

## The History of Imperial Russia, 1682-1917

Marquis de Custine, in one of his famous aphorisms, said of Russia: “The Russian government could never have been established elsewhere than in Russia; and the Russians would never have become what they are under a government differing from that which exists among them.” Known for his exotic, though often keen, observations of Russia, de Custine illuminated the two main questions we are going to explore in this class. First, what was the relationship between the Tsar and his people? Second, to what extent did this relationship make Russia’s tortuous path to modernity unique?

To answer these questions, this class will introduce students to the political, social, cultural and economic history of Imperial Russia in regard to its quest to become a “modern” nation. Class themes include the personalities and identities of its rulers and subjects, reform and revolution, empire and nationality, everyday life, intellectual and popular culture, and reactions and responses to social, economic and political change.

### Required Texts:

Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552-1917*

### Class Schedule

#### Part One: Petrine Russia, 1682-1725

##### **Introduction: The Anatomy of an Empire**

Hosking, Introduction and Part 1

##### **Peter the Great: Person and Personality**

Hosking, Part 2, Chapter 1

##### **Peter’s Modernization of Russia from Above**

Hosking, Part 2, Chapter 2

##### **Discussion: Evaluating Peter’s Reforms**

The Revolt and Punishment of the Streltsi in 1698: An Eyewitness Account, 1698

Petrine Reform Legislation

Peter’s Relations with his Son Alexei

Pososhkov on Poverty and Wealth

M. M. Shcherbatov, “The Pace of Russia’s Modernization”

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#### Part Two: Catherine the Great, 1725-1796

## **Palace Coups, Empreses, and Catherine the Great**

Hosking, Part 2, Chapter 3

## **Legalizing Russia**

Hosking, Part 3, Chapter 1

## **Intellectual and Social Rebellion**

Hosking, Part 3, Chapter 3

## **Discussion: Understanding the Palace coup**

A Palace Revolution

Elizabeth Seizes the Throne

The Empress Elizabeth

Catherine's Coup d'Etat: Report of the British Ambassador

Catherine's Coup: Her Own Account

Catherine's Accession Manifesto

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## **Part Three: Alexander I, 1801-1825**

### **The Trials of Alexander I**

Hosking, Part 2, Chapter 4

### **Discussion: Making Sense of the Decembrist Revolt**

The Problem of Succession

The Decembrist Movement

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## **Part Four: Nicholiaevan Russia, 1825-1855**

### **Nicholas I and Official Nationality, 1825-1855**

Hosking, Part 3, Chapter 4 and Chapter 7

### **The Birth of the Russian Intelligentsia**

Hosking, Part 3, Chapter 6

### **Society under Nicholas I**

Hosking Part 3, Chapter 3 and Chapter 5

### **Discussion: Colonial Encounters in the Caucasus**

Muhammad Tahir al-Qarakhi, *The Shining of Dagbestani Swords in Certain Campaigns Of Shamil.*

Lev Tolstoi, *Hadji Murat.*

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## Part Five: The Great Reforms

### Alexander II, the Tsar Liberator

Hosking Part 4, Chapter 1

### The Great Reforms

### Discussion: How Peasants Understood Emancipation

Daniel Field, *Rebels in the Name of the Tsar*, selections.

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## Part Six: The Revolutionary Movement, 1860-1890

### Nihilism and Terrorism

Hosking Part 4, Chapter 2

### Populism and Marxism

### Discussion: Examining Russian Terrorism

David Footman, Killing an Emperor

Pyotr Tkachev, Program of the Journal "The Tocsin"

Vera Figner, Memoirs of a Revolutionist

Catechism of the Revolutionary, 1868

Demands of Narodnaia Volia

Nikolai Morozov, "The Terrorist Struggle," 1880

G. Tarnovskii, "Terrorism and Routine," 1880

Serge Stepniak-Kravchinski, "Underground Russia," 1883

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## Part Seven: Dilemmas of Modernization, 1881-1905

### Question of Modernization under Alexander III

Hosking, Part 4, Chapter 3

### The Revolution of 1905 and Russian Constitutionalism

Hosking Part 4, Chapter 4

### Separate Lives: the Bourgeoisie, the Working Class and the Peasantry

### Discussion: The Culture of Town and County

P. Timofeev, "What a Factory Worker Lives By"

Olga Semyonova Tian-Shanskaia, *Village Life in Late Tsarist Russia*, 22-115

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## Part Eight: Reaction, War and Revolution, 1905-1917

### The World of Nicholas II

Hosking Part 4, Chapter 5

### World War One and the Last Tsar

## **Dual Revolutions of 1917—Center and Periphery**

Hosking Part 4, Chapter 6

### **Discussion: Understanding the Russian Revolution**

“Documents of the Okhrana on the February Days”, 33-39.

“Letter from Alexandra to Nicholas, 24 February 1917”, 69-71.

“Telegram from Mikhail Rodzianko . . .”, 76-77.

“Protocol of talks Between Deputies . . .”, 96-100.

“Nicholas II’s Manifesto of abdication from the Throne”, 100-101.

**Click here to Download the Above Documents**

“Letter to Minister of Justice Aleksandr Kerensky,” 85-91.

“Letter to Izvestiia”, 128-129.

“Letter to Chkheidze . . .”, 110-114.

**Click here to Download the Above Documents**

V. V. Shulgin, “The Waning Days of the ‘Constitution,’” 138-166.