



# HIST 14100 1, REES 26015 1, SOSC 24200 1 - Introduction to Russian Civilization III - Instructor(s) - Anna Aizman

Project Title: **College Course Feedback - Spring 2024**

Number Enrolled: **24**

Number of Responses: **17**

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## Report Comments

Opinions expressed in these evaluations are those of students enrolled in the specific course and do not represent the University.

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Creation Date: **Thursday, July 11, 2024**

**What are the most important things that you learned in this course? Please reflect on the knowledge and skills you gained.**

Comments
Art and anarchism in Russia and (by the end) elsewhere.
I am, in general, strongly opposed to anarchism and anarchist ideas. Nevertheless, this class gave me the opportunity to engage with them in an intellectually honest way; I would not say that I have been convinced of their correctness, but, going forward, my hope is that this class will have helped me better understand why anarchists think what they think and where their intellectual tradition comes from. Thus, I believe I am more sympathetic towards them now.
I learned about art, and I learned about an anarchism. This was certainly an interesting set of topics for a course listed as the conclusion of the Russian Civilization sequence (as we looked at thinkers and stories from people all around the world), but it was very cool to see how its all connected.
I really enjoyed the readings for this course. Both fictional stories and primary accounts of historical events I found to be very informative, interesting, and generally enjoyed discussing them.
I learned how to read, analyze, and interpret complicated historical texts.
I believe I learned how to much better interpret dense texts and write concise but effective texts concerning their main ideas.
Anarchism.
Anarchist ideas and movements in various media: artworks, poetry, literature, manifestos, etc.. The role of anarchism in history.
A history of Russian anarchism and anarchist thought from the late 19th century through to the present with some side tangents about other anarchist and protests movements on the more contemporary side.
I learned a ton about anarchism and its relationship to communism, america, and the visual, audio, and literal arts. I knew very little about anarchism and professor Aizman did a really good job laying out the ideologies principles, their relationship to historical events, and how these principles evolved and can be seen in political movements today. I also learned more about how to read and write analytically.
The fundamentals of classical anarchist thought and its perseverance through Russian and Western culture through the arts.
This course covered historical material focused on anarchism in Russia (and abroad) with a focus on its philosophical roots and literary/artistic dimensions. Many of the readings were pieces of literature produced by anarchist writers along with some artwork of varying genres. In light of this, I felt like I became better at analyzing creative sources and connecting their meaning to the tenants of anarchist thought. The course built on the two prior Russian Civilization courses in terms of requisite historical knowledge but obviously differed quite a lot in scope.
Anarchist and revolutionary movements in Russia—analyzed through the lens of art and literature—and modern—day applications to the political sphere in the US.
This class changed the way I think. I have never been left with so many deep questions about humanity and the historical nature of humanity. In this class, we had writing assignments that differed from what I was used to. This was challenging at first but an important skill to learn. To succinctly write an interpretation of a quote as well as its historical context is not an easy task but one I feel I somewhat got the hang of.
I learnt a lot about anarchism and revolutionary movements in Soviet Union by reading very interesting texts by Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Nestor Makhno, Emma Goldman and many many more interesting figures of 19th and 20th centuries.

**Describe how aspects of this course (lectures, discussions, labs, assignments, etc.) contributed to your learning.**

Comments
Lectures and readings were the big things.
I really liked the lectures; Professor Aizman does a great job of weaving art and literature into the historical tradition. Discussions were alright, although I felt they sometimes broke up the flow of the lecture; nevertheless, I'm sure they are necessary to the learning process. The readings were generally quite good, although we often had to read extremely short excerpts from larger works, which left me wondering what their place was in the overall text.
There were 3 source interpretations and a final project. These were all not super high time commitment to do, and were definitely more on the fun side rather than feeling like tedious work I've seen in previous Civ classes.
I really enjoyed the readings. We read a wide-range of historical documents that allowed me to really gain a deeper understanding of the topics.
The various methods of interaction in the class (Group discussion, source interpretations, etc) were very helpful in providing a varied experience to learn
The lectures were helpful.
The course mostly consisted of lectures and readings; I think both contributed roughly equally, perhaps slightly skewed towards the readings just because we spent so much class time just recapping the readings / talking about them in small groups. I know the professor showed us studies showing that we would retain our learning better if we did group work in class, but I would have preferred perhaps slightly more lecturing as she was clearly knowledgeable.
The lectures were really informative and I felt that the readings were really selected well, I could often see topics discussed in class in the readers and vice versa! The source interpretations really pushed me to improve my writing and the in-class notebook assignment made sure that I took notes
Lectures were discussion-focused, whether in small groups or as a class. Participation was very important, as it incentivized students to read the material. The aspects I enjoyed most were the free-writes and source interpretations. The free writing allowed me to be creative, which was a refreshing break from analytical, historical writing. Nevertheless, the source interpretations were where I learned the most. They challenged your understanding of concepts and their relevance in a historical context.
Classes were a mix of lecture and discussion formats. The former of these provided valuable historical context for readings and the latter afforded the ability to go deeper into and express our own thoughts on the material for the day. I thought that class sessions were used very productively and contributed a fair amount to my learning. Many of the other assignments, such as source interpretations, took on a shorter form. Although these were helpful in synthesizing/analyzing passages encountered in individual readings, I do wish we had the opportunity to write some longer papers pulling from multiple sources at once. That said, the final exam on the last day of class partially fulfilled this wish as it was cumulative.
Ania's lectures are extremely informative and engaging. I also really liked the in-class notebook assignment to track progress throughout the quarter, as well as the creative project at the end.
The lectures were great. Professor Aizman was super organized, which was really helpful. Having everything so accessible and easy to find on the syllabus (like the daily slides) was incredibly useful. In addition, Professor Aizman was really good at promoting interesting discussion within the classroom. Overall, Professor Aizman was a great professor.
I think the most interesting part of the course was in-class discussions about the readings and the professor's lectures which provided extensive historical context as well as explained important concepts to understand the readings better! Very interesting! Highly recommend!

Please respond to the following:

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This course challenged me intellectually.	4.12	4.00	0.00%	11.76%	5.88%	41.18%	41.18%
I understood the purpose of this course and what I was expected to gain from it.	4.56	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	12.50%	18.75%	68.75%
I understood the standards for success on assignments.	4.31	4.50	0.00%	6.25%	6.25%	37.50%	50.00%
Class time enhanced my ability to succeed in graded assignments.	4.53	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	6.67%	33.33%	60.00%
I received feedback on my performance that helped me improve my subsequent work.	4.81	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	18.75%	81.25%
My work was evaluated fairly.	4.69	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	6.25%	18.75%	75.00%
I felt respected in this class.	4.81	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	18.75%	81.25%
Overall, this was an excellent course.	4.75	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	75.00%

Additional comments about the course:

Comments
a bit boring/easy. I would prefer longer and harder readings
I did not know there was so much to learn about anarchy, to be honest!
Since we have such a short quarter, I think it might have been nice to spend less time on contemporary protests movements elsewhere in the world and spend a little more time on Russia and the former Soviet Union, also perhaps look at some more types of art beyond just literature and a few days with lots and lots of slides of visual art.

I would recommend this course to:

	No	Yes
Highly-motivated and well-prepared students	0.00%	100.00%
Anyone interested in the topic	0.00%	100.00%

Thinking about your time in the class, what aspect of the instructor's teaching contributed most to your learning?

Comments
her detailed lectures were very helpful.
The lectures were definitely the best part of class. Professor Aizman is extremely well researched on the topics she is discussing, and therefore I felt that her lectures gave me in depth historical, literary, and artistic background for the topics under discussion.
The lectures are interesting, as well as the time we spent discussing topics in small groups.
The readings
Professor Aizman was wonderfully available and provided helpful feedback.
The teacher's insistence on group discussion and active participation was very helpful towards helping me better understand the material
Lectures.
Instructor's passion for teaching, and good selection of readings.
I think the lectures, and well documented syllabus + reading guides were most helpful.
Professor Aizman is an excellent instructor; I'd had her in the past and thought that she was excellent then, but she's somehow gotten even better at teaching! She's really knowledgeable, kind, and funny and makes class fun and interesting. She's taken a lot of time in class to talk about ways in which we could write better; not only have these moments taught me a lot, but they've motivated me to try harder when i write! The class was also really well organized, the syllabus had lots of materials on it that were designed to help us; I felt like I had a lot of tools to succeed! Feedback on writing was great too.
Her openness and capability to discuss new ideas or answer any questions I had. Her feedback on assignments was also very helpful.
During discussions, Ania frequently broke us into small groups to talk over questions from the reading. This helped to improve participation in the class-wide discussion when we reconvened and was highly effective. Broadly speaking, she was also extremely encouraging of everyone to participate and made it very easy to openly do so.
Ania is an amazing lecturer and structures the class in a way that balances sharing historical context with getting our perspectives on the readings.
I think every aspect of Professor Aizman's teaching had a positive contribution to my learning. As I mentioned above, the lectures and discussions were great and the course was very well organized.
I think that the instructor chose very interesting readings and asked engaging questions for in-class discussions. I also really liked Professor Aizman's lectures and presentations. Her passion for the subject made me more interested in learning more about anarchism!

## What could the instructor modify to help you learn more?

Comments
Get rid of the notebook. I never referred back to it and found it totally tedious. Also work on developing more of a group discussion, though small-group discussions were good
I do wish the class had kept to its focus on specifically anarchist Russian art, although I recognize the difficulty of this for some periods of history. Between the Russian revolution and the 1980s, it felt like we basically veered into American labor history, which, while an interesting topic, is not what I signed up for, which made the class feel disjointed at times. I know to some extent this is an unfair criticism, since the anarchist movement was quashed by massive state repression for much of the Soviet period, but I wish there were some way to stay on the Russian history track during this period.
I feel like it was a little difficult to succeed on 300-word interpretations, I found myself writing a lot and not able to relay my thoughts so concisely.
I think if the instructor provided a more strict guide to how our work was graded, I would be better able to understand what mistakes I made and learn from them.
No comment.
Spend a little more time lecturing, it's a class being taken as a requirement by many and as such not everyone has done all that much of the reading which made group in class work frequently frustrating.
N/A
Grade-wise, participation was a large emphasis in the course. By itself this was completely fine but it meant that the amount of writing required in the course was fairly limited. Writing consisted of three short source interpretations, an in-class final exam, and a midterm research proposal. I felt like I could have gotten a little bit more out of the class with maybe one more written assignment. This would have helped me better collect my thoughts and opinions on the readings.
More timely feedback on source interpretations
I can't think of anything
Nothing! I found that having the in-class notebook was a great assignment for me because it helped me organize my thoughts clearly and retain more information from the class !

## The Instructor . . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Organized the course clearly.	4.69	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	6.25%	18.75%	75.00%	0.00%
Presented lectures that enhanced your understanding.	4.81	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	18.75%	81.25%	0.00%
Facilitated discussions that were engaging and useful.	4.75	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	6.25%	12.50%	81.25%	0.00%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the course.	4.81	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	18.75%	81.25%	0.00%
Challenged you to learn.	4.75	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	6.25%	12.50%	81.25%	0.00%
Helped you gain significant learning from the course content.	4.69	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	6.25%	18.75%	75.00%	0.00%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	4.94	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	6.25%	93.75%	0.00%
Motivated you to think independently.	4.81	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	18.75%	81.25%	0.00%
Worked to create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment.	4.94	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	6.25%	93.75%	0.00%
Overall, this instructor made a significant contribution to your learning.	4.88	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	12.50%	87.50%	0.00%

Please include the name of the TA/CA/Intern you are evaluating. What aspects of the TA's teaching contributed most to your learning? What could the TA modify to help you learn more? Please include any additional feedback for the TA/CA/Intern.

Comments
Lena. She gave a great lecture on poetry, other than that she was a non-factor for me
The TA was Lena Tsykynovska. She brought a literary focus to the class to complement Professor Aizman's focus on art, which I felt was extremely helpful. The lecture on poetry provided by Lena was quite useful, as we had not had much focus on literature since leaving the works of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, and poetry does provide a unique perspective on anarchism.
Lena Tsykynovska
She was lovely! I liked the poetry class
Lena Tsykynovska The TA was a great addendum for questions and in scenarios where I needed help with specific portions of the course. Her day teaching the class was also a great breath of fresh air in the overall structure of the class.
Presented a helpful lecture.
Lena Tsykynovska – she seemed lovely and gave one very interesting lecture on poetry, but otherwise I didn't interact with her much, she seemed cool though and wouldn't have minded interacting with her more.
Lena Tsykynovska
Lena Tsykynovska; as a writer, she was very helpful with creative projects. Her perspectives inspired me to take my projects in different directions.
Lena Tsykynovska was the TA for the course and led one class session. This class focused on anarchist poetry and was extremely well organized and valuable. It was some of the only poetry we read throughout the quarter and she helped the class get quite a bit out of it in our discussion.
Lena was great at facilitating conversation around different topics, and I really enjoyed the poetry lecture she gave
Lena Tsykynovska. Lena was really great and super helpful to talk to and brainstorm with. Her presentation on poetry and the discussion she facilitated based on that was fascinating.

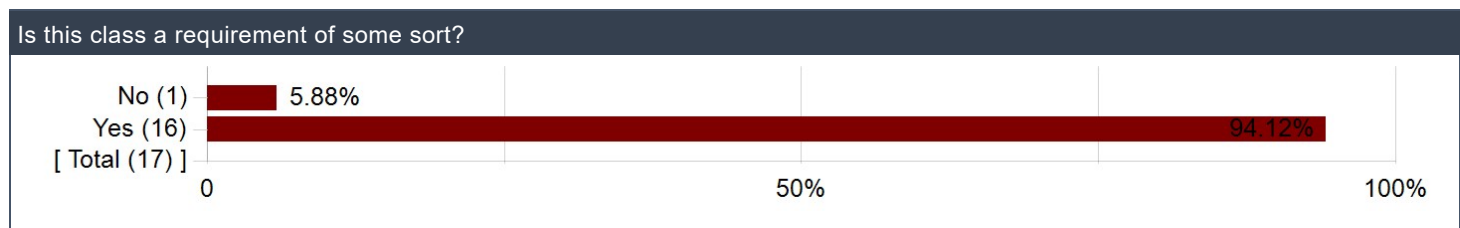
### The TA/CA or Intern. . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Facilitated discussions that supported your learning.	4.57	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	6.67%	26.67%	60.00%	6.67%
Gave you useful feedback on your work.	4.55	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	6.67%	20.00%	46.67%	26.67%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the class.	4.54	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	6.67%	26.67%	53.33%	13.33%
Challenged you to learn.	4.38	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	13.33%	53.33%	13.33%
Helped you succeed in the class.	4.62	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	6.25%	18.75%	56.25%	18.75%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	4.67	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	6.67%	13.33%	60.00%	20.00%
Overall, this individual made a significant contribution to your learning.	4.33	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	18.75%	25.00%	50.00%	6.25%

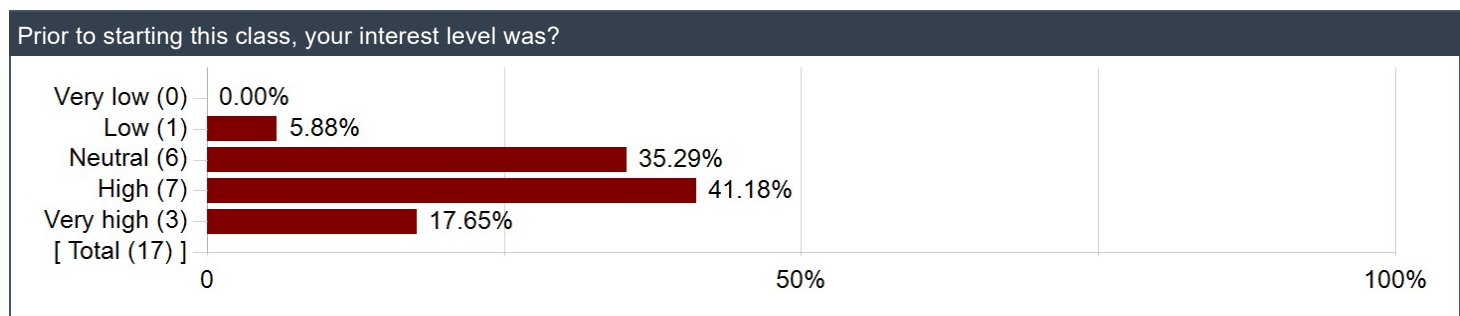
### How much did the following elements of the course contribute to your learning gains?

	Mean	Median	No Gain	A Little Gain	Moderate Gain	Good Gain	Great Gain	N/A
Laboratory Experience	N/A	N/A	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Field Trips	N/A	N/A	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Library Sessions	N/A	N/A	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Review Sessions	N/A	N/A	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%
Writing Seminars	N/A	N/A	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%

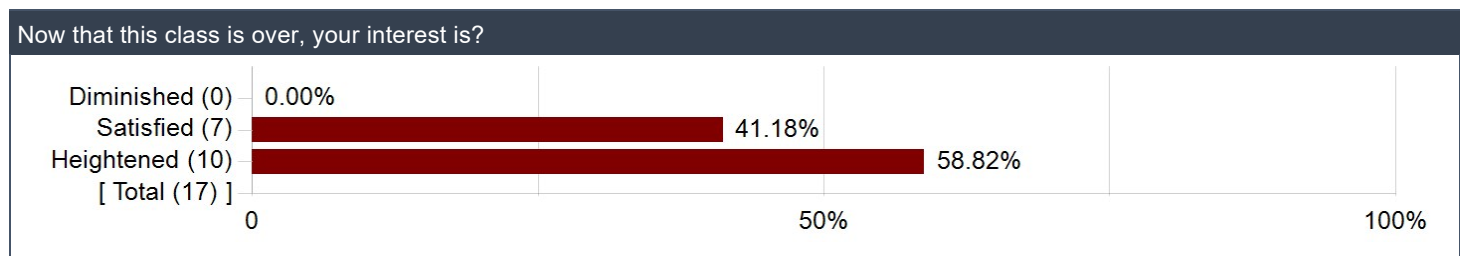
## Is this class a requirement of some sort?



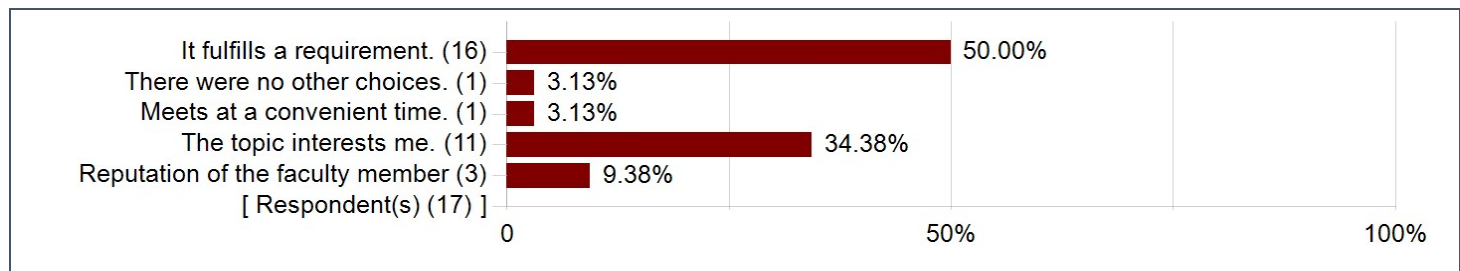
## Prior to starting this class, your interest level was?



## Now that this class is over, your interest is?

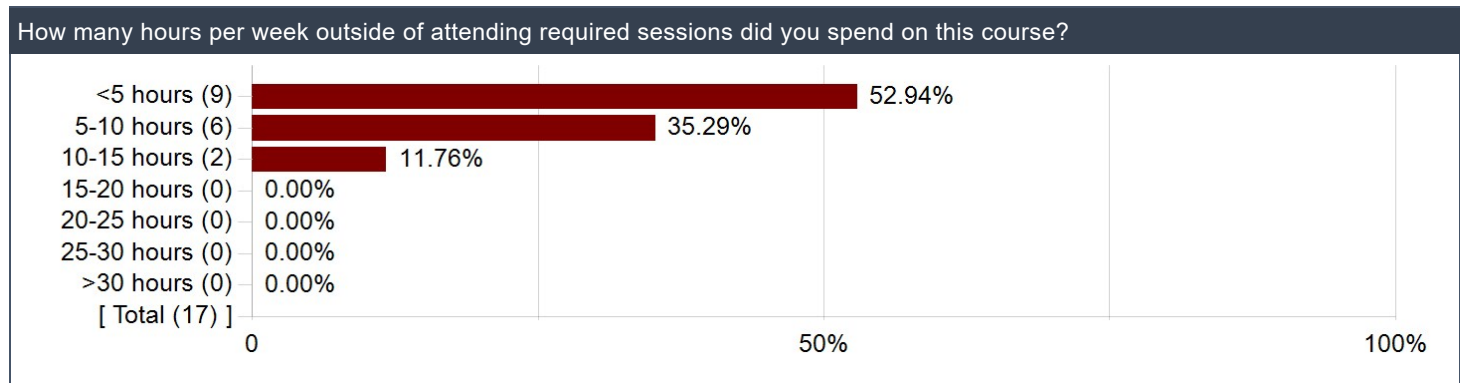


## Why did you choose to take this course? (Select all that apply)

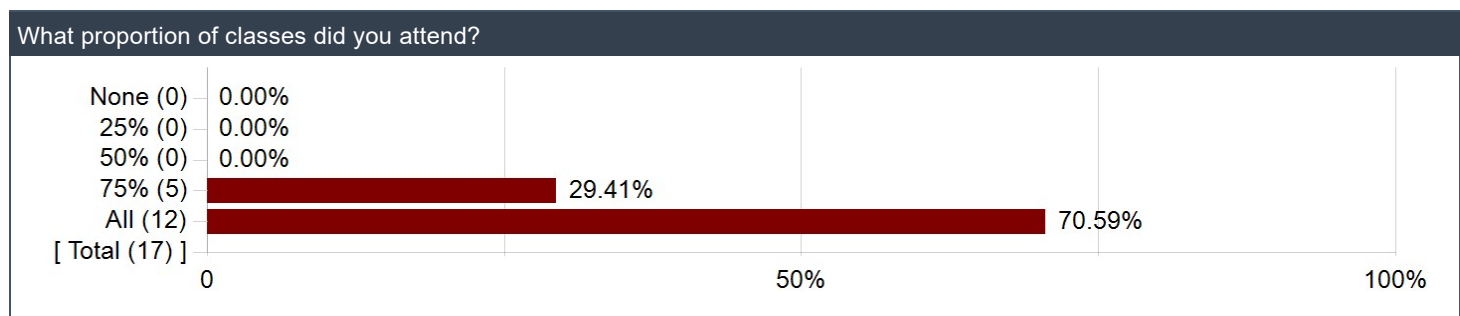




## How many hours per week outside of attending required sessions did you spend on this course?



## What proportion of classes did you attend?



## Please comment on the level of difficulty of the course relative to your background and experience.

Comments
extremely easy, almost to the detriment of the course
This class was quite easy, I believe at least in part because Professor Aizman intentionally made it so. My learning philosophy usually tends to favor more rigorous courses, but I understand why Professor Aizman designed the class in this way.
Not too difficult but enjoyable
Was relatively simple, with some difficult portions
It was very easy.
This was not a particularly difficult course, but it felt like I got out of it what I put in, so enjoyed it more when I was perhaps doing a little more work than the average student in the class.
I am a big fan of Russian history, but this course studied a dimension of the subject that I didn't know much about, so even though I had some background knowledge, I was learning a lot of new things
The readings were no heavier than those from other humanities classes like Power, for example. They were heavy at the beginning but got lighter throughout the quarter. I had little experience with source interpretations prior, so there was a slight learning curve. The course was not too difficult overall.
Having taken Russian Civilization I–II, this course was extremely manageable. Without these courses it still would be as the vast majority of relevant Russian history was reviewed when it did come up.
The workload was not that heavy yet it managed to impact me in such a profound way. I truly believe this was a great class in all respects.