

Syllabus

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

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| Professor Marina Mogilner <a href="mailto:mmogilne@uic.edu">mmogilne@uic.edu</a>   |
| Office hrs: Tuesday and Thursday, online 11 am – 2 pm or by appointment. Please email me in advance if you plan to “visit” me during the office hours. Once we agree on the exact time, I will send you a zoom invitation. |
| Class: 9.30–10:45 am, Tuesdays, Thursdays  |
| Location: Online   |

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.

As it is an online course, we will have a few zoom discussions and many individual assignments. Please make sure to familiarize yourself with blackboard and zoom, and keep your course syllabus always ready to check for your next assignment and deadline. Lectures for this class are prerecorded and available on Blackboard.

**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 two short (2 pp.+) papers, each worth 10% of the grade; a midterm paper (25%) and a final paper (5 pages or more) worth 30% of the grade; participation in zoom discussions is worth the remaining 15%.

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 by the date and time indicated in the syllabus.
3. **Late papers.** Late papers will be given a lower grade.
4. **Attendance.** I expect students to be present when we have zoom meetings and actively contribute to our discussions.
5. **Religious holidays**  
Students who wish to observe their religious holidays (if they coincide with our synchronous class sessions) 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.
6. **Disability accommodation**  
Students with disabilities who require accommodations for access to and/or participation in this course are welcome. Please let me know what kind of personal accommodation you may need, and I'll do my best to make your participation in this class comfortable.

You may contact Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 312-413-2183 (v) or 773-649-4535 (VP/Relay) and consult the following <http://drc.uic.edu/guide-to-accommodations>.

**Feel free to contact me on email whenever you need help.**

### Schedule of Topics and Assignments:

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

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| <b>WEEK 1</b>       | Reading: Nancy Shields Kollmann, <i>The Russian Empire, 1450-1801</i> (Oxford UP, 2017), pp. 21-28<br>Blackboard |
| August 25, Tuesday  | 1. Introductions [Zoom meeting].   |
| August 27, Thursday | 2. Imagining Northern Eurasia: Geographical and Social Landscape [lecture, recorded]                             |

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| <b>WEEK 2</b>  | Reading: “New Imperial History of Northern Eurasia” (manuscript), Authored by Ilya Gerasimov, Marina Mogilner, Sergey Glebov, with the collaboration of Alexander Semyonov, pp. 6-22<br>Blackboard   |
| September 1, Tuesday (e.c.)  | 3. Where is the state? The Phenomenon of Early Statehood; Nomads and Settler communities; Khazar <i>Qaganate</i> and revolutionary change in the nomadic society. [lecture, recorded]  |
| September 3, Thursday  | 4. Volga Bulgaria and the emergence of early statehood   |
| <b>WEEK 3</b>  | Reading: Required: David Goldfrank, <i>Medieval Russia’s Epics: Chronicles</i> , pp. 11–13; <i>Primary Chronicle</i> , pp. 43–71;<br><br>Background reading: “New Imperial History of Northern Eurasia” (manuscript), Authored by Ilya Gerasimov, Marina Mogilner, Sergey Glebov, with the collaboration of Alexander Semyonov, pp. 1-32 (available in the WEEK 2 folder)<br><br>Blackboard  |
| <b>FIRST SHORT PAPER DUE</b><br><b>SEPTEMBER 8, 9am via SafeAssign</b> | PLEASE WRITE a 2-pp or more PAPER ABOUT THE PHENOMENON OF THE NOMADIC STATE: How would you define the state? Is it a normative (“the state is...”) or a historically-specific definition (“there is no universally applicable definition of the state, it evolved historically and had different forms depending on a region and a culture?”) 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 8, Tuesday   | 5. The Formation of the Rus’ Land [lecture, recorded]  |
| September 10, Thursday   | 6. From the Varangians to the Greeks [lecture,   |

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|   | recorded]  |
| <b>WEEK 4</b>   | 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 15, Tuesday (e.c.)  | 7. The Dilemma of the Sovereign and the State: Kiev Rus' (11th–12th centuries) [lecture, recorded]   |
| September 17, Thursday  | 8. State Building in Northern Eurasia (11th–13th centuries): scenarios of power<br><br>ZOOM class. In addition to the lecture we will discuss your assignment for second short paper   |
| <b>SECOND SHORT PAPER DUE</b><br><b>SEPTEMBER 22 by 9 am via SafeAssign</b> | PLEASE WRITE a 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? |
| <b>WEEK 5</b>   | Reading: David Goldfrank, <i>A History of Russia</i> , 56-61 Blackboard<br><br>The movie “Mongol” (watch at home)<br><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MxGpFY6OJWg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MxGpFY6OJWg</a>   |
| September 22, Tuesday   | 9. Political Integration of the Steppe: The Mongol Empire [lecture, recorded]  |
| September 24, Thursday  | 10. The movie “Mongol”: discussion. (ZOOM)   |
| <b>WEEK 6</b>   | 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 Blackboard   |
| September 29, Tuesday   | 11. Rus' under the Golden Horde [lecture,  |

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|  | recorded]  |
| October 1, Thursday  | 12. Lithuania: The birth of the forest monarchy<br>[lecture, recorded]   |
| <b>WEEK 7</b>  | Reading: Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, Mark D. Steinberg <i>A History of Russia</i> , pp. 54-70 Blackboard  |
| October 6, Tuesday (e.c.)  | 13. A New Rus' Land – Hierarchies of Statehood<br>[lecture, recorded]  |
| October 8, Thursday  | 14. The Great Duchy of Lithuania<br>[lecture, recorded]  |
| <b>WEEK 8</b>  | The movie "Alexander Nevsky".<br><a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-nRev9FvsBU">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-nRev9FvsBU</a><br><br>Reading: David Brandenberger, "The Popular Reception of S. M. Eisenstein's Aleksandr Nevskii," in Platt and Brandenberger (Eds.), <i>Epic Revisionism: Russian History and Literature and Stalinist Propaganda</i> (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 233-252. Blackboard |
| October 13, Tuesday  | Discussion of the movie. ZOOM  |
| October 15, Thursday<br><br>Individual consultations (if needed) via zoom.<br>Please contact me in advance to schedule a meeting | Working on your Midterm paper.   |
| <b>THE MIDTERM PAPER IS DUE VIA SAFEASSIGN BY 9 PM, OCTOBER 20</b>   | PLEASE WRITE a 5-page (or more) long PAPER ON ONE OF THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:<br><br>Contemporary interpretations of premodern history: the movie "Mongol"<br><br>Or<br><br>Contemporary interpretations of premodern history: the movie "Alexander Nevsky"   |
| <b>WEEK 9</b>  | Reading: "Orison on the Downfall of Russia" (13 <sup>th</sup> c.)<br>Blackboard  |

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| October 20, Tuesday (e.c.) | 15. Golden Horde and Its Rus' <i>ulus</i> (principality)<br><br>[lecture, recorded]   |
| OCTOBER 22, THURSDAY       | 16. Principalities of Lithuania, Halych-Volynia and Their Neighbors<br><br>[lecture, recorded]  |
| <b>WEEK 10</b>             | 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 27, Tuesday        | 17. The Great Duchy of Muscovy and Its Neighbors; Building the Post-Mongol Sovereignty of Muscovy.  |
| October 29, Thursday       | 18. Kazan Khanate and the Crises of Vassal Relationships. Discussion of the assigned historical sources. ZOOM meeting   |
| <b>WEEK 11</b>             | 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, 1547-1584" 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<br><br>The movie: "Ivan the Terrible"<br><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5EWgWEcoxM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i5EWgWEcoxM</a><br>(Part 1) |
| November 3, Tuesday (e.c.) | 19. Ivan IV and the Problem of Absolute Power<br><br>[lecture, recorded]  |
| November 5, Thursday       | 20. Discussion: the historical Ivan IV and the movie. ZOOM meeting  |
| <b>WEEK 12</b>             | Reading: David Goldfrank, <i>A History of Russia</i> , pp. 139-157  |

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| November 10, Tuesday        | 21. Reformation, Counter-Reformation: The Case of Poland-Lithuania and Its Neighbors<br><br>[lecture, recorded]  |
| November 12, Thursday       | 22. The Time of Troubles<br><br>[lecture, recorded]  |
| <b>WEEK 13</b>              | Reading: David Goldfrank, <i>A History of Russia</i> , pp. 179-186; Christoph Witzernath, "S.U. Remezov, Cossack Adventurer, and the Opening of Siberia"<br>Blackboard   |
| November 17, Tuesday (e.c.) | 23. Integrating Northern Eurasia: Siberia in the Orbit of Muscovy; The Church Schism<br><br>[lecture, recorded]  |
| November 19, Thursday       | 24. Muscovy as a Gun-Powder Empire<br><br>[lecture, recorded]  |
| <b>WEEK 14</b>              | Reading: David Goldfrank, <i>A History of Russia</i> , pp. 164-177.  |
| November 24, Tuesday        | 1. Peter the Great – The Emergence of Modern Empire: 1<br><br>[lecture, recorded]  |
| November 26, Thursday       | 2. <b>Thanksgiving holiday. No class</b>   |
| <b>WEEK 15</b>              | 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 <sup>th</sup> edition (NY-Oxford: Oxford UP, 2019), pp. 207-209 Blackboard |
| December 1, Tuesday (e.c.)  | 26. Peter the Great – The Emergence of Modern Empire: 2 [lecture, recorded]  |
| December 3, Thursday        | 27. Final Discussion: Evaluating of Peter the Great.<br><br>Q&A about the final paper ZOOM   |
| <b>WEEK 16</b>              |  |

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| <p>December 7-10</p> <p><b>FINAL PAPER IS DUE BY SAFE-<br/>ASSIGN BY 2 PM, THURSDAY,<br/>DECEMBER 10</b></p> | <p>Please write a 5-page (or more) long paper on one of the topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Contemporary interpretations of premodern history: the movie “Ivan the Terrible”</li><li>2. The Revolution of Peter the Great – competing evaluations. Please provide arguments and examples in support of your position.</li></ol> <p>You can choose any other topic, but it should be approved by me during an individual consultation.</p> |
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**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. You can find out how do they work online and schedule an appointment. Show tutors 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](http://www.uic.edu/depts/engl/writing) for more information.

Enjoy your holiday season!