

SOCIETIES AND CULTURES OF EURASIA

This course offers a general ethnographic overview to the diverse cultures of the former Soviet Union, concentrating particularly on the non-European peoples of the Caucasus, Central Asia and Kazakhstan, Siberia, and the Far North. Other non-Russian ethnic groups within Russia and Ukraine, such as the Crimean Tatars and peoples of the Middle Volga, also will be considered. Changes in Russian identity, particularly for Russians still living in non-Russian Republics of the former Soviet Union, will be discussed at the end of the class. Larger and smaller ethnic groups within the European part of the Soviet Union (including Moldovans, Belorussians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Russian Jews, etc.), which are not covered directly in the readings or class lectures, may be investigated individually by students as possible subjects for their final papers. The course will review how the 'traditional' cultures in the covered areas changed during the 70 years of Soviet rule and will examine the problems they face today associated with the dissolution of the USSR and their newly established independence or greatly enhanced autonomy. Current ethnic conflicts, such as those burning or simmering in Chechnya/Russia, Georgia/Abkhazia and Armenia/Azerbaijan, and the rise of different Islamic militant movements in Central Asia that are connected with exploitation of natural resources (gas, oil) and political developments in Afghanistan and Pakistan to the south, also will be discussed.

The course, however, is primarily an introduction to the societies and cultures of the vast area encompassed by post-Soviet space (or the Commonwealth of Independent States – SNG) and is not primarily focussed on contemporary political developments, nor structured around such controversies. The distinctive features of Soviet ethnography also will be introduced, including its inevitable political utilization by the Soviet state. Emphasis throughout will be placed on the history, literature, and reconstruction of the 'traditional lifeways' of the diverse peoples of Eurasia.

A mid-term essay quiz will be given on October 24th, and, possibly an end-of-the-term essay quiz may be given during the last class on December 12th. There is no final exam. Every student will be asked to make a short c. 10 minute oral presentation on a topic of her own choice (in consultation with Mr. Kohl) in the latter part of the course after the fall break (cf. Course Outline below). A final paper, due at the end of the Examination Period (December 21st) is required, and it is expected that students will continue to research and write on the same topic that they presented orally in class, though it is possible to write on another approved topic. The final grade for the course will be calculated roughly as follows:

- 1) Class Participation and Oral Presentation – 20%**
- 2) Mid-Term (and possible end-of-term) Quiz – 30%**
- 3) Final Paper – 50%**

Students are urged to consult with Mr. Kohl early in the term for selection of a research/final paper topic (office hours: Tuesdays and Fridays 3:00- 4:00 PM; Pendleton East 345; extension 2146).

**ABBREVIATIONS FOR BOOKS LISTED IN COURSE OUTLINE OR FOR
GENERAL REFERENCE INFORMATION**

The double asterisk** entries refer to the books NSNP and NPSSS (below). ** NSNP is a slightly revised and updated edition of NPSSS; if NSNP is unavailable, the corresponding chapters in NPSSS may substitute for those in NSNP)

BOOKS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AT THE BOOKSTORE

EON – Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union by F. Hirsch

AN - Ali and Nino by K. Said

CLWTS – Chechnya: Life in a War-Torn Society by V. Tishkov

TNMST - Tribal Nation: the Making of Soviet Turkmenistan by A.L. Edgar

MEW – Museum at the End of the World: Encounters in the Russian Far East by A. Bloch and L. Kendall

OTHER BOOKS LISTED IN COURSE OUTLINE

- ROP - The Revenge of the Past by R.G. Suny
- IIF - Identity in Formation: the Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad by D. Laitin
- NSNP** - New States, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations by I. Bremmer and R. Taras**
- NPSSS** - Nations and Politics in the Soviet Successor States ed. by I. Bremmer and R. Taras **
- AAE – The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939 by T. Martin
- NGG – The New Great Game: Blood and Oil in Central Asia by L. Kleveman
- ENC - Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict In and After the Soviet Union: The Mind Aflame by V. Tishkov
- TE - The Tenacity of Ethnicity by M. Balzer
- JRMI - Jihad: the Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia by A. Rashid
- AFBM - At the Foot of the Blue Mountains: Stories by Tajik Authors
- ABAI - Abai by M. Auezov
- LTA - Looking Toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History by R.G. Suny
- CARR - Central Asians Under Russian Rule: A Study in Culture Change by E. Bacon
- PSN- Pride of Small Nations by S. Goldenberg
- CI - Culture Incarnate: Native Anthropology from Russia by M.M. Balzer
- MGN - The Making of the Georgian Nation by R. G. Suny
- RIN - The Revolution in the North: Soviet Ethnography and Nationality Policy by K. E. Kuoljok
- AM - Arctic Mirrors by Y. Slezkine
- ISE - Introduction to Soviet Ethnography, ed. by S.P. and E. Dunn
- TNSC - Transcaucasia: Nationalism and Social Change, ed. by R.G. Suny
- SMS - The Soviet Multinational State: Readings and Documents, ed. by M.B. Olcott
- NFSPS - The Nationalities Factor in Soviet Politics and Society, ed. by L. Hajda and M. Beissinger
- VPMIPT – The Value of the Past: Myths, Identity and Politics in Transcaucasia by V. Shnirelman

COURSE OUTLINE

I. Introduction (through September 15th): Ethnic Diversity throughout the Former Soviet Union: An Overview and Problems of Objectivity; Soviet Nationalities Policy: The

‘Affirmative Action Empire’ or ‘State-Sponsored Evolutionism’; the Bolsheviks and the Ethnographers: maintaining the Empire without making it a ‘prison of peoples’

A. Week 1: Sept. 5th and 8th – view on your own full-length video – “Prisoner of the Mountains” (on reserve for course – Knapp Center, Clapp Library) for discussion in class on September 12th

B. Week 2: Sept. 12th and 15th

Readings: EON – Introduction, Part One, pp. 1-98

Recommended readings:

ROP – chapters 1-4

ENC- part 1, pp. 1-114

"The Crisis in Soviet Ethnography" by V.A. Tishkov, Current Anthropology, vol. 33, no. 4, August-October 1992

II. Peoples of the Caucasus (Weeks 3-6, readings through October 13th)

A. Week 3: Ethnic stereotyping and an overview to the history of the Caucasus, Reading for Sept. 19th and 22nd: AN – entire

B. Week 4: Sept. 26th and 29th – Georgia and Armenia;

Readings: NSNP - article by Stephen Jones, chap. 14, "Georgia: the Trauma of Statehood"; NSNP - chap. 13, by N. Dudwick, "Armenia: Paradise Lost?"

C. Week 5: Oct. 3rd and 6th – Azerbaijan and the Peoples of the Northern Caucasus;

Readings: NSNP - chap. 12 by S. Hunter, "Azerbaijan: Searching for New Neighbors; "The North Caucasus: The National Situation and Ethnic Problems" by Anchabadze, Arutiunov, and Volkova in Anthropology and Archeology of Eurasia, vol. 31, no. 4, spring 1993 (Xerox on reserve)

C. Week 6: October 13th - the Chechen conflict;

Reading: CLWTS – entire

Recommended readings for Part II Peoples of the Caucasus:

PSN – entire

NGG – chapters 1-5: introduction and chapters on Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Chechnya

NFSPS - chap. 10 by R.G. Suny

"Crisis and Response in Soviet Nationality Policy: the Case of Abkhazia" by D. Slider in Central Asian Survey, vol. 4, no. 4 (xerox)

LTA – entire

TNSC - article by Swietochowski

short stories of F. Iskander in Sandro of Chegem (I) and The Gospel

According to Chegem (II):

L.N. Tolstoy - Prisoners of the Caucasus and Hadji Murat

Films: Return to Samashki by T. Goltz;

III. Ethnography and the Making of Nations under the Soviets (Week

7 through Oct. 20th): cultural technologies of rule: census, maps, and museums; initial attempts at nation-making prior to World War II; the advent of the Nazi threat;
Reading: EON – Part Two, pp. 101-227, chapter 6, pp. 231-272

MID-TERM ESSAY QUIZ GIVEN WEEK 8 (October 24th)

IV. Peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan (Weeks 8-11)

- A. Week 9 (Oct. 27th and 31st) – Turkmenistan in Soviet Times and Today; 1st Student Oral Presentation(s): October 31st
Readings: TNMST – entire
- B. Week 10 (Nov. 3rd and 10th): Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan:
Readings: NSNP – chaps. 15 and 19, “Jamila” and "Goodbye Gyulsary" in Tales of the Steppes by C. Aitmatov (xerox); 2nd student oral presentation (s): Nov. 10th
- C. Week 10-11 (Nov. 14^t and 17th): Uzbekistan and Tadjikistan:
Readings: NSNP - chaps. 16-18; AFBM - The Road to Bukhara by S. Aini; 3rd student oral presentation (s): November 17th

Recommended readings:

NGG – chapters on Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan
JRMI –entire
ENC – chapters 6-7
SMS - pp. 143-163
ABAI - entire

V. The Peoples of the North and Siberia (Weeks 12-13)

- A. Week 12 (Nov. 21st and 28th)
Reading: MEW – entire; 4th student oral presentation (s): November 28th
- B. Week 13 (Dec. 1st) readings: NSNP - chap. 5, article by G. Fondahl, "Siberia: Assimilation and Its Discontents"; film Dersu Uzala (view on your own - full-length video – on reserve Knapp Center, Clapp Library; 5th student oral presentation (s): Dec. 1st

Recommended readings:

TE –entire
AM
RIN

NQSU - chaps. 18-19

ISE - vol. 1, article by A.V. Smoliak on the Nivkhi of the Amur Sound

VI. Russians outside Russia and other Peoples of European Russia, Ukraine, and the Baltics); Governing Nationalities and Ethnic Conflicts in Post-Soviet Space; An Assessment of the Making of Nations under Soviet Rule (Weeks 14/15 – December 5th, 8th and 12th)

A. Peoples of the Middle Volga and Russians outside Russia: Russian identity in a post-imperial (?) age
Reading: NSNP – chap. 4, by A. Frank and R. Wixman, "The Middle Volga: Exploring the Limits of Sovereignty"

B. The Soviet Experiment in Nation-Building and Its Legacy
Reading: EON – Epilogue, pp. 309-325

Recommended readings:

ENC - part 3 and Conclusion

CI - article by R.G. Kuzeev and S.F. Mukhamediarov, "Ethnogenesis and Ethnocultural Relationships of the Turkic Peoples of the Volga and Urals: Problems and Tasks"

NSNP - chaps. 6-11

POSSIBLE (?) END-OF-TERM QUIZ – DECEMBER 12th