

Course Syllabus – Russia: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

Course Information

Course number –GEOG 3382

Course title – Russia: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

Term – Summer 2011

Section – 05A

Classroom – GR 2.530

Time – Monday/Wednesday 8:00 am-12:30 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 3.213

Office hours – Monday 12:45 pm -1:30 pm; by appointment

Other information: Please send email directly to the address above.

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 Russian ascend into a global power. The study of rich Russian history, tradition and culture will help students to take 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

Russia in the Modern World: A New Geography by Denis J.B. Shaw, Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

ISBN 0-631-18134-2. *From Nyet to Da: Understanding the New Russia*, 4th Edition by Yale

Richmond, Intercultural Press, 2009. ISBN 978-1-931930-59-8

The rest of required reading will be placed on-reserve and e-learning.

Suggested Course Materials

Students are expected to take notes during PowerPoint presentations and complete reading, maps, and assignments before due dates. Lectures shall be complemented by reading the assigned material.

Assignments & Tentative Academic Calendar

	Class Date	Topic	Assignments for next class
1	5/23/11	Introduction. Geographical and geopolitical position. Europe or Asia: both or neither? Environment (1) and resources. Exploration and use. Environmental degradation and pristine oases. 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.	D. Shaw, p.10-18, p.127-131, 146-150. Notes, p.1-2, 12 (e-learning). Start Map 1
2	5/25/11	Some glimpses of Russian history (2) from pre-Christian times through Peter the Great: 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.	Dziewanowski, p. 13-27 Notes, p. 3-4. Map 1 is due. Start Map 2. Make a Sidetrip choice. Journal Entry 1 is due BEFORE the class.
3	6/01/11	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 1. Pre-Soviet historical site. Dziewanowski, p.87-90. Notes, p.4-6 . The New Russia. Ch. 9. Demise of the Command Economy. Journal Entry 2 is due BEFORE the class.
4	6/06/11	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 2. Soviet historical site. Shaw, p.152-161, Richmond p. 22-27, 39-43, 45-50. Notes, p. 2-3, 11-12 Map 2 is due. Journal Entry 3 is due BEFORE the class.
5	6/08/11	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.	Start Map 3 Journal Entry 4 is due BEFORE the class.

			Sign up for an Oblast paper/presentation.
6	6/13/11	Economy (6) : primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors and their prominence. Shifts in geography. Russian military. Transport, communications, and tourism. Informal economy, new Russians, and integration into global economy.	Notes p. 9-11, 12-13, 14. Map 3 is due. Start Map 4. Sidetrip 3. Modern business enterprise. Journal Entry 5 is due BEFORE the class.
7	6/15/11	Test. 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. Financial and political (8) transformations. Privatization, nationalization, and foreign direct investment. Kremlin inside out. Russian politics is business as usual.	Sidetrip 4. Russian billboard. Notes, p. 6-7, 9, 11, 12, 13-14. Shaw, p.58-72. Map 4 is due. Journal Entry 6 is due BEFORE the class.
8	6/20/11	Financial and political (8) transformations. Russian government. Role of state in nation building. The Russian Federation and problems of federalism. Regions of Russia. Foreign relations (9) , 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.	Oblast Paper and an Interview question are due. Start Map 5. D. Shaw, p. 265-268, 278-287. Notes, p. 15-16 Journal Entry 7 is due BEFORE the class.
9	6/22/11	Law and disorder: judicial system and human rights. Education, healthcare, social entitlements. Quality of life (10) . 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. Map 5 is due. Journal Entry 8, 9 are due BEFORE the class.
10	6/27/11	Final Exam	Journal Entry 10 is due BEFORE the class.

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 (200-250 words) of comments of WHAT you learned and WHY it was important for your understanding of Russia. Every entry must be e-mailed to me at ivakulenko@utdallas.edu before the next class. Total - **30 pts.**

After 6 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) are due on 6/20/11. Detailed instruction will be provided in class** – **10 pts.**

Every student needs to sign up for one “**sidetrip**” to be presented in a PowerPoint format in class on an assigned date ***. – **10 pts.**

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

The Final Exam on **June 27, 2011** will make other **20%** of your grade. Includes 30 fact questions, a map, and an essay.

*****You will get 15 open end questions, map questions and the list of Russian words to know ahead of time. At the Exam you will randomly pick a card with 3 questions, one in each category. You will have about 10 minutes to prepare for your comments and then you will present your comments to the class.

******The paper is about 2-3 pages long (1200-1300 words) covering relative geographical location of the chosen oblast, characteristics of its 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. The list of oblasts you signed in to will be completed by 6/08/11.

******* Imagine that you have a day to spend on site to learn about Russian life and heritage. The budget is unlimited. You have to be ready to present your findings in class with PowerPoint of 4-5 slides.

Sidetrip 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 observation or personal experience?
4. How has this new information influenced your understanding and impressions of Russia?

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 you 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. No makeup tests. (Individual consideration may be given in case of overwhelming circumstances). Although extra

help may be provided to students, the professor will not hold alternate lectures or release lecture notes to students. Respectful discussions of the topics being studied are encouraged. **Bonus points** are offered for participation and perfect attendance (missed no more than 2.5 hours).

If you wish to look at the ancillary syllabus material, a link to that material is as follows
<http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>.

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