

Syllabus

**HIST 236: Between Europe and Asia: Eurasian Spaces and Peoples
(premodern period)**

Professor Marina Mogilner mmogilne@uic.edu
Office hrs: Tuesday and Thursday: 11.00–1:30 and by appointment, 1001 UH
Class: 2.00–3:15 pm, Tuesdays, Thursdays
Location: BSB385

This course covers the medieval and early modern period in the history of Northern Eurasia that witnessed political self-organization of the region along several competing scenarios. Their relative success depended on how well they accommodated people's interaction with the natural environment and their neighbors; the coexistence of nomads with the sedentary population; and the efficiency of different models of statehood. Eventually, several competing regional powers (Muscovy, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and the Crimean Khanate) became incorporated into the modern Russian Empire that reconfigured and reinvented the old historical lands and regions. Their distinctive cultures and political traditions became the source of both dynamism and instability of the Russian Empire as a heterogeneous society struggling with the problem of managing human diversity.

The class uses different textbooks. All assigned pages from the textbooks and other literature can be accessed on blackboard

Requirements: Students will be evaluated on the basis of three short (1-2 pp.) papers, each worth 10% of the grade; a midterm paper and a final paper (5 pages or more) worth 25% each; participation in in-class discussions is worth 10%; and attendance of regular classes—the remaining 10%.

Extensions on papers will be granted only by prior arrangement and only with a legitimate excuse.

Required readings have been posted on Blackboard and are marked in the syllabus.

Important Course Policies:

- 1. Plagiarism and cheating are completely unacceptable.** Plagiarism is defined as the act of taking someone else's written work without proper citation. You must not use someone else's words without putting them in quotation marks and providing a proper reference. If you borrow an idea from another author, please reference it as well. I am

more interested in your original thoughts and in your ability to engage with other people's ideas than in "correct" and "sophisticated" papers that are stolen and thus tell me nothing about your progress in the course. (Keep in mind that I do not define knowledge as regurgitated information.) Plagiarism may result in an "F" for this class. I will treat it as a very serious offense.

2. **Safe Assign.** All papers must be submitted electronically through Safe Assign on Blackboard before the beginning of the class on the due date AND turned in as hard copy in class.
3. **Late papers.** Late papers will be given a lower grade.
4. **Electronic equipment in class.** Please avoid using mobile phones, texting, or looking at text messages during class – I want you to participate in the discussions, to be able to ask questions, and get as much as possible from our meetings. You may use computers to take notes, but only if you are a highly self-disciplined person who cannot be distracted by the Internet.
5. **Attendance.** I expect students to be present in class and ready to contribute to our common work. Many of the visual materials as well as facts and interpretations will be presented only in class and cannot be found in your reading. Your final grade depends partially on your attendance. We will take attendance via a sign-in sheet at the front of the classroom. Please do not sign in for your friends, this can be easily established. If you have a valid reason to miss the class, please contact me and provide an explanation and proof.
6. **Religious holidays**
Students who wish to observe their religious holidays shall notify me by the tenth day of the semester of the date when you will be absent unless the religious holiday is observed on or before the tenth day of the semester. In such cases, you shall notify me at least five days in advance of the date when you will be absent. I will make every reasonable effort to honor the request.
7. **Disability accommodation**
Students with disabilities who require accommodations for access to and/or participation in this course are welcome, but must be registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). You may contact DRC at 312-413-2183 (v) or 773-649-4535 (VP/Relay) and consult the following <http://drc.uic.edu/guide-to-accommodations>.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments:

This course outline is subject to change during the semester. Students are responsible for all adjustments announced in class.

Deadlines

September 11 – first short paper

September 25 – second short paper

October 23 – the mid-term paper is due by noon

November 6 – third short paper is due

December 11 -- the final paper is due by 2 pm

Week 1	Reading: Nancy Shields Kollmann, <i>The Russian Empire, 1450-1801</i> (Oxford UP, 2017), pp. 21-29 Blackboard
August 28, Tuesday	1. Introductions.
August 30, Thursday	2. Imagining Northern Eurasia: Geographical and Social Landscape
Week 2	Reading: Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, Mark D. Steinberg <i>A History of Russia</i> 9 th edition (NY-Oxford: Oxford UP, 2019), pp. 3-9 Blackboard
September 4, Tuesday	3. Where is the state? The Phenomenon of Early Statehood; Nomads and Settler communities
September 6, Thursday	4. Khazar <i>Qaganate</i> and revolutionary change in the nomadic society; Volga Bulgaria and the emergence of early statehood
Week 3	Reading: David Goldfrank, <i>A History of Russia: Peoples, Legends, Events, Force</i> , 1st ed. (Cengage Learning, 2013), pp. 10-13; Medieval Russia's Epics: Chronicles, pp. 11-13; Primary Chronicle, pp. 43-71 Blackboard
FIRST SHORT PAPER DUE SEPTEMBER 11	PLEASE WRITE a 1 to 2-pp PAPER ABOUT THE PHENOMENON OF THE NOMADIC STATE: How would you define the state? Is it a normative or a historically-specific definition? Did ancient nomadic societies have "the state"? Please provide examples supporting your answer. Refer to the lecture materials and the reading. What do you find particularly interesting and/or problematic about ancient Eurasian nomadic cultures and nomadic states?
September 11, Tuesday	5. The Formation of the Rus' Land
September 13, Thursday	6. From the Varangians to the Greeks
Week 4	Reading: David Goldfrank, <i>A History of Russia</i> , pp. 13-37; 42-46. Valerie A. Kivelson, Ronald Grigor Suny, <i>Russian Empires</i> , pp. 27-37 Blackboard
September 18, Tuesday	7. The Dilemma of the Sovereign and the State: Kiev Rus' (11th-12th centuries)

September 20, Thursday	8. State Building in Northern Eurasia (11th–13th centuries): scenarios of power
SECOND SHORT PAPER DUE SEPTEMBER 25	PLEASE WRITE a 1 to 2 pp PAPER ABOUT THE SO-CALLED MYTHOLOGY OF ORIGINE: why the story about the invitation of Varangians turned out to be so important and so controversial? Please consider possible interpretations of this story. Do you know other historical myths and legends about the origin of a state or a dynasty? If so, please describe them briefly and compare their historical and political implications to that of the Varangian story. Why, in your opinion, modern states and rulers search legitimacy in ancient myths of origin?
Week 5	Reading: David Goldfrank, <i>A History of Russia</i> , 56-61 Blackboard The movie “Mongol” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NxoBfbhoEmo
September 25, Tuesday	9. Political Integration of the Steppe: The Mongol Empire
September 27, Thursday	10. The movie “Mongol”: discussion.
Week 6	Reading: David Goldfrank, <i>A History of Russia</i> , pp. 61-74; Valerie A. Kivelson, Ronald Grigor Suny, <i>Russian Empires</i> , pp. 38-43 Blackborad
October 2, Tuesday	11. Rus’ under the Golden Horde
October 4, Thursday	12. Lithuania: The birth of the forest monarchy
Week 7	Reading: Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, Mark D. Steinberg <i>A History of Russia</i> , pp. 54-70 Blackboard
October 9, Tuesday	13. A New Rus’ Land – Hierarchies of Statehood
October 11, Thursday	14. The Great Duchy of Lithuania
Week 8	The movie “Alexander Nevsky”. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-nRev9FvsBU Reading: David Brandenberger, “The Popular Reception of S. M. Eisenstein’s Aleksandr Nevskii,” in Platt and Brandenberger (Eds.), <i>Epic Revisionism</i> :

	<i>Russian History and Literature and Stalinist Propaganda</i> (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 233-252. Blackboard
October 16, Tuesday	Discussion of the movie.
October 18, Thursday Individual consultations (if needed) in my office	Working on your Midterm paper.
THE MIDTERM PAPER IS DUE VIA SAFEASSIGN BY NOON, OCTOBER 23	PLEASE WRITE a 5-page (or more) long PAPER ON ONE OF THE FOLLOWING TOPICS: Contemporary interpretations of premodern history: the movie “Mongol” Or Contemporary interpretations of premodern history: the movie “Alexander Nevsky”
Week 9	Reading: “Orison on the Downfall of Russia” (13 th c.) Blackboard
October 23, Tuesday	15. Golden Horde and Its Rus’ <i>ulus</i> (principality)
October 25, Thursday	16. Principalities of Lithuania, Halych-Volynia and Their Neighbors
Week 10	Read: Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, Mark D. Steinberg <i>A History of Russia</i> , pp. 70-104; Sofony of Riazan, “Zadonshchina” (blackboard); Donald Ostrowsky, “Memoir of a Tatar Prince Ismail ibn Ahmed” Blackboard
October 30, Tuesday	17. The Great Duchy of Muscovy and Its Neighbors; Building the Post-Mongol Sovereignty of Muscovy.
November 1, Thursday	18. Kazan Khanate and the Crises of Vassal Relationships
THIRD SHORT PAPER DUE NOVEMBER 6	PLEASE WRITE a 1 to 2 pp. PAPER THAT ANALYZES “MEMOIR OF A TATAR PRINCE”: Please reconstruct historical context of the Prince’s life; explain why the Tatar Prince moves to Muscovy? What is his view of his past and his

	present situation? Does he approve or disapprove the choices made by his sons and why? What do you think about their life choices? Refer to the reading and lecture material to show how the story reflects the politics between Muscovy and Kazan Khanate.
Week 11	Reading: David Goldfrank, <i>A History of Russia</i> , pp. 118-138; David Brandenberger and Kevin Platt, “Terribly Pragmatic: Rewriting the History of Ivan IV’s Reign, 1937–1956” in Platt and Brandenberger (Eds.), <i>Epic Revisionism: Russian History and Literature and Stalinist Propaganda</i> (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 157-178. Blackboard The movie: “Ivan the Terrible” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJmsV10MTJE (Part 1) and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5g-Ss9BDR4 (Part 2)
November 6, Tuesday	19. Ivan IV and the Problem of Absolute Power
November 8, Thursday	20. Discussion: the historical Ivan IV and the movie.
Week 12	Reading: David Goldfrank, <i>A History of Russia</i> , pp. 139-157
November 13, Tuesday	21. Reformation, Counter-Reformation: The Case of Poland-Lithuania and Its Neighbors
November 15, Thursday	22. The Time of Troubles
Week 13	Reading: David Goldfrank, <i>A History of Russia</i> , pp. 179-186; Christoph Witzenrath, “S.U. Remezov, Cossack Adventurer, and the Opening of Siberia” Blackboard
November 20, Tuesday	23. Integrating Northern Eurasia: Siberia in the Orbit of Muscovy; The Church Schism
November 22, Thursday	Thanksgiving holiday. No class
Week 14	Reading: David Goldfrank, <i>A History of Russia</i> , pp.

	164-177.
November 27, Tuesday	24. Muscovy as a Gun-Powder Empire
November 29, Thursday	25. Peter the Great – The Emergence of Modern Empire: 1
Week 15	Reading: David Goldfrank, <i>A History of Russia</i> , pp. 203-239; Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, Mark D. Steinberg <i>A History of Russia</i> 9 th edition (NY-Oxford: Oxford UP, 2019), pp. 207-209 Blackboard
December 4, Tuesday	26. Peter the Great – The Emergence of Modern Empire: 2
December 6, Thursday	27. Discussion: Evaluation of Peter the Great.
Week 16	
December 7-11 FINAL PAPER IS DUE BY SAFE-ASSIGN BY 2 PM, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11	Please write a 5-page (or more) long paper on one of the topics: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contemporary interpretations of premodern history: the movie “Ivan the Terrible” 2. The Revolution of Peter the Great – competing evaluations. Please provide arguments and examples in support of your position. <p>You can choose any other topic, but it should be approved by me during an individual consultation.</p>

The Writing Center, located in Grant Hall 105, offers one-on-one consultation with student writers who need help developing ideas, or need advice, guidance or additional instruction on any aspects of writing in any class. Tutors are prepared to spend fifty minutes per appointment, and there is no limit to the number of tutoring sessions you can have each semester. Make an appointment and be on time! Bring the paper on which you're working, as well as any related drafts or notes, and information about the assignment. For an appointment, call the Writing Center at (312) 413-2206, or stop by room 105 of Grant Hall. Visit the Writing Center website at www.uic.edu/depts/engl/writing for more information.

Enjoy your holiday season!