

HIST/CEES 435: Russian and Soviet Criminal Justice

Spring 2019
Tel: 6-3141

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About the course

During the past three centuries, criminal punishment regimes in Russia have softened dramatically. Capital punishment, for example, took the lives of thousands annually in the 1700s and now is no longer applied. Russia has a richly deserved reputation for severity of punishment, yet it was the first major country in the region to limit the death penalty application. Until the late 1800s, Russia and Europe were following a similar path of penal reform. From the early 1900s, however, they diverged radically. What happened? This course will survey modern trends in criminality and penology in Russia, with a comparative perspective on Europe. Students will conduct independent research into topics of their choice.

Format of the class

- I. The class will learn about the development of crime and punishment in Russia from Peter the Great (ca. 1700) to the present with consideration of European comparisons.
- II. Drawing upon assigned readings in the first part of the semester, students will gradually narrow their focus to one aspect of Russian criminal justice (for example, a particular crime, punishment, or jurisprudential procedure) and will investigate it in comparative (European) perspective.
- III. The best way to communicate with me is by e-mail; I typically respond very quickly. I am also happy to talk with you before or after class. Finally, we can meet in my office by appointment.
- IV. This course will be entirely paperless. Please turn in all assignments via SafeAssignment.

Required book

Jonathan Daly, *Crime and Punishment in Russia: A Comparative History From Peter The Great To Vladimir Putin* (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2018).

Grading system

Three 5-8 page shorter essays worth 15 points each (3 X 15 = 45); a final 15-page paper worth 45 points; and 10 points for class participation. The highest score for the semester possible: 100 points. Ninety points will be an "A"; 80, a "B"; 70, a "C"; 60, a "D"; anything below 60, an "F."

Attendance is mandatory

Each class period missed without a 4-page make-up essay analyzing the week's reading will result in a deduction of 3 points. Makeup papers can be turned in until May 3.

Class meetings

Week 1: Introduction to course

Week 2: Medieval Crime and Punishment (see Week 2 readings on Blackboard).

Week 3: Eighteenth-Century Russia. Read textbook, pp. 1-32.

Week 4: Nineteenth-Century Russia before the Emancipation. Read textbook, pp. 33-52

Week 5: From Great Reforms to Revolution. Read textbook, pp. 53-78. **First analytical essay due via SafeAssignment at midnight on Sunday.**

Week 6: The Era of Lenin. Read textbook, pp. 79-102

Week 7: The Era of Stalin. Read textbook, pp. 103-124

Week 8: The USSR under “Mature Socialism.” Read textbook, pp. 125-50

Week 9: Criminal Justice since the Collapse of Communism. Read textbook, pp. 151-84. **Second analytical essay due via SafeAssignment at midnight on Sunday.**

Week 10: Outside readings. Students will present at least one scholarly book or article to the class bearing on some aspect of Russian criminal justice.

Week 11: Outside readings. Students will present at least one scholarly comparing some aspect of Russian and European criminal justice.

Week 12: Presenting and discussing your proposal for your final paper to the class. **Third analytical essay due via SafeAssignment at midnight on Sunday.**

Week 13: Developing your bibliography (bring a tentative bibliography secondary sources). Present your research so far (oral presentation to the class).

Week 14: Structuring your paper. Present a tentative outline of your paper to the class.

Week 15: Peer review (bring printed draft of your paper; break out into pairs for on-the-spot editing). Present your final draft to the class. **Final synthetic and analytical essay due via SafeAssignment at midnight on Sunday.**

On the written work

The research reports must be typed (double-spaced) and submitted on SafeAssignment. Proper spelling and grammatical usage are required. Each quotation, as well as every important fact or thought borrowed from a book or an article but from which no actual words are quoted, must still be cited, by means of a footnote, with a reference to the specific page numbers where the author discusses the issue. Use the [Chicago Manual of Style](#). Provide a full bibliography (again using the Chicago Manual of Style/Turabian) for each essay in which you cite more than one book.

On late papers

Papers turned in late will be marked down one point per day for shorter papers and three points per day for the longer (final) paper.

Descriptions of the essays

The first essay will review the assigned readings so far, distilling from them an interpretation of the nature of crime and punishment (criminal justice) in Russia and their evolution over the centuries. Was Russia becoming less despotic, its officials less arbitrary, its legal system more predictable, its citizens more secure in their rights. Be sure to cite page numbers for any evidence or arguments you present.

The second essay will analyze the assigned readings with an eye to understanding how the Bolshevik project influenced the development of criminal justice in Russia after 1917. Be sure to cite page numbers for any evidence or arguments you present.

The third essay will present a historiographical survey on one aspect of Russian criminal justice in comparative European perspective. The purpose is to prepare the ground for an eventual deeper investigation of that aspect by briefly summarizing the main arguments in several scholarly books and articles on the topic. Be sure to cite page numbers and complete bibliographical references.

Final essay: All the preceding essays and course-work should be seen as leading up to, and contributing to, this final paper. Feel free to use any of the text you will have written in the first three papers without attribution. In fifteen pages, you should (a) identify and define the aspect of criminal justice in Russia that you are investigating; (b) present a historiographical overview of scholarly works illuminating this aspect; (c) interpret the development of this aspect of criminal justice in comparison with developments in Europe; (d) draw some conclusions about the specificity of this aspect of criminal justice in Russia. You do not have to investigate your topic across the three

centuries covered by this course, but you should be very mindful of change over time and carefully delineate your timeframe.

I cannot give you a precise number of sources to include in the final essay, since it all depends on the nature of the sources. Rule of thumb: the more the better.

Extra work for graduate students

Graduate students will be expected to write longer, more detailed papers.