

# **HIST 386: Twentieth-Century Russia (Spring 2012)**

MWF 9:05-9:55 am, Ross Hall 2275

Dr. Steven Seegel

[steven.seegel@unco.edu](mailto:steven.seegel@unco.edu)

Department of History, University of Northern Colorado

Office Telephone: 970-351-2082

Office Hours: MWF 10-11 am, Ross Hall 3280B

## **Contents of Syllabus**

- I. Course Overview
- II. Required Readings
- III. Grading Breakdown
- IV. Seegel's Grading Criteria
- V. Seegel's Three A's: How to Succeed in This Course!
- VI. Important Course Policies
- VII. Our Spring 2012 Schedule
- VIII. Your Final Research Paper
- IX. Further Helpful Advice & Guidelines

### **I. Course Overview**

Twentieth-century Russia could be called a history of the Soviet experiment, save for the disqualifying fact that the USSR lasted only 74 years. To most, the quick disintegration of the Soviet state and its institutions came unexpectedly. Yet while Cold War triumphalism (we won!) lives on in Western circles, Russia's future is uncertain. In 2005, then-President Vladimir Putin lamented the Soviet collapse as the century's "greatest geopolitical catastrophe."

We aim to assess the legacies of what were in fact multiple experiments in Russian and Soviet governance: a tsarist and autocratic Empire (pre-1905); constitutional monarchy and liberal parliamentarism (1905- Feb. 1917); "provisional" bourgeois-democratic government (Feb.-Oct. 1917); a Leninist system of one-party rule in constituent Soviet republics, with commitment to communist values and international revolution (Oct. 1917-late 1920s); Stalin's model of personal dictatorship and geopolitical expansion (early 1930s-1953); de-Stalinization and modernization by oligarchic rule (1953-mid-1980s); Gorbachev's perestroika (1985-1991); postcommunist Russian capitalism under Yeltsin (1991-1999); and the Putin era, with its hybrid mix of Russian xenophobic nationalism, European imperialism, and petropolitics (1999-present).

In your historical focus on the peoples of Russia and the USSR, you will come to interpret 20<sup>th</sup> Century Russia through three main lenses: (1) of Soviet citizens who stayed in the republics of the USSR, or else came to identify as Soviet or Russian; (2) of those who left the Soviet bloc for one reason or another, and identified as non-Soviet or non-Russian; and (3) of international observers – of varied political stripes – on the Russian, Soviet, and postcommunist scenes.

**II. Required Readings** (All are at the UNC bookstore; some are at The Book Stop.)

Cohen, Stephen. *Soviet Fates and Lost Alternatives: From Stalinism to the New Cold War*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009. ISBN: 0231148976.  
Koestler, Arthur. *Darkness at Noon*. New York: Scribner, 2007. ISBN: 1416540261.  
Politkovskaia, Anna. *Putin's Russia: Life in a Failing Democracy*. New York: Holt Paperbacks, 2007. ISBN: 0-8050-8250-6  
Service, Robert. *The Russian Revolution, 1900-1927*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Palgrave, 2009. ISBN: 0-230-22040-1  
Suny, Ronald. *The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States*. New York: Oxford U Press, 2011. ISBN: 0195081056

**III. Grading Breakdown**

Three In-class Quizzes	30 points
PAPER #1: Koestler Paper (3-4 pp.) on Stalinism	10 points
PAPER #2: Cohen Paper (3-4 pp.) on Post-Stalinism	10 points
PAPER #3: Politkovskaia Paper (3-4 pp.) on Putin's Russia	10 points
Stalin on Trial (Group Presentations)	10 points
Final 15-20 pp. Research Paper (Abstract/Biblio is worth 5 of 20 pts)	20 points
Attendance and Participation	10 points
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 points</b>

**IV. Seegel's Grading Criteria**

A (90-92 an A-; 93-96 is an A; 97-100 is an A+) You've done startlingly well, exceeding all expectations. Your work is organized, cogently argued, well-written, and creative. The grade is NOT given for simply following directions or parroting lecture notes.

B (80-82 is a B-; 83-86 is a B; 87-89 is a B+) You've made a good or very good effort. Your work is clearly presented with supporting details, and your performance is solid and consistent. The grade indicates above average mastery of the material.

C (70-72 is a C-; 73-76 is a C; 77-79 is a C+) You've made a fair effort, but missed the point, gone off on a tangent, did not follow directions. You may have had a good idea, but presented it in a rushed, careless, or sloppy manner. The grade is given for basic understanding of factual material and competent, if unspectacular, written presentation.

D (60-62 is a D-; 63-66 is a D; 67-69 is a D+) Your effort is lacking. The grade reflects unsatisfactory preparation of factual material, inability or unwillingness to answer specified questions in an assignment, superficial interpretation or argumentation, and/or poor written work.

F (Below 60) Unacceptable at the college level. See me immediately if you wish to improve.

## V. Seegel's Three A's: How to Succeed in This Course!

**A.1.:** Be *articulate*. Aim for precision and coherence in everything you write or say. Organize your thoughts, and develop your own sense of style.

**A.2.:** Be *analytical*. Do not simply report or describe. Keep in mind that I do not define knowledge as regurgitated information. (Consider this [The Wikipedia Warning!](#))

**A.3.:** Be *accountable*. YOU are responsible for what you do or say in the course. Don't be afraid to challenge me or your fellow classmates, but please be courteous.

## VI. Important Course Policies

### A. Forms of Academic Misconduct: Plagiarism and Cheating

- Plagiarism is defined as the act of taking someone else's written work without proper citation. I follow strictly the UNC Student Code of Conduct: "Students who are judged to have engaged in some form of academic misconduct may be subject to (1) a zero or an "F" on the work in question, (2) an "F" in the course, (3) other academic penalties as outlined in the professor's course requirements and expectations, (4) disciplinary action as specified in the Sanctions for Misconduct section . . . , or (5) any combination thereof. Procedural due process, including the right to appeal, is to be followed in making a determination of whether academic misconduct has occurred."
- Cheating is the act of copying or stealing another's intellectual property, or using aids or references when none are allowed. If I catch you cheating during a quiz or exam (and I should add that I have caught students in the past), you will receive an "F" for the assignment, and depending on the severity, potentially for the entire course.
- UNC's policies and recommendations for academic misconduct will be followed. For additional information, please see the Dean of Students website, Student Handbook link, [www.unco.edu/dos/handbook/index.html](http://www.unco.edu/dos/handbook/index.html). According to UNC Guidelines, cases of academic misconduct are offenses which can be referred, at my discretion, to the Academic Dean. Do not dare to risk this, as it may jeopardize your academic status.

### B. NO Late Papers

- Deadlines are given *in advance* on the syllabus! Consequently, no late papers will be accepted, except in *rare* case of accident, death in the family, college-related business, or a medical emergency, for which you must bring a *signed* excuse. Your honesty is always *expected*.
- **IMPORTANT:** If you *know* that you will be absent for class on the day the paper is due, you *must* send it to me as an e-mail attachment, or leave it in my office mailbox. The deadline for every paper is the **START OF CLASS**; you *must* be ready to hand in the paper when class starts.
- All late papers will receive a ZERO.

**C. Format for Papers**

- All papers *must* be double-spaced, with one-inch margins and Times New Roman 12-point font. Failure to comply and/or deliberate manipulation of the font or margins will result in grade reductions.

**D. Citing Properly**

- Upper-level history courses at UNC follow the Chicago Manual of Style. There are two ways to access this for the course: (1) Purchase the user-friendly manual for \$3 in the History Department Office, Ross Hall 3270. (2) On the UNC Libraries website at <http://library.unco.edu/> click on “Citation Styles” at the right, and then go to “Chicago Manual of Style Online.”

**E. Extra Credit**

- NO individualized extra credit will be offered for the course. There are no exceptions.

**F. Disability Support Services**

- Students who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Disability Support Services (970) 351-2289 as soon as possible to ensure that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. Information is kept confidential.

**G. Facebook Policy**

- Students attempting to “Facebook befriend” me as their professor should be cautioned. This is a boundary issue for professors at UNC, and strictly not permissible *for any and all students who are enrolled my courses*. If, after you have taken all of my courses you wish to take (or else upon your graduation from UNC), you wish to “Facebook request” a friendship, I am open to considering that. This does not, of course, mean that I will reciprocate it.

**H. Seegel’s “Open Door Policy,” or What You Can Expect of Me . . . .**

- “Open door” entails decent customer service, but it does not mean that the store is always open. I am not on call to answer your emails 24/7. Please keep in mind that I will respond to you on the clock, between 9 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- “Open door” means that if you have a scheduling conflict with my regular office hours, I will do my best to make an individual appointment with you.
- “Open door” means that you should *never* hesitate to come and see me.

**I. Attendance & Participation**

- I *do* take attendance! You will not be able to do well in the class if you do not attend regularly and participate.
- I reserve the right to give unannounced quizzes if class participation is lacking. If I do, I will explain the attendant changes in our grading system.

A/A-	=	9.0-10.0
B+/B	=	7.5-8.5
C+/C	=	6.0-7.0
D	=	4.5-5.5
F	=	0.0-4.0

- The "A/A-" student regularly attends discussion and lecture, does the assigned work thoughtfully, and eagerly participates. The student offers insightful contributions to the general forum, and provides occasional leadership in smaller groups.
- The "B+/B" student usually shows up to discussion and lecture, does the assigned work, and readily participates. The student frequently contributes to the general forum and in smaller groups.
- The "C+/C" student sometimes misses discussion and lecture, sometimes does the assigned work, and generally participates when called upon.
- The "D" student infrequently attends discussion and lecture, does assignments inconsistently, haphazardly or not at all, may disturb other students' learning, and participates only when called upon.
- The "F" student rarely attends discussion and lecture, rarely does the assigned work, never participates, and/or is disruptive in the classroom.

## **VII. OUR FALL 2010 SCHEDULE**

### **Week One: Overview of Russian History**

Mon., 1/9: Syllabus Overview; Russia Today (Clips)

Wed., 1/11: Lecture 1: Tsarist Legacies

Fri., 1/13: Lecture 2: Russia and 1905

Mon., 1/16: MLK Day – NO CLASS

### **Week Two: Formation of the USSR**

Wed., 1/18: Discussion 1: Imperial Russia into the USSR?

Fri., 1/20: Lecture 3: WWI and the 1917 Revolutions

### **Week Three: Revolutionary Legacies**

Mon., 1/23: Lecture 4: Russian Civil War or Revolutionary Wars?

Wed., 1/25: Discussion 2: Russian Revolution – Causes and Effects

\*\*\* **Readings for Discussion 2:** Suny, Chs. 2-3, Service, pp. 1-70 (Intro, Chs. 1-2)

**Question:** Was the Russian Revolution a creative or destructive force? How so?

- Read for Fri., 1/27: Suny, Ch. 4

Fri., 1/27: Lecture 5: Nationalities

- Read for Mon., 1/30: Suny, Ch. 5

#### **Week Four: Communism in the 1920s**

Mon., 1/30: Lecture 6: Bolshevnik Communism and NEP

- Read for Wed., 2/1: Suny, Ch. 6

Wed., 2/1: Lecture 7: Lenin and Succession Politics

- Read for Fri., 2/4: Suny, Ch. 8 (skip Ch. 7); Service, pp. 71-107 (Ch. 3, Conclusions)
- **We WILL have a half-period discussion on Suny and Service (all)**

Fri., 2/3: Lecture 8: Soviet Culture and Modernist Utopia

- Study for Quiz One – **lecture notes and text: Suny, Chs. 1-6, 8; Service (all)**

#### **Week Five: Stalinism**

Mon., 2/6: **Quiz One: Tsarist Rule to Pre-Stalinism, 1905-1929**

- Start Koestler, *Darkness at Noon*

Wed., 2/8: Lecture 9: Stalinist Modernization and the Ukrainian Terror-Famine

- Continue Koestler, *Darkness at Noon*

\*\*\* **Readings for Discussion 3:** Suny, Chs. 9-12

Fri., 2/10: Lecture 10: Stalin's Purges

- Finish Koestler, *Darkness at Noon*

#### **Week Six: Stalin and the Great Fatherland War**

Mon., 2/13: Discussion 3: Revolutionary Afterthoughts

- **Historical Thought Paper #1 (3-4 pp.) is DUE!!!**

**QUESTION:** What are the arguments in *Darkness at Noon* for and against Stalinism? How might the character of Rubashov reflect the author's attitudes toward Stalinism?

- Read for Wed., 2/15: Suny, Ch. 13

Wed., 2/15: Lecture 11 - Totalitarianism and the Hitler-Stalin Bargain

- Read for Fri., 2/17: Suny, Ch. 14

Fri., 2/17: In-class Documentary – *Russia's War: Blood upon the Snow* (1995)

## **Week Seven: World War II to Cold War**

Mon., 2/20: Lecture 12 - The Great Fatherland War

- Read for 2/22: Suny, Ch. 15

Wed., 2/22: Lecture 13: Origins of the Cold War

- Read for 2/24: Suny, Ch. 16

Fri., 2/24: Seegel at Harvard – NO CLASS

## **Week Eight: Legacies of Stalinism I**

Mon., 2/27: Lecture 14: Late Stalinism

- Prepare Legal Cases for and against Stalin

\*\*\* **Readings you can use for Discussion 4a-b (Stalin on Trial) and QUIZ TWO:** Suny to Ch. 16 (minus Ch. 7); Service (all); Koestler (all)

Wed., 2/29: **Discussion 4a** (Review for Quiz Two): Stalin on Trial, Part I (Prosecution's Case)

Fri., 3/2: **Discussion 4b** (Review for Quiz Two): Stalin on Trial, Part II (Defense's Case)

## **Week Nine: Legacies of Stalinism II**

Mon., 3/5: **QUIZ TWO: Stalin's USSR, 1929-1953**

Wed., 3/7: IN-CLASS FILM, *Burnt by the Sun*

Fri., 3/9: IN-CLASS FILM, *Burnt by the Sun*

\*\*\* **Reading over break: Suny, Ch. 17, start Cohen**

**SPRING BREAK: March 10-18, 2012**

## **Week Ten: Soviet Reform I**

Mon., 3/19: Lecture 15: From Autocracy to Oligarchy

- Read for Wed., 3/21, Cohen, *Soviet Fates*, Introduction, Chs. 1-2 (up to p. 60)

\*\*\* **Reading for Discussion 6: Cohen, up to page 60**

Wed., 3/21: Discussion 6: Issues of Soviet Reform I

- Read for Fri., 3/23: Suny, Ch. 17

Fri., 3/23: Lecture 16: Khrushchev's Reforms

- Read for Mon., 3/26: Suny., Ch. 18

### **Week Eleven: Soviet Reform II**

Mon., 3/26: Lecture 17: Brezhnev's Long Reign

- Read for Fri., 3/30: Suny, Ch. 19

Wed., 3/28: Lecture 18: Gorbachev's Revolution?

Fri., 3/30: Discussion 7: Issues of Soviet Reform II

- **Historical Thought Paper #2 (3-4 pp.) is DUE!!!**

**QUESTION:** Was the Soviet Union reformable? Assess the validity of Cohen's argument, and his historical framework for the problem. Do you agree or disagree with his assessment?

### **Week Twelve: Legacies of Glasnost' and Perestroika**

Mon., 4/2: In-class FILM on Women & Glasnost: *Adam's Rib* or *Little Vera*

Wed., 4/4: In-class FILM: on Women & Glasnost: *Adam's Rib* or *Little Vera*

Fri., 4/6: In-class FILM on Women & Glasnost: *Adam's Rib* or *Little Vera*

- Read for Mon., 4/9: Suny, Ch. 20

### **Week Thirteen: Fall of the Soviet Union, and Beyond**

Mon., 4/9: Lecture 19: The End of the Soviet Union

- Study for Quiz Three – **lecture notes and text: Suny, Chs. 17-21; Cohen (all)**

Wed., 4/11: **QUIZ THREE: Khrushchev to Gorbachev, 1953-1991**

Fri., 4/13: Lecture 20: Yeltsin's 1990s

- Start Politkovskaia, *Putin's Russia*

### **Week Fourteen: 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Russia and the "Near Abroad"**

Mon., 4/16: Lecture 21: Putin's 2000s

- Continue Politkovskaia, *Putin's Russia*

Wed., 4/18: Lecture 22: Orange (Ukraine 2004) and Rose (Georgia 2008) Revolutions

Fri., 4/20: **Discussion 8:** Putin's Russia

- **Historical Thought Paper #3 on Politkovskaia – 3-4 pp - is DUE)**

**QUESTION:** What specifically makes Putin's Russia a "failing democracy"? Does Politkovskaia, as a journalist, present a convincing case with the examples and issues she touches upon? Would a historian present the problem any differently?

## **Week Fifteen: Student Research Presentations**

Mon., 4/23: Student Presentations I (one page Abstract, one page Bibliography, 5 points)

Wed., 4/25: Student Presentations II (one page Abstract, one page Bibliography, 5 points)

Fri., 4/27: Student Presentations III (one page Abstract, one page Bibliography, 5 points)

## **VIII. Final Student Research Projects**

\*\*\* Your research paper (**15-20 pp. max**) should deal with one of these main topics.

### **1. War and Revolution**

- the causes and effects of WWI
- the Russian Civil War
- the Great Fatherland War
- the Cold War
- the Soviet-Afghan War
- the Russian-Chechen Wars

### **2. Nationalism and Nationalities**

- the USSR as a multiethnic state
- minority policy
- development of the national cultures, languages, histories among “nationalities”
- ethnonationalism

### **3. Studying Soviet Communist and Soviet Russian Politics, Society, Culture**

- models of communism
- Marxism
- Leninism
- Stalinism
- U.S. Sovietology and the Cold War
- “socialism with a human face”

### **4. Civil/Uncivil Society**

- concepts of civil society
- bureaucracy and institutions
- diplomacy and the fall of communism
- role of Soviet and East European dissidents
- post-communist transitions

FINAL EXAM WEEK - No Final Exam; Hand in Final Paper DRAFT, w/ Bibliography and Footnotes!!! Send it to [steven.seegel@unco.edu](mailto:steven.seegel@unco.edu) or drop it off in the History office in Ross Hall

3270. **DEADLINE: 10:45 am, Tuesday, May 1, 2012**

## IX. Further Helpful Advice & Guidelines

### Dr. Seegel's Quick Tips for Reading Historical Sources and Literature

(revised April 2010)

#### Basic Questions to Consider

1. **The 5 W's:** Who? What? Where? When? Why?
2. **Assumptions:** What assumptions (conscious or not) might the author have?
3. **Background:** What is the author's background, biography, psychology?
4. **Accuracy/"Spin":** Is the author competent in assembling facts accurately into evidence? What factors might make the evidence faulty, or unbalanced?
5. **Language, Tone, Style:** In what manner does the author write? Is it polemical, detached, epic, lyrical, comical, performative, etc.?
6. **Agenda:** What is the author's purpose? Is it stated explicitly, or somehow veiled?
7. **Audience:** To whom does the author speak or appeal? Are the intended audience members friendly, hostile, neutral, undecided, academic, indifferent?
8. **"Historicizing" the Context:** Always consider carefully the *historical context* (economic, political, social, cultural, religious, gender norms) for any source.

#### Advanced Level

9. **Method/Model of Interpretation:** What methods or models of interpretation can be applied? Standards of "objectivity," Marxist, feminist, structuralist, postmodernist?
10. **Structure of Argument:** Analyze (break into parts) the author's argument and assemblage of evidence.

#### Note on Citations -- **When in doubt, cite!**

\*\*\* In writing all UNC History papers, you should be using *The Chicago Manual of Style* (14<sup>th</sup> ed., 1993). For further helpful information on "The Chicago Style," see Joan Clinefelter, *A Brief Manual of Style*, available in the History Department's office (Ross Hall 3270).

## How to Write Effective History Papers

### DO'S

1. Read carefully. An "A" paper starts with **comprehension!**
2. Have a **thesis** statement. Think of your paper as a building a case which you *must* prove.
3. **Organize** your **argument** (para. 1), supporting **body of evidence** from primary/secondary **sources** (para. 2-4), **conclusion** (para. 5).
4. Marshall your **critical evidence**.
5. Be attentive to **bias**, but do not let this prevent you from **engaging** with other perspectives.
6. Be **sensitive to historical context** that is different from your own.
7. Know the difference between a **primary source** (a witness account) and a **secondary source** (commentary, interpretation).
8. Edit and **proofread** your writing.

### DON'T's

**AGREE** – incorrect tense or aspect agreement

**AWK** – awkward word usage

**CITE** – missing or improper citation (beware of **plagiarism!!!!**)

**CHOP** – choppy or sloppy sentence structure

**CNTXT** – lack of attention to context

**DESCR** – piling on of descriptive information, in place of analytical commentary

**EDIT** – failure to edit your writing for basic errors

**EXAMP** – introduction of examples which are random, incorrectly understood, or do not tend to support your argument

**FILL** – blatant, uncreative use of filler sentences, rhetorical questions, generalities, clichés

**FRAG** – sentence fragment or run-on

**GRAM** – incorrect grammar structure

**LOGIC** – faulty logic in the argument ("X preceded Y, therefore X caused Y")

**OPIN** – improper insertion of opinion, personal experience, or reflection where formal, objective analysis is needed

**PASS** – passive ("people were killed"); make active ("X killed Y")

**PLOT** – excessive, and obvious, plot summarizing

**PUNCT** – absent or misplaced punctuation

**SPELL** – spelling typos or mistakes

**TANG** – going off on a tangent; introducing irrelevant information

**TRANS** – lack of or incorrect usage of transitions, topic sentences

**WW** – wrong word choice