

**Field Research Course – Russia
The World Through Russian Eyes
Paul Robinson
Summer 2020**

COURSE OUTLINE

OFFICIAL COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will study Russian national identity, the nature of the Russian political system, Russian views on current international affairs, and Russian foreign policy. It will examine questions such as: 'Do Russians consider their country to be part of Europe, part of Asia, Eurasian, or something different?' 'Where do Russians consider that their future lies?' 'How do Russians explain the rising tensions with the Western world?' 'What solutions do Russians see for current international problems?' 'What are the main vectors in Russian foreign policy, and what factors and institutions shape it?'

GENERAL COURSE OBJECTIVES

The general objective of the course is to study Russians' perception of the world and of their own country's place in it, as well as to examine how Russians are likely to respond to Western policies vis-à-vis their country.

SPECIFIC COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the end of the course, students should have acquired a basic knowledge of:

- Russian and Soviet history, and the importance of competing versions of historical memory.
- Contested versions of Russian national identity.
- The Russian political system.
- The Russian economic system.
- Issues contributing to current Russian-Western tensions.

ASSESSMENT METHODS

Prior to the start of the course, students will read the following 2 books, and on the first day of class they will submit a 1500 word essay, reflecting on what they have learnt from them:

John Thompson & Christopher War, *Russia: A Historical Introduction from Kievan Rus' to the Present*, 8th edition (Routledge, 2018)
Edwin Bacon, *Inside Russian Politics* (Biteback, 2017)

While in Russia, each day students will submit a one-page think-piece reflecting on the day's activities and their implications. (10 x 5%, total 50%). Submissions should be made by email by midnight of the day in question.

Within a week of the completion of the course, students will submit their final research reports (2,000 words) by email to Professor Robinson. Students will analyze how the Russian Federation would be likely to react to the policy recommendations made in the following report: RAND Corporation, *Extending Russia*, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR3063.html;

Policy on language quality and late submissions

Class attendance is necessary to successfully complete this course.

You will also be judged on your writing abilities. It is recommended to take the appropriate measures to avoid mistakes such as spelling, syntax, punctuation, inappropriate use of terms, etc. You may be penalized up to 15%, to the professor's discretion.

Late submissions are not tolerated. Exceptions are made only for illness or other serious situations deemed as such by the professor. *There will be a penalty for late submissions* - A penalty of 5% will be given for each subsequent day following the due date (weekends not included). University regulations require all absences from exams and all late submissions due to illness to be supported by a medical certificate.

We suggest that you advise your professor as early as possible if a religious holiday or a religious event will force you to be absent during an evaluation.

The University of Ottawa does not tolerate any form of sexual violence. Sexual violence refers to any act of a sexual nature committed without consent, such as rape, sexual harassment or online harassment. The University, as well as student and employee associations, offers a full range of resources and services allowing members of our community to receive information and confidential assistance and providing for a procedure to report an incident or make a complaint. For more information, visit www.uOttawa.ca/sexual-violence-support-and-prevention

SCHEDULE

Introduction to Russian history, culture and politics (held at University of Ottawa)

Wednesday 13 May: Introduction to Russian history and national identity

0900-1200: Discussion of key moments in Russian history, and of Russian national identity between east and west.

1200-1300: Lunch break

1300-1600: WWII in Russian historical memory. Film *Come and See*.

Readings:

Nikolai Leskov, *Lefty: Being the Tale of Cross-Eyed Lefty of Tula and the Steel Flea*.

Aleksandr Blok, 'The Scythians'.

Vladimir Solovyov, 'Pan-Mongolism'.

Thursday 14 May: Introduction to Russian culture

0900-1200: Discussion of religion, philosophy, art, literature, music, film, popular culture

1200-1300: Lunch with Russian guests

1300-1430: Continuation of discussion.

Friday 15 May: Introduction to the Russian economy

0900-1200: Discussion of structure of Russian economy, Russian economic policy, and sanctions.

1200-1300: Lunch break

1300-1500: Guest panel: doing business in Russia. Gilles Breton, John Helmer, Lou Naumovski.

Reading:

Richard Sakwa, *Russia's Futures* (Polity, 2019), Chapter 3, pp. 89-115.

Monday 18 May: Introduction to Russian politics

Reading:

Richard Sakwa, *Russia's Futures* (Polity, 2019), Chapter 2, pp. 48-88.

0900-1200: Discussion of Russian constitution, models of Russian politics, and Russian media.

Evening: Fly to Russia

Moscow section of course

Tuesday 19 May

Arrive Moscow.

Wednesday 20 May

Meet at Faculty of Global Processes, Moscow State University (MSU)

Morning: Opening session of Globalistics Congress, MSU

Afternoon: Tour of MSU

Thursday 21 May

Globalistic Congress, MSU

Friday 22 May

Globalistics Congress, MSU

Evening: Train to Vladimir

Saturday 23 May

Visit Suzdal

Sunday 24 May

Morning: Visit Vladimir

Afternoon: Return to Moscow

Monday 25 May

Morning: Seminar, Moscow State University

Afternoon: Walking tour, downtown Moscow and Kremlin

Evening: Dinner with Russian diplomat (TBC).

Tuesday 26 May

Morning: Seminar, Moscow State University

Afternoon: Field trip (e.g. Russian State Duma)

Wednesday 27 May

Field trips (e.g. Museum of the Great Patriotic War)

Thursday 28 May

Field trips (e.g. New Tretyakov Gallery)

Evening: Dinner with journalist (Fred Weir, *Christian Science Monitor* - TBC)

Friday 29 May

Individual research

Saturday 30 May

Field trip: Sergiev Posad

Sunday 31 May

Free day

Monday 1 June

Morning: VDNKh and Cosmonautics museum

Evening: Train to St Petersburg

St Petersburg section of course

Tuesday 2 June

Morning: Piskarovskoe cemetery

Afternoon: Peterhof

Wednesday 3 June

St Petersburg Economic Forum

Thursday 4 June

Course ends