

RUSSIAN REVOLUTION
HIST 4395
Honors College, University of Houston
Dr. David Rainbow

Class meetings: Monday and Wednesday, 8:30-9:50am
Cougar Village, Room N105

Office hours: Monday and Wednesday, 12:00-1:00pm
Honors College, Room 205D

This course is a study of Russia's 1917 revolutions, which overthrew a three-hundred-year-old dynasty and gave birth to the first-ever socialist state. We consider the events of 1917 in a broader context of social transformation, cultural creativity, three revolutions (1905, February 1917, and October 1917), and three wars (Russo-Japanese War, World War I, and the Russian Civil War). We approach the subject through the works of influential political thinkers, literary figures and artists who shaped the Russian revolutionary period and, in some cases, history ever since. Topics will include: mass politics, aesthetics, nationality, empire, violence, utopia, socialism, and historical memory.

*Please subscribe to our course blog for resources and communications.
<http://www.davidrainbow.com/russian-revolution>

*Please ensure that you have access to the course Blackboard site for submitting assignments.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- 1) Read, think, and speak about historical topics critically.
- 2) Write analytically about the past using primary sources.
- 3) Understand some of the ways the Russian Revolution relates to broader developments in Russian, European, and global history.
- 4) Explain the Russian Revolution in political, social, and cultural terms

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

Readings

This is an upper-level honors history course. As such, it requires a substantial amount of reading. Your performance in the course—including class participation and all writing assignments—is dependent upon how well you do this centrally important job.

Class participation

You should come to class each day having completed the readings, and prepared to make productive contributions to our discussions.

Assignments

Reading responses

Prior to each Monday class meeting you will write a brief (one or two paragraph) response to the reading assignment for that day. Responses are to focus on *analysis*, not *description*. This means, in short, that rather than merely describing or summarizing the reading (which is

what your notes should do), you should make a point about the significance of the reading, how it helps us understand a larger historical problem, or why you did or did not find it compelling. Your responses demonstrate how deeply you engage with texts and the quality of your thinking.

Post your response to the discussion forum on the course Blackboard site by Sunday 7:00pm.

Lightning talks

During the first several class meetings, you will make a short presentation together with two or three other classmates based on a short reading that the rest of the class will not have done. Each presenter has exactly three minutes to teach the class about the topic of your reading. Each member of your group should make a distinctive point about the reading, which means you will need to plan your presentations ahead of time. Reading assignments and further details will be given in our first class meeting.

Final project

Your final project will be a 10-12 page research paper. See assignment below for detailed instructions.

Evaluation

Class Participation:	15%
Reading responses:	30%
Lightning talk:	10%
Final project:	45%

POLICIES

Late Submission of Work:

Late assignments will be assessed a penalty of one letter grade per day (e.g., from B+ to C+), unless prior arrangements with the instructor have been made.

Attendance:

More than one unexcused absence will negatively affect your grade. Advanced notice is required for absences unless for reasons of health, in which case documentation should be provided.

Laptops, etc.

Please do not use laptops, tablets, or phones during class. You should come to class with books, printouts, notebooks and a writing utensil in hand. If this is going to present a hardship, let me know.

Plagiarism:

Cases of plagiarism or suspected plagiarism will be reported to the Honors College hearing officer, at which point appropriate sanctions will be carried out. Familiarize yourself with UH's academic honesty policy here: <http://publications.uh.edu/content.php?catoid=21&navoid=5723>.

READINGS

To be purchased:

- Fitzpatrick, Sheila, *The Russian Revolution: 1917-1932*, 3rd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- Sunderland, Willard, *The Baron's Cloak: A History of the Russian Empire in War and Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014)
- Lenin, Vladimir, *Essential Works of Lenin*, ed. Henry M. Christman (Dover Press, 1987)
- Zamiatin, Evgenii, *We*, trans. Clarence Brown (New York: Penguin, 1993)

On reserve in the library or on Blackboard:

- Acton, Edward, et al., eds., *Critical Companion to the Russian Revolution, 1914-1922* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997)
- Aitmatov, Chingiz, "The First Teacher," in *Mother Earth and Other Stories* (London: Faber, 1989)
- "Constituent Assembly is Dissolved, January 19, 1918," in *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and Materials*, ed. James Bunyan (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1934)
- Corney, Frederick, *Telling October: Memory and the Making of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004)
- Fitzpatrick, Sheila, "Ascribing Class: The Construction of Social Identity in Soviet Russia," *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 65, no. 4 (December 1993): 745-770
- Hirsch, Francine, "State and Evolution: Ethnographic Knowledge, Economic Expediency, and the Making of the USSR, 1917-1924," in *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700-1930*, ed. Jane Burbank, et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007)
- Holquist, Peter, "Information is the Alpha and Omega of Our Work": Bolshevik Surveillance in Its Pan-European Context," *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 69, no. 3 (September 1997): 415-450
- "Justice in the Proletarian State, April 22, 1918," in *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and Materials*, ed. James Bunyan (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1934)
- Kotkin, Stephen, *Stalin: Paradoxes of Power, 1878-1928* (New York: Penguin, 2014)
- Kuleshov, "The Task of the Artist in Cinema," in *Film Factory: Russian and Soviet Cinema in Documents*, ed. Richard Taylor and Ian Christie (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988)
- Lenin, V. I., "Directive on Cinema Affairs," in *Film Factory: Russian and Soviet Cinema in Documents*, ed. Richard Taylor and Ian Christie (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988)
- Lenin, V. I., "Lenin Urges the Immediate Seizure of Power," in *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1918: Documents and Materials*, ed. James Bunyan (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1934)
- Malia, Martin, *Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia, 1917-1991* (New York: Free Press, 1994)
- "*Rabochaia Gazeta* [Worker's Newspaper] on Lenin's Program," in *The Russian Provisional Government, 1917: Documents*, vol. 3, ed. Paul Robert Browder (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961)
- Slezkine, Yuri, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism," *Slavic Review*, vol. 53, no. 2 (Summer, 1994): 414-52.
- "Speech of Steklov on Dual Power before the All-Russian Conference of Soviets," in *The Russian Provisional Government, 1917: Documents*, vol. 3, ed. Paul Robert Browder (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961)
- Stites, Richard, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989)
- Taylor, Richard, "The Birth of Soviet Cinema" in *Bolshevik Culture: Experiment and Order in the Russian Revolution*, ed. Abbot Gleason, et al. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985)
- Vertov, Dziga, "We. A Version of a Manifesto," in *Film Factory: Russian and Soviet Cinema in Documents*, ed. Richard Taylor and Ian Christie (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988)

Available online (go to Blackboard for links):

Dotsenko, Paul, “The Struggle for the Liberation of Siberia” (pp. 16-57). Berkeley Oral History project. UC Berkeley.

Gastev, Aleksei, *We Grow Out of Iron* (1918)

Gerasimov, Mikhail, *We* (1919)

Kirillov, Vladimir, “The Iron Messiah” (1918)

Shneyeroff, Michael, “Recollections of the Russian Revolution” (195-242). Berkeley Oral History project. UC Berkeley.

Zizek, Slavoj, “Between the Two Revolutions” introduction to V.I. Lenin, *Revolution at the Gates: A Selection of Writings from February to October 1917* (London: Verso, 2002)

READING AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Reading (*primary source)	Lightning talk	Due
8/22	Introduction			

PART ONE: The Revolution

8/24	Setting	1) Fitzpatrick, 1-39 2) *Lenin, 106-8, 111-14	1) Lieven, “World War I”	
8/29	February-April	1) Fitzpatrick, 40-61 2) *Tsar’s abdication 3) *Rabochaia Gazeta, 1208 4) *Speech of Steklov, 1223-26	1) Hasegawa, “February” 2) White, “Provisional Gov’t”	
9/1	October	1) Fitzpatrick, 61-67 2) Corney, 15-45 3) *Lenin, “Immediate seizure of power,” 95-6	1) Rabinowitch, “October Revolution” 2) Service, “Bolshevik Party”	
9/5	Labor Day	NO CLASS		
9/7	Civil War	1) Fitzpatrick, 68-92 2) *Dotsenko, 16-57 3) * “Constituent Assembly is Dissolved,” 384-6	1) Smirnov, “Constituent Assembly” 2) Malle, “War Communism”	
9/12	NEP	1) Fitzpatrick, 93-119 2) *Shneyeroff, 195-242	1) Figes, “The Peasantry” 2) Foglesong, “Foreign Intervention”	
9/14	Ending Revolution	1) Fitzpatrick, 120-72 2) *1936 Constitution	1) Mawdsley, “Civil War” 2) Service, “Soviet State”	Poster selection

PART TWO: Rebuilding the State

9/19	Lenin as Savior	1) Kotkin, 174-226		
9/21	Revolution as anarchy	1) Kotkin, 227-288		
9/26	State building I	1) *Lenin, S&R, 271-313 2) *"Justice in the Proletarian State," 577-9		
9/28	State building II	1) *Lenin, S&R, 313-49		Bibliography
10/3	Legacies of the past	1) Holquist, "Information" 2) Fitzpatrick, "Ascribing"		

PART THREE: Rebuilding the Empire

10/5	State as empire	1) Sunderland, 1-62		
10/10		1) Sunderland, 63-123		
10/12		1) Sunderland, 124-89		
10/17		1) Sunderland, 190-233		Analysis
10/19	Nation building	1) Slezkine, 414-52		
10/24	Empire of nations	1) Hirsch, 139-65 2) *Stalin, On Nationality		
10/26	Civilizing Missions	1) *Aitmatov, "First Teacher," 150-97		

PART FOUR: Dreams of the Future, Memories of the Past

10/31	Socialist utopia	1) Malia, 1-50		Abstract
11/2		1) Malia, 51-78		
11/7	Techno-utopia	1) Stites, 3-10, 37-57 2) *Gastev, "Out of Iron" 3) *Kirillov, "Iron Messiah" 4) *Gerasimov, "We"		<i>Film night: Honors Commons 6-8pm</i>
11/9		1) Stites, 145-89		
11/14	Techno-dystopia	1) *Zamyatin, 1-77		
11/16		1) *Zamyatin, 78-153		Paper draft
11/21		1) *Zamyatin, 154-225		Peer critique
11/23	Thanksgiving	NO CLASS		
11/28	Revolutionary film	1) Taylor, "Soviet Cinema," 190-202 2) *Kuleshov, "Task" 3) *Vertov, "Manifesto" 4) *Lenin, "Directive"		
11/30	A new Lenin?	1) Zizek, "Between the Two"		
12/5	TBD			Final paper

FINAL PROJECT

Your final project will be a 10-12 page research paper. You must fulfill several prerequisite steps throughout the semester in order to successfully complete the project. These steps are designed to build momentum towards the final paper, and if done well, will put you in a position to submit a substantial piece of research.

Below are instructions and deadlines for each step.

1) Poster selection (Sep. 14)

You will research the collection of Russian propaganda posters at Stanford University's Hoover Institution Archive, which includes several thousand items (see course website for link). You will select three posters to profile based on the information you can glean through the archival descriptions of the items; images in the online catalog are very small. The three you select need not be connected thematically, or otherwise.

Complete a brief description for each of the posters, including the following information insofar as it can be determined: 1) description of image, 2) translation or paraphrase of caption(s), 3) date of production, 4) artist, 5) brief explanation of why you selected it including questions you hope to answer, and 6) archival catalog information and link to online catalog entry. At this point, you will likely have more questions about the poster than answers. But questions must be thoughtful, historically informed, and promising starting points for further research. Indicate the one poster you want to order from the archive.

2) Annotated bibliography (Sep. 28)

You will produce an annotated bibliography of six to eight sources that you anticipate will serve as the most important sources—in addition to your selected poster—for your final paper. These can include other primary sources (e.g., writings from the period, other images, government documents), but must include several secondary sources that you will use to develop your thesis. Annotations should be approximately one brief paragraph for each source.

3) Source analysis (Oct. 17)

Once you receive your poster from the archive, you will write a one to two page analysis of the source. You are not making an argument in this assignment. Instead, you are exploring the document's material, aesthetic, thematic, and ideological aspects. The goal here is not to come to conclusions about the source, but to think more deeply about its various dimensions.

4) Abstract (Oct. 31)

By now, having worked with your primary and secondary sources for over a month, you should be able to clearly articulate the parameters of your research project *and* a provisional statement of thesis in an abstract. This is not an outline for your paper, but a succinct statement of your central claim and its historical significance relative to the Russian Revolution.

5) First draft (Nov. 16)

Bring a complete draft of your paper to class and submit a copy to Blackboard. For both submissions, include an image of your poster of a high enough quality to allow the reader to see what you are talking about. Papers must be formatted according to Chicago Manual of Style, with footnotes and a bibliography. See course website for a link to the Chicago Manual online. The paper should be 10-12 pages, not including images and bibliography.

You will exchange your paper with a partner for the purpose of peer critique.

6) Peer critique (Nov. 21)

Return your peer critique to your partner, complete with your peer review sheet (provided in advance by me) to his or her paper that has your editorial markings.

You should consider your partner's critique of your paper as you revise.

7) Final paper (Dec. 5)

Bring a final draft of your paper to class and submit a copy to Blackboard. Make sure both submissions include a high-quality 8.5x11 inch reproduction of your poster (and any other visual sources you are using).