Dziewanowski, Ch. 18

19 Discussion of primary source documents: Stalin's *Broadcast to the Soviet People, July 3, 1941*; and Stalin's *Order No. 227, 28 July 1942 (AS)*

Brief analytical paper due

22 Discussion of Chuikovskaya, *Sofia Petrovna*

24 The Soviet literary scene under Stalin (**student presentations**)
Second reaction paper due

26 The U.S.S.R. during Stalin's last years, 1945-1953; Dziewanowski, Ch. 19

29 The power struggle after Stalin's death and the beginning of de-Stalinization; Dziewanowski, Ch. 20

31 Discussion of a primary source document: Khrushchev's *Secret Speech* at the Twentieth Party Congress (AS)

Brief analytical paper due

November

02 The triumph of Nikita Khrushchev, 1956-1958; Dziewanowski, Ch. 21

- 05 The decline and demise of Khrushchev, 1959-1964; Dziewanowski, Ch. 22
- 07 The Soviet literary scene under Khrushchev (**student presentations**)
- 09 Instructor attending a conference
- 12 The beginning of the end: the U.S.S.R. during the Brezhnev years; Dziewanowski, Ch. 23
- 14 Discussion of Trifonov, *The House on the Embankment*
- 16 Discussion of primary source documents: The *Brezhnev Doctrine* (1968), a KGB report titled *On the Results of Search for Authors of Anti-Soviet Anonymous Documents in 1975* (1976), and a *KGB Proposal to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (1977) (AS)
- 19 The Soviet literary scene under Brezhnev (**student presentations**)
- 21 Thanksgiving Recess
- 23 Thanksgiving Recess
- 26 Discussion of Voinovich, *The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of Private Ivan Chonkin*
Third reaction paper due
- 28 Too little, too late: Gorbachev's policies to save the Soviet Union, 1985-1991; Dziewanowski, Ch. 24
- 30 The fall of the Soviet Union, August – December 1991; Dziewanowski, Ch. 25

December

- 03 Discussion of primary source documents: Alexander Yakovlev's *Text of Presentation at the CC CPSU Politburo Session* (1987), the *Memorandum of Conversation between M.S. Gorbachev and Károly Grósz, General Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party, Moscow, 23-24 March 1989*, and an *Excerpt From the Diary of Anatoly Chernyaev, Gorbachev's foreign policy assistant, 10 November 1989* (AS)
- 05 The Soviet Union's legacy for Russia and other former Soviet Republics; Dziewanowski, Ch. 26
Final paper due