

Course Syllabus – Russia: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

Course Information

Course number –GEOG 4396

Course title – Russia: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

Term – Summer 05A 2009

Section – 001

Classroom – SOM 2.901

Time – Tuesday/Thursday 1:00 PM-5:00 PM, there will be two short breaks.

Professor Contact Information

Name – Dr. Irina Vakulenko

Phone number – 972-883-6718

Email – ivakulenko@utdallas.edu (best way to contact me)

Office location – GR 3.812

Office hours – Tuesday 12:00 pm -12:45 pm; by appointment

Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions

There are no formal prerequisites for this course. General academic skills of analytical thinking, comparison, essay writing, working with statistical material, map reading will be helpful. Lower division geography courses are not essential but definitely helpful for this course. If you have not taken any of these please let me know.

Course Description

The course covers information about Russian economy and politics, history and culture, tradition and innovation, Russian-American relations, and much more. It investigates the rise of Russia to prominence historically and in post Cold War world, communist legacy in forming Russian present economic bias and social policies, Russia's place in the global order.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Students will learn about the largest country in the world, its geography, history, economy and people. They will explore characteristics of Russian society that side tracked capitalist development to the Soviet experiment. Analyze statistical information about current population and economic trends and make conclusions about the future possibilities for Russian evolution into a global power. The study of rich Russian history, tradition and culture will help students to make a fresh look at a mysterious Russian soul. The students will be encouraged to make their own opinion if Russia is a friend or a foe. The skills of statistical information analysis, map reading and making, creative writing, discussion, and public speaking will be reinforced. Cognitive internet browsing and information selection skills to foster research are reinforced.

Required Textbooks and Materials

Students need out-of-classroom Internet access to work on projects and home assignments. Required reading will be provided in class.

Suggested Course Materials

Students are expected to take notes during PowerPoint presentations and complete reading, maps, and assignments before due dates. Lecture material shall be complimented by reading the appropriate hand-out material.

Assignments & Tentative Academic Calendar

#	Class Date	Topic	Assignments
1	5/26/09	Introduction. Geographical and geopolitical position. Europe or Asia: both or neither? Environment (1) and resources. Exploration and use. Environmental degradation and pristine oases.	D. Shaw, p.10-18, p.127-131, 146-150. Notes, p.1-2, 12 Map 1
2	5/28/09	Some glimpses of Russian history (2) from pre-Christian times through Peter the Great: Kievan Rus as a cultural and spiritual center of Eastern Slavs. The fight for freedom from Mongol Tartars yoke and the impact of this struggle on the future development of Europe. Ivan the Terrible, Legacy of Russian early states. Rise of the Romanovs. Imperial Russia. Expansion of Russia to the East and South. Exploration of Siberia. Alaska Deal. Building Russian Empire: geographically, economically, and politically. Attempts to modernize Russia. Russian royal dynasties and their descendants and followers today.	Sidetrip 1. Nature Dziewanowski, p. 13-27 Notes, p. 3-4 Map 2
3	6/2/09	20th century— new turmoil or perpetual movement? Economic and political situation. The development of capitalism in Russia. The socialist revolution, its leaders, supporters, and opposition. Origins of the Communist Party and reasons for their victory. The Soviet (3) Empire: its leaders and people. Stalinism: reforms and purges. Soviet Union in WWII. Main Soviet achievements and shortcomings. The Cold War. Demise of Soviet Empire. Khrushchev, Gorbachev. Disintegration of the Soviet Union. Eltsin, Putin and post-communist Russia. Latest political and economic changes. Is democracy and capitalism for Russia after all?	Sidetrip 2. Pre-Soviet historical site. Dziewanowski, p.87-90. Notes, p.4-6 . The New Russia. Ch. 9. Demise of the Command Economy.

4	6/4/09	Population (4). Demographics, distribution. Clusters and emptiness. Settlement patterns and economic development. Russian women. Learn to speak Russian. Multinational and multilingual composition of Russia. Religion in Russia. Russian Soul: myth or reality?	Sidetrip 3. Soviet historical site. D.Shaw, p.152-161 Y. Richmond p. 22-27, 39-43, 45-50. Notes, p. 2-3, 11-12
5	6/9/09	Russian cities (5) : centers of economy and culture. Urban hierarchy and federal structure. Closed cities. Russian countryside. Moscow and St. Petersburg, their role in Russian life and places of interest.	Map 3
6	6/11/09	Test . Economy (6) : primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors and their prominence. Shifts in geography. Russian military.	Notes p. 9-11, 12-13, 14. Map 4
7	6/16/09	Transport, communications, and tourism. Informal economy, new Russians, and integration into global economy. Russia is where East meets West: cultural (7) achievements, traditions and attitudes. Doing business in Russia. Russian contribution to the world literature, visual art, music, ballet and cinematography. Cultural life today. Decent.	Sidetrip 4. Modern business enterprise.
8	6/18/09	Financial and political (8) transformations. Privatization, nationalization, and foreign direct investment. Kremlin inside out. Russian politics is business as usual. Russian government. Role of state in nation building. The Russian Federation and problems of federalism. Regions of Russia.	Sidetrip 5. Russian billboard. Notes, p. 6-7, 9, 11, 12, 13-14. D. Shaw, p.58-72. Paper and Interview question due. Map 5

9	6/23/09	<u>Foreign relations (9)</u> , trade patterns, and military alliances within Commonwealth of Independent States, with Europe, the rest of the world. Russian-American relations: rollercoaster or consistency? Sovietology and its role in development of these relations, negotiating the end of the Cold War and look into the future. Role of Russia in the modern world.	D. Shaw, p. 265-268, 278-287. Notes, p. 15-16
10	6/25/09	Law and disorder: judicial system and human rights. Education, healthcare, social entitlements. <u>Quality of life (10)</u> . Meet Russian families. Everyday life in different place and among social groups: homes, food, leisure. Customs, traditions, and holidays. Do Russians and Americans share values? Is Russia a friend or a foe?	Richmond, p. 71-90 Notes, p. 7-9, 12 Radzinsky.
11	6/30	Final Exam at 1 pm at SOM 2.901	

Grading:

There are ten topics for discussion. After every topic is studied you are supposed to write a journal entry. It includes half a page of comments of WHAT you learned and WHY it was important for your understanding of Russia. Every entry must be e-mailed to me before the next class. Total - 30 pts.

After 5 classes there will be an oral examination over studied material in a fashion customary in Russian universities. Detailed instruction will be provided in class*. – 20 pts.

Paper and an oral presentation over one Russian oblast (administrative unit) due 6/18/09. Detailed instruction will be provided in class** – 10 pts.

Every student needs to sign up for one “side trip” to be presented in PowerPoint format in class on an assigned date, depending on the “destination” or as a paper***. – 10 pts.

Collection of 5 contour maps with completed assignments – 10 pts. (2 pts. each).

The Final Exam on **June 30, 2009** will make other **20%** of your grade. Includes 30 fact questions, a map, and an essay.

*You will get 30 open end questions a week prior to the exam. At the Exam you will randomly pick a card with 3 questions. You will have about 10 minutes to prepare for your comments on each topic and then you will present your comments to the class.

******The paper is about 2-3 pages long covering relative geographical location, characteristics of environment, population, economy, and places of interest as if you plan to visit. Make conclusion by comparing the oblast with the U.S. state similar either by the size of territory or population, or another parameter. Prepare one question you would like to ask another student about his/her oblast.

******* You have a day to spend at one location and unlimited budget. You need to turn in a 1-2 pages description of your experience by the date stated for the trip of your choice. You have to be ready to present your findings in class either in oral form or with PowerPoint of 4-6 slides. Hard copy has to be turned in by due date.

Side-Trip Description Plan.

1. What was your destination? Why did you make this choice?
2. How did you get there?
3. What were three the most striking discoveries that impressed you at the site? What did the guide tell you about each of them or what have you learned through on-site research or personal experience?
4. How has this new information influenced your understanding and impressions of Russia?

Bonus points are offered for perfect attendance, participation, and complete notes.

All graded material will be assigned a numerical value on a scale of 100. Letter Grades are given as follows: 98% and over A+; 93% to 97% A ; 90% to 92% A- ; 88% to 89% B+; 83% to 87% B; 80% to 82% B-; 78% to 79% C+; 73% to 77% C ; 70% to 72% C- ; 68% to 69% D+ ; 63% to 67% D ; 60% to 62% D; less than 60% F.

Course & Instructor Policies

Attendance is crucial for the successful learning and will be taken each class. Many of my lectures and our discussions will include materials not found in the text. As a result a good set of class notes and contour maps will be extremely helpful if plan excelling in this course. To do the classroom assignments you are required to have a pencil, eraser, and colored pencils at every class.

Attendance and class participation will be used as deciding factors for borderline students. Only one opportunity to make up exams will be provided. If a student misses any class time, it is that student's obligation to obtain notes from other students in attendance. Although extra help will be provided to students, the professor will not hold alternate lectures or release lecture notes to students. Respectful discussions of the topics being studies are encouraged.

Field Trip Policies Not Applicable

Off-campus Instruction and Course Activities Not Applicable

Off-campus, out-of-state, and foreign instruction and activities are subject to state law and University policies and procedures regarding travel and risk-related activities. Information regarding these rules and regulations may be found at the website address http://www.utdallas.edu/BusinessAffairs/Travel_Risk_Activities.htm. Additional information is available from the office of the school dean. Below is a description of any travel and/or risk-related activity associated with this course.

Student Conduct & Discipline

The University of Texas System and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the UTD publication, *A to Z Guide*, which is provided to all registered students each academic year.

The University of Texas at Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the *Rules and Regulations, Board of Regents, The University of Texas System, Part 1, Chapter VI, Section 3*, and in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SU 1.602, 972/883-6391).

A student at the university neither loses the rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents' Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to discipline for violating the standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

Academic Integrity

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work.

Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, statements, acts or omissions related to applications for enrollment or the award of a degree, and/or the submission as one's own work or material that is not one's own. As a general rule, scholastic dishonesty involves one of the following acts: cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic records. Students suspected of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism (see general catalog for details). This course will use the resources of turnitin.com, which searches the web for possible plagiarism and is over 90% effective.

Email Use

The University of Texas at Dallas recognizes the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. The university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student's U.T. Dallas email address and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. This allows the university to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of all individual corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. UTD furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The

Department of Information Resources at U.T. Dallas provides a method for students to have their U.T. Dallas mail forwarded to other accounts.

Withdrawal from Class

The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, I cannot drop or withdraw any student. You must do the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of "F" in a course if you choose not to attend the class once you are enrolled.

Student Grievance Procedures

Procedures for student grievances are found in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities, of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*.

In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding grades, evaluations, or other fulfillments of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the instructor, supervisor, administrator, or committee with whom the grievance originates (hereafter called "the respondent"). Individual faculty members retain primary responsibility for assigning grades and evaluations. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the grievance must be submitted in writing to the respondent with a copy of the respondent's School Dean. If the matter is not resolved by the written response provided by the respondent, the student may submit a written appeal to the School Dean. If the grievance is not resolved by the School Dean's decision, the student may make a written appeal to the Dean of Graduate or Undergraduate Education, and the dean will appoint and convene an Academic Appeals Panel. The decision of the Academic Appeals Panel is final. The results of the academic appeals process will be distributed to all involved parties.

Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations.

Incomplete Grade Policy

As per university policy, incomplete grades will be granted only for work unavoidably missed at the semester's end and only if 70% of the course work has been completed. An incomplete grade must be resolved within eight (8) weeks from the first day of the subsequent long semester. If the required work to complete the course and to remove the incomplete grade is not submitted by the specified deadline, the incomplete grade is changed automatically to a grade of F.

Disability Services

The goal of Disability Services is to provide students with disabilities educational opportunities equal to those of their non-disabled peers. Disability Services is located in room 1.610 in the Student Union. Office hours are Monday and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The contact information for the Office of Disability Services is:

The University of Texas at Dallas, SU 22
PO Box 830688

Richardson, Texas 75083-0688
(972) 883-2098 (voice or TTY)

Essentially, the law requires that colleges and universities make those reasonable adjustments necessary to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability. For example, it may be necessary to remove classroom prohibitions against tape recorders or animals (in the case of dog guides) for students who are blind. Occasionally an assignment requirement may be substituted (for example, a research paper versus an oral presentation for a student who is hearing impaired). Classes enrolled students with mobility impairments may have to be rescheduled in accessible facilities. The college or university may need to provide special services such as registration, note-taking, or mobility assistance.

It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her professors of the need for such an accommodation. Disability Services provides students with letters to present to faculty members to verify that the student has a disability and needs accommodations. Individuals requiring special accommodation should contact the professor after class or during office hours.

Religious Holy Days

The University of Texas at Dallas will excuse a student from class or other required activities for the travel to and observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20, Tax Code, Texas Code Annotated.

The student is encouraged to notify the instructor or activity sponsor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment. The student, so excused, will be allowed to take the exam or complete the assignment within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment.

If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence [i.e., for the purpose of observing a religious holy day] or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the chief executive officer of the institution, or his or her designee. The chief executive officer or designee must take into account the legislative intent of TEC 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the chief executive officer or designee.

These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.