

Course Name

[History of Russia](#)

Course Overview

The course is devoted to the general problems of Russian History. The class activity includes 9 lectures and 9 seminars (36 hours). In the end of course students present the results of their individual research, based on the project method (12 hours). **Research** projects response to the requirement of students' major (language, culture, literature) and fit into the context of the problem-based learning.

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| Level of study | <i>Bachelor Degree or Master degree</i> |
| Workload | ECTS: 6 Total Hours: 48 Contact Hours: 36 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectures: 18 • Seminars: 18 |
| Course Code | |
| Semester | <i>Winter, Summer</i> |
| Prerequisites | <i>No Prerequisites Needed or Introductory course in Russian history</i> |
| Course Objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and explain the specific features of Russian historical and cultural identity • Learn and describe the key points of Russian history from IX to XX century • Define the content and the structure of distinctive Russian political, social and economic organization • Explain Russian impact and Russian heritage in interregional and global context • Read critically key articles on Russian history • Conduct an individual research on the topic of interest |
| Learning Outcomes | Participants should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Identify the specifics of particular aspects of Russian history</i> - <i>Set out the key concepts orally and in writing</i> - <i>Formulate personal position on critical issues (e.g. What is Russian nation? What is the historical background of Russian Empire? How can we describe Russia as the unique juxtaposition of European and Asian</i> |

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| | <p><i>traditions?).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss and debate key topics and questions of interest - Produce text and visual content on the particular topics and questions of interest. <p>Project-based learning (PBL) involves students in research activity. Participants may conduct an individual research in Russian History responded to the requirement of their major. Students will train their communicative and presenting skills. The results of individual project and final presentation may be used for further research activity.</p> |
| Syllabus | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The rise and decline of Kievan Rus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Society, Religion and the Political system in East Slavic states • The Byzantine Empire influence on Ancient Rus’ • The Mongol invasion • Medieval Rus’ and the Steppe 2. The Muscovy State. Rise of an Empire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The emergence and growth of Muscovite Russia • The consolidation and centralization policy of Ivan III and Ivan IV • The social life, culture and economics of the Tsardom of Russia • The Time of Troubles (1603 – 1613) and first Romanovs (Michael I of Russia and Aleksey Mikhailovich) 3. Russian Empire in 1760 – 1860: Rise and decline of autocracy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catherine II and the servile absolute system • Paul I, Alexandr I, Nicholas I: military service and autocratic state • The «Golden Age» of Russian culture • Russian Society, Law and Economy in XIX century 4. The economic and social development of Russia in the second half of the XIX century <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reign of Alexander II (emancipation of the serfs and other state reforms in 1860-1870s) • The reign of Alexander III (conservative course in domestic and foreign politics of Russian «Peacemaker») • Revolutionary political organizations in the Russian Empire of XIX century 5. The Soviet Russia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Russian Revolutions of 1917 and Civil War • The Economic Policy in the USSR • Soviet society in 1930s (from cult of personality to purges and deportations) |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russia in World War II, 1939–45 • 1960s–1980s: The Khrushchev Thaw and Brezhnev’s Era of Stagnation • Perestroika: Gorbachev's reforms and the decline of Soviet Union |
| Projects | <p>I. «Understanding Russian history in the piece of art» PROJECT TASK WITH FINAL PRESENTATION Participants choose a popular artwork created by Russian author and related to Russian history and give the detailed description of the historical background, which was conceptualized by the author (historical events happened, their significance, disputed issues related). Type: Oral presentation with a discussion (8-10 slides) Time limit: 10 – 12 minutes</p> <p>II. «Talk about Russia: Writing with Confidence» CRITICAL REVIEW OF A JOURNAL ARTICLE ON TOPIC OF INTEREST Participants choose a scientific article related to Russian history and give the detailed critical analysis of author’s conception.</p> |
| Assessment | <i>Exam or Credit Test</i> |
| Literature and resources recommended | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Riasanovsky, Nicholas and Mark Steinberg. A History of Russia (various editions). • Martin, Janet. Medieval Russia, 980-1584. Cambridge, 1995. • Kliuchevskii, V. O. Course in Russian History (various editions). • Kaiser, Daniel H., Gary Marker. Reinterpreting Russian History. Oxford, 1994. • Richard Pipes. Russia under the Old Regime. 1995. • Cohen, Stephen F. Rethinking the Soviet Experience: Politics and History since 1917. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985. • Virtual guide to the history of Russian science and technology (Russian historical texts) <p style="text-align: right;"><i>and other recommended by teacher</i></p> |
| Instructors | <p>Kseniya Zharchinskaya, Assistant Professor of the Department for History and Philosophy of Science and Technologies; Anton Kotov, Associate Professor of the Department for History and Philosophy of Science and Technologies.</p> |

THE SAMPLE OF PROJECT TASK FOR FINAL PRESENTATION

«Understanding Russian history in the piece of art»

TASK: *Choose a popular artwork* (a book, a film, a painting and so on) created by Russian author and related to Russian history.

Artwork chosen should:

- *Focus on a specific period of Russian history* (e.g. Ancient Kievan Rus', Peter the Great reign, The Tsardom of Russia in XIX century, Russian revolution, Soviet Russia and so on);
- *Contain a specific view on Russian history* (interpretation of Russia's past, its understanding or an idea of what people can learn from past for the future being);
- It should be *quite a popular piece of art*, widely discussed in public and the humanities.

Your task is **to make a final presentation**, which should contain:

- An artwork itself (or some excerpts showing a historical plot and author's understanding of Russian history);
- Short description of an artwork (author's biography is optional, the essential part of project is author's understanding of history);
- *Detailed description of the historical background.* Give information about that period of Russian history, which was conceptualized by the author (historical events happened, their significance, disputed issues related and so on);
- What is the significance of that time in history?
- What can we learn from Russian history of that period? (In general and with regards to the artwork).

Type: Oral presentation with a discussion (8-10 slides)

Time limit: 10 – 12 minutes.

| Works of art recommended | THE EXAMPLES of the Historical background |
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| <p>«<i>Demons</i>» by F.M. Dostoyevsky (a novel)</p> | <p>In the second half of XIX century Russia faced with a great level of radicalism and nihilism among young generation. Future revolutionaries were influenced by new socialist and liberal ideas. The satiric novel, written by Dostoevsky in 1869, became his protest against influence of 'west' on Russian culture....</p> |
| <p>«<i>Andrei Rublev</i>» by A. Tarkovsky (film), also known as «<i>The Passion According to Andrei</i>»</p> | <p>In the XV century medieval Russian principalities suffer from the Mongol invasion and turn by internal conflicts. Icon painter Andrei Rublev lives in times of fighting between rival princes and creates an icon symbolizing unity and peaceful Christian being. Famous soviet film director A. Tarkovsky creates a realistic portrait of Medieval Russia where the formation of Christian morality coexists with cruelty and violence under repressive regime of future Tsardom of Russia.</p> |

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| <p><i>'The Stalin epigram'</i> (also known as 'The Kremlin Highlander') from the 'Selected Poems' by Osip Mandelstam (poetry)</p> | <p>Famous Russian poet O. Mandelstam has survived several difficult periods in Russian history (World War I, Russian Revolution, Stalin Purges). In 1920s Mandelstam became the victim of recriminations from the newly empowered communists. Although he continued to publish his poems until when he disappeared in Soviet work camps in 1938. <i>'The Stalin epigram'</i> (1933) describes the time of purges, arrests and deportations, feeling of fear and anxiety which dominated in the Soviet Union in 1930s....</p> |
| <p><i>Piskaryov Memorial Cemetery</i> (St.Peterburg, former Leningrad) – Memorial complex, 'The sculpture of the Motherland', sculptures of Leningrad defenders, «Here lie Leningraders...» (poem by Olga Berggolts carved on a memorial wall).</p> | <p>The Piskaryov Cemetery is a memorial place, where 100,000 soldiers and 470,000 civilian defenders of the Leningrad are buried. It was designed in 1945 after the end of a World war II and was inaugurated on the 9 of May, in 1960. The complex is devoted to the victims of the Siege of Leningrad, when city was isolated from the rest of country. A military blockade undertaken by the German Army finished almost 900 days after it began. Disruption of utilities, water and food supplies according to some sources led to death of 1 500 000 people....</p> |
| <p><i>'The Millennium of Russia'</i> by V. Hartmann and M. Mikeshin (monument).</p> | <p><i>'The Millennium of Russia'</i> was erected in 1862 in Novgorod. The monument is encircled with 129 statues of Russian tsars, politicians, artists, commanders and other significant personalities which 'made Russian history'. Who are they? What does the top of the monument symbolize? And who is absent from 'The Millennium of Russia' despite of his (or her) undoubted impact on Russian history....</p> |

REALIZATION

Results: All participants successfully fulfilled their projects.

Topics chosen:

1. «A Horseman» by A. Pushkin (The historical background is *Peter the Great reforms*);
2. «Soviet poster» (The historical background is *Space Race and the Cold war*);
3. «N. Hetman paintings» (The historical background is the *GULAG and Stalin Purges* as the historical background);
4. «Nicholas II portraits by I. Repin» (The historical background is the February revolution and fall of the Russian monarchy).
5. «A. Rublev by A. Tarkovsky» (The historical background is Mongol invasion and its impact on medieval Russian principalities).