

Class meetings in 429 Cooper St., #104, Tues/Thurs 9:35-10:55am  
Office hours Tues/Thurs 8:30-9:30am and by appointment in 429 Cooper St., #202  
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## From Peter the Great to Putin: Empire in Russia

This course explores the expansion and contraction of the Russian and Soviet Empire through a close look at the foreign policies and reigns of the most influential figures at the helm of the state from the late seventeenth through the early twenty-first centuries. In addition to reading our text, secondary sources, and primary sources, we will consider 19<sup>th</sup>-century fictional and 20<sup>th</sup>-century cinematic representations of the peoples within and without the Empire's changing borders.



### Required reading

Valerie A. Kivelson and Ronald Grigor Suny, *Russia's Empires* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017) ISBN 978-0-19-992439-4

Primary and secondary sources available on [Sakai Resources](#) are assigned for each unit (all listed below)

## Requirements<sup>1</sup>

### *Conduct, attendance, and participation (10 points)*

You are expected to attend every class, to arrive on time, to come prepared in terms of the reading and writing assignments, and to participate civilly in class discussions. You are also expected to remain in the classroom during our sessions – exceptions will be made for emergencies *so long as Dr. Bernstein is notified in advance*. Electronic and mobile devices are to be turned off and to be kept out of reach during class time – exceptions will be made if you are in the midst of a family emergency *so long as Dr. Bernstein is notified in advance*. Please be courteous and inform Dr. Bernstein by email or voicemail prior to class if you will not be able to attend. *NB*: Please keep in mind that communications with professors should not be treated as texts among friends, but as formal and professional correspondence. In other words, written communications should begin with a polite address, they should be written carefully and grammatically, and they should be signed with your full name.

### *Comments on Kivelson & Suny (30 points)*

Before the start of each class that has a reading assignment from Kivelson & Suny, you are to submit via Sakai Assignments carefully written comments that (1) put something particularly striking from the reading *in your own words* (with page references inside parentheses); (2) articulate why you find this fact or idea so interesting in terms of historical questions about the Russian or Soviet empire; and (3) raise a relevant question for our class discussion. Each set of comments is worth up to 3 points. ***See Sakai Assignments for the precise guidelines on expectations and grading.***

### *Short papers on our secondary sources (35 points)*

Before the start of each class with an assignment from our secondary sources, you are to turn in a carefully written short paper on Sakai Assignments that summarizes and explains the author's overall argument in the article *in your own words*, and then and comments on how the author's main idea (his or her "*argument*") agrees with and/or disagrees with what you have read in Kivelson & Suny. You may revise and resubmit your first three papers within one week of receiving suggestions for consideration of a higher grade. Each paper is worth up to 5 points. ***See Sakai Assignments for the precise guidelines on expectations and grading.***

### *Short quizzes on the three short stories (9 points)*

Before the start of each class with a reading assignment by the authors Pushkin, Tolstoy, and Turgenev, there will be a short quiz to make sure you have come prepared for our class discussion of these sources.

### *Oral presentation on a contemporary source (10 points)*

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<sup>1</sup> Please keep in mind that a syllabus is like a contract: it tells you what you should expect from this course at the same time that it specifies what is expected from *you*. As a student in a college class, you are expected to meet the requirements. If any of these pose a problem for you, I strongly recommend that you take a different course.

On November 29 and December 4, students will be responsible for guiding the class through a *reliable* contemporary article on Putin's policy toward non-Russian nationalities who were once or who still remain part of the Russian/Soviet Empire. ***See Sakai Assignments for the precise guidelines on expectations and grading.***

*Final exam (10) points)<sup>2</sup>*

From 8-11 am on Thursday, December 20, there will be a final exam on the course as a whole.

***Students with documented disabilities should contact our Office of Disability Services for reasonable accommodations and services. Call the coordinator Timothy Pure (856-225-6442) or email him at [tpure@rutgers.edu](mailto:tpure@rutgers.edu).***

### **General education and learning goals**

*This course fulfills the GLOBAL COMMUNITIES (GCM) requirement for General Education and will introduce you to the diverse ways in which humans have organized their social relations. You will learn about:*

- the interconnectedness of Russia with its surrounding territories and peoples (GCM1);
- how racial, ethnic, and national differences were perceived, represented, and addressed by rulers of the Russian and Soviet states at specific historical moments (GCM3); and
- the impact of policies and practices of Russia's most influential leaders toward the nations and peoples in and beyond their midst (GCM 5).

*In addition, you will learn:*

- the basic contours of Imperial, Soviet, and post-Soviet history;
- how historians approach questions of cultural expansion, ethnocentrism, and geopolitics;
- how historians interpret primary sources; and
- how historians read and assess secondary sources.

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### **Introduction to the Russian Empire**

*Tuesday, September 4*

Introduction to the course

*Thursday, September 6*

Read and be prepared to discuss Kivelson & Suny, Introduction (Thinking about Empire), and Chapter Three (Disrupting the Easy Road from Empire to Nation-State: A Theoretical Interlude)

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<sup>2</sup> The total number of possible points for this course equal 104, giving you the opportunity to miss an assignment and/or raise your grade.

\*Prior to class, turn in comments on the Introduction and/or Chapter Three via Sakai Assignments<sup>3</sup>

### **Peter the Great (on throne 1682-1725)**

*Tuesday, September 11*

Read and be prepared to discuss Kivelson & Suny, Chapter Four (Responsive Rule and Its Limits: Force and Sentiments in the Eighteenth Century)

\*Prior to class, turn in comments on Chapter Four via Sakai Assignments

*Thursday, September 13*

Read on Sakai Resources and be prepared to discuss: Brian J. Boeck, "When Peter I Was Forced to Settle for Less: Coerced Labor and Resistance in a Failed Russian Colony (1695-1711)," *The Journal of Modern History*, v. 80, no. 3 (September 2008): 485-514

\*Prior to class, turn in short paper on Boeck via Sakai Assignments

*Tuesday, September 18*

Read on Sakai Resources and be prepared to discuss the following primary sources:

- 1) "Peter Accepts the Imperial Title, 1721," from *Major Problems in the History of Imperial Russia*, ed. James Cracraft (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company), 113-114
- 2) "P.P. Shafirov Justifies the Empire, 1717," from *Major Problems*, ed. Cracraft, 245-248
- 3) Alexander Pushkin, "A Prisoner in the Caucasus"

\*Short quiz on Pushkin

### **Catherine the Great (on throne 1762-1796)**

*Thursday, September 20*

Read and be prepared to discuss Kivelson & Suny, Chapter Five (Russians' Identities in the Eighteenth Century: A Multitude of Possibilities)

\*Prior to class, turn in comments on Chapter Five via Sakai Assignments

*Tuesday, September 25*

Read on Sakai Resources and be prepared to discuss: John D. Klier, "The Ambiguous Legal Status of Russian Jewry in the Reign of Catherine II," *Slavic Review*, v. 35, no. 3 (September 1976): 504-517

\*Prior to class, turn in short paper on Klier via Sakai Assignments

*Thursday, September 27*

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<sup>3</sup> All reading and writing assignments are due on the day listed on the syllabus.

Read on Sakai Resources and be prepared to discuss the following primary sources:

- 4) "Russia Annexes Crimea: Potemkin's Memorandum to Catherine II Urging Annexation, 1780," from *Major Problems*, ed. Cracraft, 249-250
- 5) "Catherine's Manifesto Proclaiming the Annexation, 1783," from *Major Problems*, ed. Cracraft, 250-251
- 6) Leo Tolstoy, "A Prisoner of the Caucasus"

\*Short quiz on Tolstoy

### **Nicholas I (on throne 1825-1855)**

*Tuesday, October 2*

Read and be prepared to discuss Kivelson & Suny, Chapter Six (Imperial Russia in the Moment of the Nation: 1801-1855)

\*Prior to class, turn in comments on Chapter Six via Sakai Assignments

*Thursday, October 4*

Read on Sakai Resources and be prepared to discuss: Michael Khodarkovsky, "The Return of Lieutenant Atarshchikov: Empire and Identity in Asiatic Russia," *Ab Imperio*, v. 1 (2009): 149-164

\*Prior to class, turn in short paper on Khodarkovsky via Sakai Assignments

*Tuesday, October 9*

Read on Sakai Resources and be prepared to discuss the following primary sources:

- 7) Peter Chaadayev, "Russia and the World," from *The Mind of Modern Russia: Historical and Political Thought of Russia's Great Age*, ed. Hans Kohn (New York: Harper & Row, 1955), 38-46
- 8) Ivan Turgenev, "The Yid"

\*Short quiz on Turgenev

### **The last Romanovs (Alexander II on throne 1855-1881, Alexander III on throne 1881-1894, Nicholas II on throne 1894-1917)**

*Thursday, October 11*

Read and be prepared to discuss Kivelson & Suny, Chapter Seven (War, Reforms, Revolt, and Reaction)

\*Prior to class, turn in comments on Chapter Seven via Sakai Assignments

*Tuesday, October 16*

Viewing of *The Yellow Ticket* (46 minutes – Victor Janson and Eugen Illés, 1918) [Link to The Yellow Ticket](#)

Read and be prepared to discuss Kivelson & Suny, Chapter Eight (Imperial Anxieties: 1905-1914)

\*Prior to class, turn in comments on Chapter Eight via Sakai  
Assignments

### **Vladimir Lenin (Chairman, Council of People's Commissars 1917-1924)**

*Thursday, October 18*

Read and be prepared to discuss Kivelson & Suny, Chapter Nine (Clash  
and Collapse of Empires: 1914-1921)

\*Prior to class, turn in comments on Chapter Nine via Sakai  
Assignments

*Tuesday, October 23*

Read on Sakai Resources and be prepared to discuss: Roman Szporluk,  
"Lenin, 'Great Russia,' and Ukraine," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*,  
v. 28, nos. 1/4 (2006): 611-626

\*Prior to class, turn in short paper on Szporluk via Sakai Assignments

*Thursday, October 25*

Viewing of *Three Songs about Lenin* (61 minutes – Dziga Vertov, 1934)  
Online through RU Libraries

Read on Sakai Resources and be prepared to discuss the following  
primary sources:

- 9) "Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia"
- 10) "Lenin on the National Question"

### **Joseph Stalin (General Secretary of the Communist Party 1922-1953)**

*Tuesday, October 30*

Read and be prepared to discuss Kivelson & Suny, Chapter Ten  
(Making Nations, Soviet Style: 1921-1953)

\*Prior to class, turn in comments on Chapter Ten via Sakai  
Assignments

*Thursday, November 1*

Read on Sakai Resources and be prepared to discuss: Yuri Slezkine,  
"The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State  
Promoted Ethnic Particularism," *Slavic Review*, v. 53, no. 2  
(Summer 1994): 414-452

\*Prior to class, turn in short paper on Slezkine via Sakai Assignments

*Tuesday, November 6*

Viewing of *Salt for Svanetia* (52 minutes - Mikhail Kalatozov, 1930)  
Online through RU Libraries

Read on Sakai Resources and be prepared to discuss the following  
primary sources:

- 11) "Stalin on the National Question"
- 12) "Report on the Women's Movement in Uzbekistan (20 June  
1928)" from Douglas Northrop, *Veiled Empire: Gender &  
Power in Stalinist Central Asia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell  
University Press, 2004), 359-364
- 13) "Threat of the North Atlantic Pact"

**Mikhail Gorbachev (General Secretary of the Communist Party 1985-1991)**

*Thursday, November 8*

Read and be prepared to discuss Kivelson & Suny, Chapter Eleven  
(Imperial Impasses: Reform, Reaction, Revolution)

\*Prior to class, turn in comments on Chapter Eleven via Sakai  
Assignments

*Tuesday, November 13*

Read on Sakai Resources and be prepared to discuss: Archie Brown,  
"August 1991: The Gorbachev Factor Revisited," *Problems of  
Post-Communism* v. 58, nos. 4-5 (July-August/September-  
October 2011): 56-65

\*Prior to class, turn in short paper on Brown via Sakai Assignments

*Thursday, November 15*

Read on Sakai Resources and be prepared to discuss the following  
primary sources:

14) "Reagan-Gorbachev Meetings in Geneva"

15) "Gorbachev to GDR CC"

16) "Gorbachev Resigns as President"

\*Prior to class, student articles for upcoming presentations must be  
submitted to me for approval via Sakai

**Vladimir Putin (at the helm in various capacities from 1999-20\_\_?)**

*Tuesday, November 20*

Read and be prepared to discuss Kivelson & Suny, Chapter Twelve  
(The End of Empire, 1991-2016 . . . Or Not?)

\*Prior to class, turn in comments on Chapter Twelve via Sakai  
Assignments

*Thursday, November 22*

No class today (Thanksgiving)

*Tuesday, November 27*

Read on Sakai Resources and be prepared to discuss: Robert D. Crews,  
"Moscow and the Mosque: Co-opting Muslims in Putin's  
Russia," *Foreign Affairs*, v. 93, no. 2 (March/April 2014): 125-  
134

\*Prior to class, turn in short paper on Crews via Sakai Assignments

*Thursday, November 29*

\*Student presentations on Putin articles

*Tuesday, December 4*

\*Student presentations on Putin articles

*Thursday, December 6*

No class today (Dr. Bernstein will be at the annual convention of the  
Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies)

**Evaluating empire**

*Tuesday, December 11*

Read and be prepared to discuss Kivelson & Suny, Conclusion

\*Prior to class, turn in comments on Conclusion

**Final exam**

*Thursday, December 20 from 8-11am*