The history of 20th century Russia, as well as the world, was decisively shaped by the Revolution of 1917 and the Soviet experiment. For much of the century the Soviet Union represented the alternative to the West. When the Bolsheviks came to power in 1917 they were committed to remake the country and its people according to their socialist vision. This course explores the effects of the Soviet project—rapid modernization and ideological transformation—on a largely agrarian, “backward” society. We will consider the hopes and ideals generated by the search for a new and better world, and we will address the violence and devastation caused by the pursuit of utopian politics. Later parts of the course will trace the gradual erosion of Communist ideology in the wake of Stalin's death and follow the regime’s crisis until the spectacular breakup of the empire in 1991. Throughout the course, we will emphasize how the revolution was experienced by a range of people – Russians and non-Russians; men and women; artists and intellectuals, but also workers, soldiers, and peasants – and what it meant for them to live in the Soviet system in its different phases. To convey this perspective, the reading material includes a wide selection of personal accounts, fiction, artwork, films, which will be complemented by scholarly analyses. For a fuller statement of the learning goals pursued in this class, see More generally, see the History department statement on undergraduate learning goals: [http://history.rutgers.edu/undergraduate/learning-goals](http://history.rutgers.edu/undergraduate/learning-goals)

The Communist age is now over. For us as historians, this means that we need to make sense of how the Soviet experiment fitted into the history of Russia, and how we should relate to it today.

Students’ grades will be determined as follows:
- Regular attendance and active participation in discussions: 15%
- Four short response papers, written on a regular basis throughout the semester (see "schedule" for details). Two of these short papers, randomly selected, will receive a letter grade: 10%
- One four-page paper, due March 30: 20%
- In-class midterm exam: 25%
- Take-home final exam (cumulative): 30%

Failure to complete any assignment will result in failure for the course

For your written assignments, please follow the History Department Guide on writing historical essays: [http://history.rutgers.edu/?option=com_content&task=view&id=106&Itemid=147](http://history.rutgers.edu/?option=com_content&task=view&id=106&Itemid=147)

For the class to “work,” i.e., to be a rewarding individual and collective learning experience, students are expected to attend all classes. If you expect to miss one or two classes please use the University absence reporting website [https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/](https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/) to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me. Please note: If you miss more than two classes without a valid and documented reason your absence will affect your grade.

You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with the History Department's policy on Mutual Responsibilities and Classroom Etiquette: [http://history.rutgers.edu/?option=com_content&task=view&id=108&Itemid=147](http://history.rutgers.edu/?option=com_content&task=view&id=108&Itemid=147)

Cell phone use during class times is forbidden. All cellphones must be switched off and be stored away from your desk. Wireless capabilities of computers must be turned off. I reserve the right to impose penalties in case of violations.

Throughout the semester I encourage you to consult and make active use of the online platform, "Seventeen Moments in Soviet History," at: [www.soviethistory.org](http://www.soviethistory.org) It provides a wealth of documents,
imagery, and scholarly commentary on the history of the Soviet Union, and will be useful for all of your assignments. To use it you must sign in and create a password.

I encourage all of you to see me during office hours to discuss your assignments or other aspects of your work for this class.

**Reading Assignments**

History 510:375 requires a good deal of interesting reading. The required books, listed below, are available for purchase at the Rutgers Bookstore, near the New Brunswick train station:


All other readings on this list are available either through the links provided on the syllabus, or on Sakai where they can be founded under «Resources / Weekly Readings». The titles there correspond to those listed on the syllabus. Download them to your own computer and print them out. Please always bring paper copies of the required readings for a given day to class. An online version of the syllabus is also posted on Sakai.

For many of the classes I will post lecture outlines on the Sakai site. They will be listed in the folder “Lecture Outlines.” Expect an outline to be posted there by midnight before a given lecture. Please bring a printed copy of the outline to class.

**Schedule of Classes and Readings**

Note: the readings listed under a given day are DUE THAT DAY!

1. **Wednesday, Jan. 18:** Introduction. How this course works
2. **Monday, Jan. 23:** From the Revolution of 1905 to World War I
   - Kenez, 1-13; Anton Chekhov, "Peasants"
3. **Wednesday, Jan. 25:** The Revolution of 1917: Opening Acts (February through June)
   - Kenez, 14-24; Mark Steinberg, "Documents on February 1917" (doc.s # 3, 9, 11, 20, 24, 35, 38, 40).
4. **Monday, Jan. 30:** The Revolution of 1917: October Days
   - Kenez, 24-33; Lenin's Letter to Central Committee Members; Mark Steinberg, "Documents on October 1917" (doc.s # 82, 100, 104, 115, 121). Short response paper due.
5. **Wednesday, Feb. 1:** The Civil War
   - Kenez, 33-41; Isaak Babel, *Red Cavalry*.
6. **Monday, Feb. 6:** The Challenges of the "New Economic Policy" (NEP)
   - Kenez, 41-53, 58-63 “Instructions for carrying out verification of party documents and purging the party membership”; Igal Halfin, "From Darkness to Light"
7. **Wednesday, Feb. 8:** Cultural Revolution
   - Kenez, 64-75; Alexandra Kollontai, "The Family and the Communist State"; "How Can We Protect Our Children?"; “From the Editors of Bezbozhnik”.
8. **Monday, Feb. 13:** The Artistic Avantgarde
   - "Lenin, Trotsky, Vertov on Cinema and Revolution"
9. Wednesday, Feb. 15: Soviet Nationality Policies
   Kenez, 53-58; Francine Hirsch, "Getting to Know ‘The Peoples of the USSR’"

10. Monday, Feb. 20: The Great Break and the War on the Villages
    Kenez, 75-89, 96-101; Lev Kopelev, "The Last Harvest"

    Kenez, 89-96, 101-102; Stephen Kotkin, Magnetic Mountain (excerpt on "Speaking Bolshevik")

12. Monday, Feb. 27: Making Socialist Citizens
    Short response paper due.

13. Wednesday, February 29: Stalinist Terror
    Kenez, 103-126; “The Purge of Comrade Ulianova”

14. Monday, March 5: Discussion of Lydia Chukovskaya, Sofia Petrovna

15. Wednesday, March 8: Midterm exam

March 12, 14: Spring Break

    Kenez, 126-144; Ilya Ehrenburg, “The Justification of Hate”; “Role of SS Einsatzgruppen in the Soviet Union”

17. Wednesday, March 21: The Soviet War Experience
    Kenez, 144-154; be prepared to present on two of the following poems/songs:
    Vasily Lebedev-Kumach and Aleksandr Aleksandrov, “Holy War” (1941)
    Konstantin Simonov, “Smolensk Roads” (1941)
    Konstantin Simonov, “Wait for Me” (1941)
    Olga Berggolts, “Conversation with a Neighbor” (1941)
    All songs and poems listed above are available at:
    [http://www.personal.dundee.ac.uk/~rlhill/anna/songs%20and%20poems/songs.html](http://www.personal.dundee.ac.uk/~rlhill/anna/songs%20and%20poems/songs.html)
    Jerzy Peterburgsky and Yakov Galitsky, “The Blue Kerchief” (1940)
    N. Bogoslavsky and V. Agatov, “Dark is the Night” (1943)
    “Song of a Front Truck Driver” (1944-45)
    The last three songs (melodies and English/Russian lyrics) are available at this website of Red Army Songs:
    Reading: Vera Malakhova, "Four Years as a Frontline Physician”; Robert Rothstein,"Homeland, Home Town, and Battlefield: the Popular Song.” Short response paper due.

18. Monday, March 26: Origins of the Cold War
    Kenez, 154-166; Winston Churchill, Sinews of Peace Address; Joseph Stalin, Response to Churchill. Begin reading Solzhenitsyn, One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich

19. Wednesday, March 28: Russia after the War – Hopes and Disappointments
    Kenez, 166-183; Stalin, Two toasts (May and June 1945); Ilya Ehrenburg, Memoirs (postwar years). Continue with Solzhenitsyn, One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich

Friday, March 30: 4-page paper due. Exact theme TBA.
20. Monday, April 2: Stalin's Death and the “Thaw”
   Kenez, 184-203; Discussion of Alexander Solzhenitsyn, One Day in the Life of Ivan
   Denisovich; Nikita Khrushchev, On the Cult of Personality.

21. Wednesday, April 4: Daily Life and the Cold War
   Kenez, 203-213; Yevgeny Yevtushenko, The Heirs of Stalin; "The Kitchen Debate"

22. Monday, April 9: The Brezhnev Era
   of Late Socialism: Power, Pretense, and the Anekdot"

23. Wednesday, April 11: Nonconformism and Dissent
   Kenez, 223-229; Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Harvard Commencement Speech; Soviet Dissident
   Artists: Interviews after Perestroika, preface and introduction (xi-xiii, 1-24),
   Recommended: interviews with E. Beliutin (36-43), E. Neizvestnyi (75-83), D. Prigov (218-
   226).

24. Friday, April 13, 12 PM: Visit of the Rutgers Zimmerli Museum. Guided tour of the “Dodge
   Collection of Nonconformist Art from the Soviet Union”
   (http://www.zimmerlimuseum.rutgers.edu/exhibitions). We will meet at the front desk of the Zimmerli
   Museum (71 Hamilton Street) at 11:50 AM. Please don't bring any valuable items to the museum; you can't
   take bags and backpacks into the museum, and there are just a few lockers in the lobby.

25. Wednesday, April 18: Late Soviet Society (discussion)
   Prepare for this class by watching on your own the film Moscow Doesn’t Believe in Tears
   (Vladimir Menshov, 1979). The film will be on reserve at the Dana Library.
   It can also be ordered through Netflix.com:
   http://www.netflix.com/Movie/Moscow_Does_Not_Believe_in_Tears/60035718?strackid=5c8e
   56defd171bf4_0_srl&strkid=423827779_0_0&lnkctr=srcrhd-sr&trkid=222336
   OR: Legally stream or download the film for a small fee at the Mosfilm website:
   http://cinema.mosfilm.ru/Movie.aspx?id=b1c625da-11f0-4b9f-9284-59164a9db623
   Note: the fees presented are in Russian rubles (30RUR = 1$) so it’s about 0.90$ for online
   streaming and 2.30$ for a download. By so doing you will not be breaking any copyright laws
   because Mosfilm is the copyright owner of the film and does it as a public service.
   Reading: Natalya Baranskaya, A Week Like Any Other. Short paper due.

26. Monday, April 23: Gorbachev’s Perestroika
   Kenez, 243-261; Nina Andreeva, “I Cannot Waive Principles,” A schoolgirl's letter; Mikhail
   Gorbachev’s Harvard speech (2002)

27. Wednesday, April 25: The Empire Collapses and Russia Takes the Plunge
   Kenez, 261-291; Variants of the Russian National Anthem
   Prepare for class by watching on your own the 1995 film "Everything will be All Right" (Vse
   budet khorosho), w. English subtitles: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vn9u37K8qeA&feature=related

28. Monday, April 30: Restoration; Russia Today. Course Summary & Distribution of Final Exam
   Kenez, 291-305; Mikhail Khodorkovsky, Final Plea to the Court (December 2010)