Course Objectives, Expectations, and Requirements

Our study of Russia in Central Asia is an ambitious one, covering an enormous length of time and a vast stretch of territory. It is made all the more difficult because the sources are quite disparate, while few modern scholars have attempted to write a comprehensive text or craft a coherent narrative of this history. So in a very important sense we will be working together to explore a history which is not well known and trying to piece together a puzzle which will nonetheless reveal important gaps in our knowledge.

We begin with the early interactions of sedentary and nomadic peoples on the Eurasian steppe, the rise of Islamic states in the region and the consolidation of their distinctive Perso-Islamic cultural and religious traditions and Turko-Mongolian political practices. We examine the emergence of the first Rus’ state and its Christianization, the Mongol conquests and the rise of Muscovy as a major power in Eurasia. We then follow the interactions that characterized Russian penetration into Central Asia variously looking at the question of ‘decline’ of the Central Asian khanates; the evolution of Russian policies toward the steppe; the conquest and colonization of Turkestan in the 19th c.; the Soviet transformation of Central Asia; the ill-fated Soviet intervention into Afghanistan and the final collapse of Soviet power in Central Asia.

I will expect students to attend all class sessions, to stay current with the readings and be prepared to discuss them. You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during the lecture; active and regular participation in our discussions is essential to the success of the course.

I encourage you to meet with me during office hours or by appointment. If you are having trouble with any aspect of the course please see me sooner rather than later.

Quiz, Papers and Grading

Geography Quiz – 10%
Primary document Analysis, each 10%
- Acceptance of Christianity/ Hilarion’s Eulogy due in class on Feb. 20
- The Gorchakov Circular, due in class on April 8
Essay #1– 20% due in class on March 20
Essay #2 -30% due in class on April 24
20% -- Class participation
All written work is governed by the Honor Code, see:
http://www.oberlin.edu/students/links-life/honorcode.html [This link will take you to a pdf of student rules and regulations.]

Late paper policy: For an extension to be considered, you must consult me in advance of the due date. Unexcused late papers will be penalized a grade step for each day (24 hours) late, that is, A goes to A-, etc.

Credit for the course will not be given if all written work is not turned in.

All books and articles assigned in this course are available on Blackboard (BB) or regular Reserve. The following books have been ordered at the bookstore:

Christian, A History of Russia, Central Asia, and Mongolia
Foltz, Religions of the Silk Road
Khalid, The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform, Jadidism in Central Asia
Soucek, A History of Inner Asia [recommended for reference]

A final note: Please turn off cell phones, pagers, beeping watches and the like for the entire class period. Please arrive for the class on time; once class has begun, please refrain from taking breaks and leaving the room.

Approximate schedule of
Readings, lectures and discussions

Mon., Feb 2 – Classes begin

Wed., Feb. 4 -- Getting oriented: human and physical geography

Christian, A History of Russia, Central Asia, and Mongolia, pp. 3-18
Barfield, The Nomadic Alternative, pp.1-18 [BB]

For reference: Soucek, pp. 1-45 [This is dry and slow-going but contains a great deal of basic information about geography, language, ethnicity and religion.]

Spend some time working with the maps and getting comfortable with the geography
http://depts.washington.edu/silkroad/maps/maps.html
Go to: “Cultures and Empires” then India and Central Asia then Timur’s empire I and II
Go to “Physical Geography” then Topography of Western Asia

http://depts.washington.edu/silkroad/maps/mapquiz/mapquiz.html
Do the interactive quizzes:
Regions, Cities of the Silk Road, Water and Mountains – West
A very useful resource is Bregel, An Historical Atlas of Central Asia
which can be accessed online through OBIS.

Feb 6- Feb 9: Silk Roads and Steppe Roads; the Coming of Islam

Foltz, Religions of the Silk Road Read Chs 1, 4, 5 [pp. 1-21; 61-87; 89-109]
Skim/Read as interests you Chs. 2 and 3.
Christian, A History of Russia, Central Asia, and Mongolia, pp. 304-323

Wed., Feb. 11: Discussion

Fri., Feb. 13 The Origins and early history of the Rus’

Christian, A History of Russia, Central Asia, and Mongolia, pp. 327-348, 353-369
“Struggle with the Nomads,” pp. 56-64 [BB]

Mon., Feb. 16 Discussion

Wed., Feb. 18 Storm From the East [film]

**Primary document Analysis due Feb. 20 in class**

Fri, Feb. 20 Chinggis Khan and the rise of the Mongols

Christian, A History of Russia, Central Asia, and Mongolia, pp. 385-405
Barfield, The Nomadic Alternative, pp. 150-168 [BB]

Feb. 23 - Feb. 27 The Golden Horde and the Rus’; The Mongols in Persia and Central Asia

Christian, A History of Russia, Central Asia, and Mongolia, pp 409-427
Morgan, The Mongols, Ch 6 (pp. 136-174) [BB]
For reference: Soucek pp, 103-116; 117-122

Mon., March 2: Discussion

Wed., March 4 – Fri., March 6: Timur and the Timurids

Clavigo, Embassy To Tamerlane, 1403-1406, pp. 278-300.[BB]
Subtelny, “Socio-economic Bases of Cultural Patronage under the Later Timurids,”
The Baburnama, Memoirs of Babur, Prince and Emperor pp. 34-44 [Regular Reserve.
Please take some time to look through this beautiful book which provides many
illustrations of Timurid art.]
For reference: Soucek pp.123-143
March 9-11: The Rise of Muscovy

Stevens, *Russia’s Wars of Emergence* pp. 13-40 [BB]
Dunning, *A Short History of Russia’s First Civil War*, pp. 14-27 [BB]

March 13: No Class
March 16-18: Post-Timurid Central Asia and the Narrative of Decline

Rossabi, “The ‘decline’ of the Central Asian Caravan trade,” [BB]
For reference: Soucek pp. 144-161

March 20: Catching up/ Summing up

**Essay #1 due in class on March 20**

March 21-March 29: Spring Break

March 30-April 3: The Great Game and the Conquest and colonization of Turkestan

The 1864 Gorchakov Circular [Handout]
Be reading Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*

**Turkestan Album** Compiled by the Russian imperial government, this collection provides an interesting and in many ways a classically orientalist visual depiction of Turkestan in the latter 19th c. Check it out!

For reference: Soucek pp. 177-208

April 6: Discussion: Colonial society

Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform* Ch 1-5

**Primary document Analysis due in class April 8**

April 8-April 13: Revolutionary Russia and Central Asia; Post-war settlements and the early Soviet period.

Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform* pp. 184-301 and Epilogue;
Dmytryshyn, *The Soviet Union and the Middle East, A Documentary Record of Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey*, 1917-1985, pp. 3-15. [BB]
Sultan-Galiev, Methods of Anti-Religious Propaganda Among the Moslems. 1922

[handout]

Soucek, pp. 209-224
April 15: Transformative Strategies: Modernization and Nation-building


April 17: Turksib [film]

April 20: Transformative Strategies: Modernization and Gender
Discussion: Northrop, “Nationalizing Backwardness: Gender, Empire and Uzbek Identity,” in A State of Nations, ed. Suny and Martin [BB]
Kamp, “Femicide as Terrorism: The Case of Uzbekistan’s Unveiling Murders” in Belief and Bloodshed, ed. By James K. Wellman, Jr.[BB]

April 22-24: Post-war society and real existing socialism

Pohl, “The ‘planet of one hundred languages’: ethnic relations and soviet identity in the Virgin Lands” in Peopling the Russian Periphery [BB]
TBA
For reference Soucek, pp. 225-253

Essay #2 due in class on April 24

April 27-29: Afghanistan: Causes and Consequences of the Soviet Invasion

Rubin, The Fragmentation of Afghanistan, Ch 3, [pp. 45-80] [BB]
Politburo documents on the invasion – 2 documents (BB)

May 1-4: Gorbachev, Afghanistan and the Central Asian Republics
Reluctant break up: Authoritarian stability in the newly independent states
TBA
For reference Soucek, pp 254-262; 274-295

May 6 The Ugly Aftermath – Afghanistan in the 1990s and post-9/11
Kabul Transit [film]

May 8: Last Class