

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. On March 14th in the evening there will be a special lecture (required for the course) by Prof. Terry Martin from Harvard, which will focus principally on Ukraine, on March 14th; and 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 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, and emphasis will be placed on the history, literature, and reconstruction of the ‘traditional lifeways’ of these diverse peoples.

A mid-term essay quiz will be given on March 18th, and an end-of-the-term essay quiz will be given during the last class on May 10th. 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 spring break. A final paper, due at the end of the Examination Period (May 23rd), 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 – 15%**
- 2) Mid-Term and Final Quiz – 25% each**
- 3) Final Paper – 35%**

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 2:45-4:15 PM; Pendleton East 345; extension 2146).

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

(Those marked with a single asterisk are available for purchase in the bookstore. The double asterisk refers 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)

- ROP* - The Revenge of the Past by R.G. Suny
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
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
RSE - Rethinking the Soviet Experience: Politics and History Since 1917 by S.F. Cohen
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
KAZ - The Kazakhs by M.B. Olcott
MGN - The Making of the Georgian Nation by R. G. Suny
TWC - The Warmest Country: Stories by Armenian Writers
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
 GPG – “Georgia’s Pankisi Gorge: An Ethnographic Survey” by S. Kurtsikidze and V. Chikovani

COURSE OUTLINE

I. Introduction (through February 11th): Ethnic Diversity throughout the Former Soviet Union: An Overview and Problems of Objectivity; Soviet Nationalities Policy: The Affirmative Action Empire

- A. Week 1: February 1st – guest lecture Dr. Elena Campbell, Davis Center, Harvard University; February 4th – view on your own full-length video – “Prisoner of the Mountains” (on reserve for course – Knapp Center, Clapp Library)
- B. Week 2: February 8th – discussion of “Prisoner of the Mountains” and reading: ROP – chapters 1-2; February 11th – reading: ROP – chapters 3-4

Recommended readings:

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 March 4th)

- A. Week 3: Ethnic stereotyping and an overview to the history of the Caucasus, reading for Feb. 15th and 18th: AN – entire
- B. Week 4: Feb. 22nd – Georgia/Armenia; readings:
 NSNP - article by Stephen Jones, chap. 14, "Georgia: the Trauma of Statehood"; NSNP - chap. 13, by N. Dudwick, "Armenia: Paradise Lost?"
 Feb. 25th – Azerbaijan/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 5 (March 1st and 4th): the Chechen conflict; reading: CLWTC - entire

Recommended readings:

PSN – entire

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

NFSPS - chap. 10 by R.G. Suny

"The Unbearable Freedom: Georgia on the Precipice" by S. Jones (xerox - to be distributed)

PCEO - "Abkhazians: Growing in Age and Wisdom" by Paula Garb

"The Bear in the Caucasus: From Georgian chaos, Russian order" by M. Glennly
(xerox - to be distributed; from Harper's, March

GPG

"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

NSNP - chap. 3, by J. Ormrod "The North Caucasus: Confederation in Conflict"

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

According to Chegem (II):

"Sandro of Chegem" (I)

"The Story of the Prayer Tree" (I)

"Belshazaar's Feast" (I)

"Uncle Sandro and the End of the Goatibex" (II)

"Keeper of the Mountains; or The People Know Their

Heroes" (II)

TWC - stories by Bitov, Mahari (pp. 12-29), Avakian (pp. 95-109), and Ovsepian

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

Films: Return to Samashki by T. Goltz;

III. Peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan (weeks 6-9), readings through April 8th); 1st Student Oral Presentations, week of April 5th

A. Week 6 (March 8 and 11th) – Turkmenistan in Soviet Times and Today;
readings: TNMST – entire

MARCH 14TH – LECTURE BY PROF. TERRY MARTIN, HARVARD: required public lecture 7:30 PM

B. Week 7 (March 15th) – review session for mid-term

MID-TERM QUIZ GIVEN MARCH 18TH

C. Week 8 (March 29th and April 1st): Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan: readings:
NSNP – chaps. 15 and 19, "Jamila" and "Goodbye Gyulsary" in Tales of the Steppes by C. Aitmatov (xerox)

D. Week 9 (April 5th and April 8th): Uzbekistan and Tadjikistan: readings: NSNP - chaps. 16-18 (check); AFBM - The Road to Bukhara by S. Aini; 1st student oral presentations (April 8th)

Recommended readings:

NGG – chapters on Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan

KAZ - parts II and III

JRMI –entire

ENC – chapters 6-7

SMS - pp. 143-163

ABAI - entire

IV. The Peoples of the North and Siberia (weeks 10-11), readings through April 22nd); 2nd and 3rd student oral presentations

A. Week 10 (April 12th and 15th) readings: MEW - entire

B. Week 11 (April 22nd) readings: NSNP - chap. 5, article by G.

Fondahl, "Siberia: Assimilation and Its Discontents";

Dersu Uzala (view on your own - full-length video – on reserve Knapp Center, Clapp Library)

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

V. Russians outside Russia and other Peoples of Russia, Ukraine, and the Baltics); Governing Nationalities and Ethnic Conflicts in Post-Soviet Space (weeks 11 - 13, readings through May 10th); 4th and 5th student oral presentations

A. April 26th – Peoples of the Middle Volga - reading: NSNP – chap. 4, by A. Frank and R. Wixman, "The Middle Volga: Exploring the Limits of Sovereignty"

B. Week 12 (April 29th and May 3rd); readings: IIF – entire

C. May 6th – review class for final quiz; final student oral presentations

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

Urals: Problems and Tasks"

NSNP - chaps. 6-11

Volga and

END-OF-TERM QUIZ – MAY 10TH