At its greatest extent the former Soviet Union encompassed a geographical area that covered one-sixth of the Earth's landmass. It spanned 11 time zones and contained over 100 distinct nationalities, 22 of which numbered over one million in population. In the 74 years from the October Revolution in 1917 to the fall of Communism in 1991, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, its leaders and its people, had to face a number of difficult challenges: the overthrow the Tsarist autocracy, the establishment of a new state, four years of civil war, a famine, transition to a mixed economy, political strife after Lenin's death, industrialization, collectivization, a second famine, political Show Trials, World War II, post-war reconstruction and repression, the "Thaw" after Stalin's death, Khrushchev's experimentation, and Brezhnev's decline. Each of these challenges engendered new solutions and modifications in what can be loosely called the evolving "Soviet system."

Assignments and Grading

Students will be asked to write three papers over the course of the semester, totaling twenty pages in length. Grading in the course will be determined as follows: 15% for attendance and participation; 60% for the three papers (20% each); and 25% for the final examination.

Grades are assigned as letters and then combined using the above weights and following numerical equivalents: A+=4.3, A=4, A-=3.7, B+=3.3, B=3, etc.

Participation grading will not be highly differentiated. Regular attendance guarantees a B, infrequent participation – a B+. Any student who participates regularly will receive an A-; thought-provoking participation will earn an A or A+.

Standards for grading the papers are as follows:
A Excellent thesis, excellent execution
A- Interesting to excellent thesis, good to excellent execution
B+ A good thesis, good execution
B Summary of others' thoughts (no original thesis!)
B- Poor summary of others' thoughts
C+ and below Increasingly inadequate thought and effort

**Texts Recommended for Purchase (at the MIT Bookstore)**


**Sourcepack:**

Remaining materials for the course come from a sourcepack, on reserve in three copies in the Humanities library. You may want to make a copy for your own purposes. Materials from the sourcepack are indicated below with a *.

**Week 1.**

**Feb. 5- Introduction to the Course**

**Week 2.**

**Feb. 10- The Setting: Tsarism (66 pages)**


*Workers and War*

*"Father Gapon's Petition," pp. 96-99
*"Memorandum to Nicholas II," pp. 476-478
*Leon Trotsky, "Peculiarities of Russia Development," *The Russian Revolution*, pp. 1-10 (as marked)

*The Peasantry*

*Frank, "Popular Justice," pp.239-265
*Peter Stolypin, "We Need a Great Russia," pp. 457-464 (as marked)

*The National Question*

Feb. 12- The Revolutionary Tradition (45 pages)

Fitzpatrick, pp. 23-31

*Revolutionary Theory I: General*
*Daniels: pp. 23-25 (Trotsky on "Permanent Revolution")

*Revolutionary Theory II: Bolsheviks vs. Mensheviks*
*Daniels: pp. 6-17 (Lenin’s Theory of the Party, Lenin on the Party Split, Marxist Reactions to Lenin)*
*Pavel Axelrod, "The Unification of Russian Social Democracy and Its Tasks," pp. 48-52

*The National Question*
Sakwa: 1.17 ("The Right of Nations to Self-Determination")

Week 3.

Feb. 17 - No Class-President's Day

Feb. 19- The Revolutions of 1917 (64 pages)

Fitzpatrick, pp. 40-67

*Revolution and War*
Sakwa: 2.1-2.3 (Order No. 1, April Theses, Lenin on the Imperialist War)

*The Grain Crisis*
*Documents from *The Provisional Government: 1917*

*Dual Power*
*Suny: pp. 35-38 (A.F. Kerenskii's Statement..., Iraklii Tsersteli's Speech...)*
*Daniels: pp. 44-47 (Lenin on the Dual Power)*
*Suny: pp. 41-43 (Tsereteli and Lenin's Exchange of Words....)*
*Daniels: pp. 57-59 (The Military-Revolutionary Committee)*

*On Seizing Power*
Sakwa: 2.9-2.11, 2.13 (Lenin: For, Kamenev and Zinoviev: Against)
*Suny: pp. 45-47 (Letter to Central Committee....)

*Victory*
Sakwa: 2.16-2.18, 2.23 (Victory Address, *Izvestiya's* Condemnation, Decrees on Peace and Land, and Bogdanov's Criticism)
Revolution from Below
*Suny: pp. 43-45 (Report to Commissar)
*Steve A. Smith, "Petrograd in 1917: the view from below," pp. 63-64

Week 4.

Feb. 24-- The Civil War (71 pages)
Fitzpatrick, pp. 68-92

Eliminating Political Opposition
*Suny: pp. 67-73 (Dissolution of the Constituent Assembly)

Withdrawing from War
Sakwa: 3.6-3.7

Running a State, Fighting a War
*Orlando Figes, pp. 1-6, 246-249, 271-273
*Robert C. Tucker, Stalin as Revolutionary, pp. 181-182
*W. Bruce Lincoln, Red Victory, pp. 476-478
*Leon Trotsky, "The Train," My Life, pp. 411-422
Sakwa: 2.11 (review), 3.1, 3.8, 3.10, 3.18 (Secret Police, Red Army, State Capitalism, Terror)

Red Opposition
*Suny: pp. 77-82 (Iulii Martov's Letter...)
Sakwa: 3.9, 3.11-3.12, 3.19 (Workers' Control, Left Communists, Democratic Centralists)

Feb. 26- The Crisis of War Communism & the Shift to NEP (60 pages)
Fitzpatrick, pp. 93-106
*Paul Avrich, "The Crisis of War Communism," Kronstadt 1921, pp. 7-34

The Opposition Suppressed
Sakwa: 3.22-3.25, 3.27-3.28 (Party Reform, Workers' Opposition, Kronstadt, Bureaucratism, Ban on Factions, Trade Union Debate)

The Shift to NEP
*Robert C. Tucker, ed., The Lenin Anthology, pp. 511-517 (Importance of Gold Now and After...)

Week 5

March 3- Defining Bolshevism (60 pages)
*A. A. Solts, "Communist Ethics," pp. 42-54

**Renewed Opposition and its Demise**
Sakwa: 4.7-4.8, 4.18-4.20, 4.22 (Declaration of the Twenty-Two, Workers' Truth, Declaration of the Forty-Six, the New Course, Stalin on Dictatorship)
*Suny: pp. 124-126 (Bukharin and Dzerzhinskii Disagree..., Letter from Nikolai Bukharin..., Letter from Dzerezhinskii)

**The Lenin Cult**
*Suny: pp. 126-128 (Joseph Stalin, "The October Revolution...")

**March 5- First paper due in class**

Film: "Mr. West in the Land of the Bolsheviks"

Week 6.

**March 10- The Politics and Economics of NEP (68 pages)**

Fitzpatrick, pp. 106-119, 124-129

**Monetary Reform**
*Vladimir Maiakovskii, "Burzhui, say goodbye to your pleasant money"

**Lenin's Last Thoughts**
Sakwa: 4.13, 4.15-4.16 (Lenin's Last Testament, Socialism in Russia, Better Fewer, But Better)

**The Party Opposition: The Left, United, and the Right**
*Daniels: pp. 144-147 (The Zinoviev-Kamenev Opposition)
*Daniels: pp. 151-153 (Bukharin on the United Opposition)
Sakwa: 4.27 (Bukharin Warns against Stalin)

**The Industrialization Debate: Stalin vs. Bukharin**
Sakwa: 4.24-4.25 (Socialism in One Country, Primary Socialist Accumulation)
*Stalin, "On the Grain Crisis" and "Siberian Speech," pp. 159-162, 41-48 (as marked)
*Daniels: pp. 162-163, 166-169 (Bukharin on Peasant Policy, Equilibrium)
The National Question
*Suny: pp. 122-124 (The Question of Nationalism....)

March 12- The Great Break: Collectivization & Industrialization (66 pages)

Fitzpatrick, pp. 120-124, 129-141

Collectivization
Sakwa: 5.3-5.6 (Liquidation of Kulaks, Dizzy with Success, Bolshevik-Leninist Opposition)

Industrialization
*Stephen Kotkin, "Peopling a Shock Construction Site," Magnetic Mountain, pp. 72-82, 86-103 (as marked)
*Stalin's Letters to Molotov, pp. 168-169, 175, 200-201, 209, 218-221
Sakwa: 5.7-5.8, 5.16 (Stalin on Industrialization, Against Wage Equality, Forward, Oh Time!)

Week 7.

March 17- The New Economy (65 pages)

Gennady Khomiakov-Andreev, Bitter Waters, pp. 185-188, 4-13, 22-25, 39-55, 69-85, 105-122

March 19- Purge and Terror (65 pages)

Fitzpatrick, pp. 163-170
*Robert C. Tucker, Stalin in Power, pp. 441-478
"Last Plea of the Accused Bukharin," The Great Purge Trial, pp. 327-328, 656-668 (as marked)
Sakwa: 5.17-5.19, 5.23-5.24, 5.30, 5.32 (Ryutin Group, Congress of Victors, Kirov Murder, Purge Plenum, Show Trials, Criticisms)

Week 8.

March 24 & 26--Spring Break--No Classes

Week 9.

March 31- World War II (79 pages)
April 2-- The Origins of the Cold War (74 pages)

*Ending World War II
*Sakwa: 6.33-6.36

The Rise of Rivalry
*Sakwa: 7.2-7.5, 7.13 (Two Camps, Long Telegram, Iron Curtain, Mr. X)
*"The Novikov Telegram,"" pp. 3, 8, 12-16

Internal Consolidation
*Sakwa: 7.8, 7.14 (Attack on Cosmopolitanism, Preserving Peace)

Khrushchev and Kennedy
*Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin's Cold War, pp. 182-188, 236-74

Week 10.

April 7- Second paper due in class

Film: "Cranes are Flying"

April 9- The Khrushchev Years: Thaw and Social Change

*Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, Inside the Kremlin’s Cold War, pp. 175-182

Agrarian and Political Reform
*Roy Medvedev and Zhores Medvedev, Khrushchev, pp. 30-45, 56-65, 94-101, 117-122

Foreign Policy
*Sakwa: 8.16-8.17 (Peaceful Coexistence, Imperialist Threat)

Opposition, Dissent, and Khrushchev's Fall
*Sakwa: 8.7, 8.15, 8.19-8.21 (Anti-Party Group, Solzhenitsyn, Khrushchev's Ouster)

Week 11
April 14- The Brezhnev Era: Politics and Economics

*Timothy Colton, "Brezhnev's Ambiguous Legacy," *The Dilemma of Reform in the Soviet Union*, pp. 6-31
*Boris Yeltsin, * Against the Grain, pp. 43-56, 61-82

*The Brezhnevite System and Foreign Policy*

*End of the Thaw and the Rise of Dissent*
Sakwa: 9.17, 9.19 (Call for Reform, KGB Surveillance).

April 16- The Brezhnev Era: Social Change

*Timothy Colton, "What Ails the Soviet System?" *The Dilemma of Reform in the Soviet Union*, pp. 32-67

*Society*
*Suny: pp. 360-379 (The "New Soviet Man" turns Pessimist, The Little Deal....)

*The Andropov Years*
Sakwa: 9.32-9.35 (Continuity, Flexibility, Ideology, Novosibirsk Report)

Week 12.

April 21-No Class- Patriot's Day

April 23-- Gorbachev's Political Revolution

*Michael McFaul, "Gorbachev's Design fro Reforming..., The End of the Soviet Union", *Russia's Unfinished Revolution: Political Change from Gorbachev to Putin*, pp. 33-86

*Economic Reform*
Sakwa: 10.1-10.6 (Anti-Alcohol Campaign, Perestroika)

*Political Reform*
Sakwa: 10.8-10.18 (Seventieth Anniversary Speech, Nina Andreeva, Nineteenth Party Conference, Congress of People's Deputies, Abolition of the Party's Leading Role, New Political Thinking)

Week 13.

April 28-- Nationalism
*Geoffrey Hosking, "The flawed melting pot," *The Awakening of the Soviet Union*, pp. 82-88

*The Baltics and Central Asia*

*Georgia*
*Stephen Brook, "Civil War or Ice-Cream," *Claws of the Crab*, pp. 6, 8, 17, 21-33

*Russia*
*Roman Szporluk, "Dilemmas of Russian Nationalism," pp. 441-462

**April 30- Collapse of the Soviet Union**

*McFaul: pp.86-117 (The End of the Soviet Union)*
*Caroline Humphrey, "Icebergs, barter, and the mafia in provincial Russia," pp. 8-13
Sakwa: 10.20-10.22, 10.24-10.32, 10.37 (Sovereign Russia, Union Treaty, Referendum, August Coup, Suspension of Communist Party, Gorbachev's Resignation)

Week 14.

**May 5- New Russia Emerges, 1991-1993**


**May 7- Third paper due in class**

Week 15.

**May 12- From Yeltsin to Putin, 1993-2001**

*Suny: pp. 564-573 (What Russia Teaches Us Now: How Weak States Threaten Freedom)*

Other Readings TBA

**May 14- Contemporary Russia**

Victor Pelevin, *Homo Zapiens*