

Prof. Julie Hessler
McKenzie office hours (351 McK): Mon. 11:15-12:15, Wed. 1:00-2:00
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History 407 [Seminar] THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Wednesday, 3:00-6:00, McKenzie 471 (in practice, undergraduates will be let out at 5:00 most weeks)

Course description: This seminar will explore the history and English-language historiography of the Russian Revolution, a formative period in Russian, Soviet, and contemporary European history. Topics include the causes of the revolution, the events of 1917, the Russian civil war, and the aftermath of the revolution in the context of the New Economic Policy. Like other history seminars, the course has methodological as well as substantive aims; class discussions and assignments will focus on the practice of writing history as well as on the specific subject matter of assigned texts.

Library assignments: The course is directed towards the production of an original 20-page seminar paper, due the Wednesday of finals week. Towards that end, students need to familiarize themselves with the sources available in the library. For the first few weeks, this course asks you to spend two hours a week perusing a major primary source, then writing up an informal 2-page response paper, due in class. Response papers should address as many of the following questions as possible: What was your source? If you have read only part of a bigger source, which part? What range of topics does this source address? For what kinds of research topic could it be used? How would you assess its reliability? What questions does the source raise?

Paper proposals: To do enough research for your paper, you need to start reasonably early. This is one of the reasons for the requirement that you turn in a formal proposal for your research paper on Oct. 29. The other reason, of course, is that you can get some feedback at an early stage as to whether your topic is feasible and your approach sound. For the proposal, try to formulate your topic in terms of a historical problem, which is to say that you should frame it in the form of a question, but also give some sense of why this question is interesting or significant, based on the reading that you have already done. In addition, you should try to give a sense of how you plan to go about answering the question (your research strategy, and, if already possible, your hypothesis or argument). Aim for roughly two pages. You should also append to your proposal a preliminary bibliography of at least eight items.

E-mail progress report: There are neither meetings nor formal assignments in the weeks of November 10 and November 17. The purpose of this break is to give you time to delve into your independent research; a 20-page seminar paper should rest on significantly more than twice the research that you would devote to an ordinary 10-page assignment. Just to make sure that you stay on track, I would like to hear from you by e-mail at least once during those two weeks. I'm not looking for anything formal (though, as always when you are writing to a professor, correct grammar and capitalization would be nice!) -- just a brief progress report that lets me know what you've been doing. Specifically, please tell me about one secondary book and one primary source that have had an impact on your thinking, as well as any changes that you are thinking of making to your proposal and some of your ideas for the paper. For example, what are the major sections of your paper? Have you started writing any section? What do you argue in it? What sources do you use? Are you encountering any problems? I'm not on e-mail every day, but I'll try to respond within a day or two with any comments or suggestions that come to mind.

Rough draft: Rough drafts (submit two copies) are due at 10:00 on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. This is a substantial part of your grade (9%), so put some effort into it. My approach to grading a research paper is to consider separately the following three components: 1) argument; 2) research; 3) writing, organization, and format. For the final grade on your seminar paper, these three parts will have equal weight. I will also comment on them when I read your rough draft -- which is to say that you will receive substantial feedback from me at this point. With regard to rough draft grading, it is conceivable that you will not have finished every section by the time that you turn it in, and on the whole I am fairly generous with rough draft credit, but I will not accept a draft that is shorter than 13 pages. The more of the overall argument that you have written, even if it is still fairly rough, the more you will be able to take advantage of constructive criticism from your fellow students and from me.

Comments on your partner's rough draft: This is your chance to see what one of your fellow students is doing in the paper, and also to give that person some feedback. You will be assigned a partner. Logistically, you should plan to pick up your partner's paper at my office the Monday after Thanksgiving, so as to write comments by Wednesday's class period. I will have a checklist of some things for you to think about as you write your critique. Try to be both honest and constructive. Comments should be typed, and make sure that you bring two copies of your comments with you to class.

Grading: Much of your grade for this course rides on your seminar paper, but not all! Attendance is mandatory. We meet formally only six times in the quarter, so if you miss one session, your participation grade will drop substantially. Missing two or more sessions will mean an automatic F in the course. Because of the nature of this course (the large amount of independent work and the need to get through the early material quickly), I will not accept late papers on any assignments (library assignments, proposals, rough drafts, peer comments, or final papers). In the case of rough drafts, failure to turn one in on time means that you will not have the benefit of comments from me or your peers, and of course you will lose out on the rough draft part of the grade. Assuming that you attend class, grades will be determined as follows:

- 20% preparation for and participation in class discussion
- 18% library assignments
- 9% on-time submission of a decent rough draft
- 3% e-mail progress report
- 5% comments on assigned partner's rough draft
- 45% seminar paper

Required text:

Orlando Figes, *A People's Tragedy*

Syllabus

Wednesday, Sept. 29 Introductory remarks: interpreting the Russian Revolution; viewing and discussion of film *The Battleship Potemkin*, dir. Sergei Eisenstein.

Wednesday, Oct. 6 Origins of the Russian Revolution.
Reading: *A People's Tragedy*, pp. 1-306

Library assignment: Focussing on the period 1904-1916, look up the British (DOC-LC JX 632.B74) and/or American (Microfilm E183.8 .R9 U5) foreign service reports on one of the following topics: the revolution of 1905-6 and the government's response; industry, labor, and strikes; agricultural reforms; the Russian military; the Duma and its relations with the government; political assassinations and the revolutionary movement.

Wednesday, Oct. 13 The revolutionary year: 1917
Readings: *A People's Tragedy*, pp. 307-473

Library assignment: Read as much as you can in two hours of one of the major Bolshevik political treatises: Lenin, *What is To Be Done*; Lenin, *State and Revolution*; Bukharin and Preobrazhenskii, *The ABC of Communism*; Trotsky, *The New Course*; Kollontai, *Autobiography of a Sexually Emancipated Communist Woman* (all on reserve). Write a response paper.

Wednesday, Oct. 20 From revolution to civil war.
Readings: *A People's Tragedy*, pp. 474-649.

Library assignment: Read/peruse a diary from the revolutionary period and write a response paper:
Semen Kanatchikov, *A Radical Worker in Tsarist Russia* (trans. and ed. Reginald Zelnik);
Pitirim Sorokin, *Leaves from a Russian Diary*; Iu. V. Got'e, *Time of Troubles*; Alexis Babine,
A Russian Civil War Diary (all on reserve).

Wednesday, Oct. 27 The early NEP.

Readings: *A People's Tragedy*, pp. 650-825.

**** Friday, Oct. 29 (by 3:00 pm) Paper proposal due under the door of McKenzie 351. Sign up for an individual consultation on your research paper.**

Wednesday, Nov. 3 No class; individual meetings with Prof. Hessler.

Wednesday, Nov. 10 No class. Email progress report due between now and Friday, Nov. 19.

Wednesday, Nov. 17 No class.

Wednesday, Nov. 25 No class. **Two copies of your seminar paper rough draft due by 10:00 a.m.** Turn them in to me at McKenzie 351. If I'm not there, slide your drafts under the door. Partners will be assigned over the weekend. Get your assignment and pick up your partner's draft from my office (or from the folder/box next to my office door) on Monday.

Wednesday, Dec. 1 **Paper workshop.** Bring two copies of your typed comments on your partner's paper, and be prepared to talk both about your partner's paper and about your aims, challenges, and arguments in your own paper.

Final papers due at 10:00, Wednesday, December 8. Bring them to McKenzie 351. Again, if I'm not there, slide your paper under the door.