

Discussion Questions

1. Week 1
 - 1. Be able to show Russia and surrounding countries on the map.
 - 2. What independent countries used to be part of the Russian Empire/of the Soviet Union?
 - 3. What are the main eco-zones, mountains, rivers?
 - 4. What is the climate of various parts of the country?
 - 5. Be able to identify the main historical periods from the 10th century to the present.
2. Week 2
 - 1. What period is known as Kievan Rus? What is the relevance of the name now?
 - 2. When were Russians baptized? What Prince is credited with choosing Eastern Christianity as the main religion? What legend is associated with this decision?
 - 3. What is the 'schism'? Who are the old believers and why are they still relevant today?
 - 4. What is meant by monasticism and monastic culture?
3. Week 3
 - 1. When was Russian territory invaded by Mongols?
 - 2. What period is known as 'Mongol yoke'?
 - 3. What was the significance of that period for Russian history? How is it remembered?
 - 4. What were Ivan the IV (Terrible) achievements? Why is he known as 'the terrible/awe inspiring'?
 - 5. Why was the attitude to Ivan during the Stalin's times?
 - 6. What period in Russian history is known as the times of troubles? Why was the 1990s referred to as The Time of Troubles?
 - 7. Why is Boris Godunov remembered in Russia?
 - 8. What literary work is written about this period? What opera?
4. Week 4
 - 1. What are the main facts of Peter's life that make him a legendary ruler?
 - 2. Why is he regarded as a great reformer? What were his main reforms?
 - 3. What does the phrase 'a window to Europe' mean? Who coined it in a poem?
 - 4. What are the main differences between Moscow and St.Petersburg?
 - 5. How did Catherine get to the Russian throne? Why is she remembered as a great empress?
 - 6. What was the significance of Pugachev's rebellion? Why is Pugachev still remembered?
 - 7. What changes did Peter and Catherine make in Russian diet?

- 8. What are the main features of Russian cuisine?
- 5. Week 5
 - 1. What is most remembered in Russia about the war with Napoleon?
 - 2. Who were the Decembrists? Why are they still remembered by Russians?
 - 3. What was the doctrine of orthodoxy, autocracy and nationality?
- 6. Week 6
 - 1. What was the significance of Alexander II reforms?
 - 2. Why was Alexander II assassinated?
 - 3. Can terror attacks on Alexander II and his administration be justified?
 - 4. What is meant by the policies of Russification?
 - 5. Why did Jews and Muslims find themselves on the Russian territory? Be specific.
 - 6. What territory is known as the Pale of Settlement?
 - 7. What differences and similarities between Jews and Muslims in Russia does the author note?
- 7. Week 7
 - 1. What views did the Slavophiles and the Westernizers espouse?
 - 2. How are these debates significant for today's Russia and its relationship with the West?
 - 3. How did the lives of Russian peasants change after the emancipation?
- 8. Week 8
- 9. Week 9
 - 1. Russia's participation in World War I.
 - 2. Why did Nicholas II and his wife get blamed for the collapse of the empire?
 - 3. Who was Rasputin and why is he considered such an important figure in the collapse of the Russian Empire?
 - 4. What were the main artistic movements of the early 20th century?
- 10. Week 10

Course Info

1. Professor Olga Kagan
2. TA Jeff Riggs jeffreyriggs@gmail.com
3. OH 12-2 W
4. Russian Civilization Beginnings (10th century)-1917 (Russian Revolution)
5. Moss *A History of Russia Volume 1: To 1917*
6. Pushkin "The Captain's Daughter"
7. Powerpoints posted
8. Readings + video materials on course website

Grading

To Do Well

1. Be familiar with the materials presented in class
2. Read assigned texts
3. Know key facts and figures
4. Know general idea of Russian culture and its role in the world culture
5. Lectures: participation in small group activities
6. Discussion sections: active participation (may have attendance)

Quiz

1. Where is Russia located?
 - Eastern Europe/Northern Asia
2. Has Moscow always been the capital of Russia?
 - No. Kiev was the capital a long time ago, St. Petersburg/Petrograd later
3. What is Russia's main religion?
 - Russian Orthodox Christianity
4. Who is the most famous 19th century Russian writer in Russia?
 - Alexander Pushkin
5. Who is Ivan the Fool?
 - Folklore fairytale character
6. What is a house on chicken legs?
 - Baba Yaga's house (witch in Russian fairy tales)
7. What does it mean to be a Slavophile?
 - One of two different views of Russia (in contrast to westerners)
8. Are there bears walking in city streets?
 - Usually not. Bears were used as entertainment and used to be more heavily wooded so bears lived nearby

Why is Russia of Interest?

1. Largest country in the world
2. Used to be/is a superpower
3. Remarkable cultural heritage
4. Rich natural resources
5. Geopolitical ambitions: much in the news lately
6. 3 million Americans claim Russian ancestry

What is Cultural History?

1. History of people and lifestyle and how it has changed over time
2. Facts
3. Common myths
4. Attitudes, perceptions, beliefs
5. Religion
6. Cultural Memory
 - The way in which people remember the past

Russian Art

1. Iconography
 - Religious images used in prayer
 - Only art until 18th century
2. Portraits (beginning in 18th century)
3. Landscapes, and more modern art

Russian Music

1. Tchaikovsky
 - *The Nutcracker*
 - *Swan Lake*

Duality of Russian Culture

1. Europe and Asia
2. 2 words for Russian, Ancestry vs. Citizen of the state
3. We and they
 - Russians and others
 - Educated class and 'narod' (people)
 - 'Narod' and the government
4. Orthodoxy and other religions
5. Orthodox religion and superstitions
6. Folk and Classical music
7. Slavophiles and westerners
8. Moscow and St. Petersburg

Russian Geography

1. Nikolai Karamzim (1766-1826) Russian historian
2. 20% of the land on Earth
3. Steppe: Flat land in Russia
 - Russian culture moved eastward through it because it was easy to conquer

Russian Empire and Soviet Union

1. Russia
2. Finland (early 19th - early 20th)
3. Part of Poland (late 18th - early 20th)
4. Alaska (mid 17th - 1867)
5. Estonia (Until 1990s)
6. Lithuania (Until 1990s)
7. Ukraine
8. Belarus
9. Moldova
10. Georgia
11. Latvia
12. Czechoslovakia
13. Azerbaijan
14. Kazakhstan
15. Kyrgyzstan

Russian Federation

1. 7 districts + Caucus region
 - i. Southern
 - ii. Central
 - iii. Volga
 - 'Barge Haulers on the Volga' painting by Repin
 - 'Song of the Volga Boatmen'
 - iv. Northwest
 - v. Urals
 - vi. Siberian
 - vii. Far East
 - viii. Caucus Region

Russian Language

1. Slavic language, related to European languages
2. Cyrillic Alphabet
 - Invented by Saint Cyril, Saint Methodius (9th century)
 - Based on Greek
3. Replaced Glagolitic alphabet
4. Need to learn Cyrillic alphabet for the class
 - Russia Alphabet song
5. Other Slavic languages: Czech, Polish, Slovene, Slovak (West)
6. All Slavic languages developed from Common Slavic
7. Other two Eastern Slavic languages
 - Ukrainian
 - Belorussian

Russia's Expansion and Contraction

1. Know these periods
 - Russia of Kiev [Kievan Rus] (882-1240)
 - Tatar/Mongol Yoke (1237-1480)
 - Russia of Moscow [Muscovite State] (1478-1712)
 - Imperial Russia (1689-1917)
 - Soviet Russia (1917-1990)
 - Post Soviet Russia (1990-)
2. Dynasties
 - Ruriks (9th century-1584)
 - Romanovs (1613-1917)

Russian Folklore

1. 'lore of the people'
2. AKA popular literature/popular antiquities
3. Main characteristics
 - Passed through oral tradition
 - Beliefs/practices held by a group of people with something in common
 - Certain elements of culture are considered folkloric (ex. Santa Claus)
4. Differences from literature
 - Folklore has a collective author
5. Folkloric customs and beliefs
 - Never give knives clocks or scarves as a present
 - Don't whistle in the house
 - If someone doesn't recognize you you will get rich

- Spit three times over your left shoulder
 - Sit down before you go on a trip
 - If you spill salt laugh loudly
6. Alexander Afanasyev
- Russian counterpart to the brothers Grimm
 - *Russian Folk Religious Legends* banned in Russia by Tsarist censorship
 - Influenced Pushkin
7. Epics
- Byliny
 - Meant to be sung or recited by heart by special storytellers (skaziteli)
 - Christian beliefs mixed with pre-Christian ideas of magic
 - Ilya of Murom and Nightingale the Robber
 - Ilya of Murom is one of the most famous epic warriors of Russia
 - Bogatyr or vityaz - the warrior
 - Described as a couch potato, i.e. he laid on the wood stove until he turned 33
 - Was handicapped and could not move but was healed by wandering religious elders, probably Christ and 2 apostles
 - Nightingale the Robber
 - i. Anthropomorphic creature who fights with a terrible whistling noise
 - ii. Depicted as human or birdlike
 - iii. Oriental features
 - In art
 - Sometimes in a series of pieces like a comic book
 - Viktor Vasnetsov
 - i. Famous Revivalist painter
 - ii. The Three Supermen/Bogatyrs
 - Sadko
 - Sadko is a musician-merchant who goes underwater and entertains the Tsar of the sea
 - Painting by Repin, opera by Rimsky-Korsakov
 - Epic tradition interrupted by WWII
 - Started in Kievan Rus
 - First recorded in 17th century
 - Nikolai Bogdanov-Belsky The New Fairytale
 - Mark change from oral to written
8. Fairytale
- Vladimir Yakovlevich Propp (1895-1970)
 - “Morphology of the Folktale” (1928)
 - Functions of fairytale
 - i. Something missing
 - ii. Tests (usually 3)
 - iii. Quest
 - iv. Hero performs remarkable deed
 - v. Villain

- vi. Magical helper
 - vii. Prohibition that hero forgets/ignores
 - viii. Achieves reward
 - Why is he important
 - i. Translated to English and inspired others
 - Good Characters
 - Ivan the Fool
 - i. Peasant
 - ii. Youngest son
 - iii. Can't do simplest task
 - iv. Does something remarkable
 - The Firebird
 - i. Russian version of the Pheonix
 - ii. Magical feathers
 - iii. Easy to catch when the bird is eating
 - iv. Stravinsky *The Firebird* (1910)
 - Vasilisa the Beautiful
 - i. Merchant's Daughter
 - ii. Her mother died when she was young
 - iii. Stepmother and stepsister treat her ba
 - iv. Good natured
 - v. Magic doll that helps her
 - Vasilisa the wise
 - The Tsar
 - Bad Character
 - Koschei the Immortal
 - i. Evil Monarch
 - ii. Likes to kidnap women
 - iii. Not completely immune to death
 - iv. can kill him by breaking a needle in an egg in a rabbit in a tree
 - Baba Yaga
 - i. Witch
 - ii. Flies around in a mortar with a broom
 - iii. Lives in a forest in a house on fowl legs (house is a living creature and can rotate)
 - iv. Famous line: "I smell Russian flesh/spirit"
 - v. Not entirely evil sometimes gives out helpful items
 - vi. In music: Mussorgsky "The Hut on Fowl Legs"
9. Ilya of Murom and Nightingale the Robber (Epic)
- Ilya
 - Famous Russian folklore hero who could not use his legs for the first 30 years of his life
 - Bogatyr, protector of the land
 - Nightingale
 - Ilya's enemy

- Robber who screams to kill his enemies and break glass
- Ilya travels down Smorodina river trying to get to Kiev
- Meets Prince Vladimir who asks him about his travels
- Vladimir doesn't believe that he went to a guarded city and killed The Nightingale
- Bylina (narrated Russian folk epic)
- 10. Baba Yaga
 - Moral: Treat others as you would want them to treat you

Kievan Rus' (9th - 13th century)

1. The Russia of Kiev
2. in 1240 sacked by Mongols
3. Literary evidence from Kievan Rus'
4. Baptism of Rus'
5. Kiev is referred to as "The mother of Russian cities"
 - Problematic because Kiev is in Ukraine right now, not Russia
6. Kiev is between Baltic and Black Sea
7. Most information from the Primary Chronicle
 - A history of Kievan Rus' allegedly compiled in Kiev about 1113
 - Fundamental source in the interpretation of the history of the Eastern Slavs
 - Author: Monk Nester
 - A Varangian (Scandinavian/Viking) Prince Rurik and his two brothers was invited to rule Rus because 'there was no order' (joke among Russians that they have to bring in outsiders to help rule)
 - Started Rurik dynasty (first of 2, other is Romanov)
 - Possibly invaded more so than invited
 - Possibly called Rus after the Varangian tribe
 - Rurik became only ruler and gave land to Boyars (noblemen) and Boyaryna (noblewomen)
8. Early Russian Princes
 - Scandinavian names
 - Prince Igor Rurikovich (protagonist of a famous legend and opera)
 - His widow Princess Olga was the first to be baptized
 - Her grandson Vladimir (The Red Sun) baptized Rus. He married the sister of Byzantine Emperor Vasily II
 - Vladimir = Vladet' (to possess) + mir (world) – Russian name
9. Baptism of Rus (988)
 - Described in great detail by Chronicle
 - Sent people to other countries to observe their worship practices
 - Decided the Greek Eastern Orthodox was best
 - Prince Vladimir also married the Byzantine Princess
 - Note: Byzantine Empire

- Ancient Greek city
- Split by Holy Roman Emperor to Constantinople
- Differences between Western and Eastern Christianity
 - Trinity: Father, Son, Holy Spirit
 - In Catholicism, Holy Spirit originates from the Father and the Son, Eastern -> only Father
 - Eastern has icons, not statues
 - Eastern priests can get married
 - Eastern does not believe in purgatory
 - No benches in Russian church
 - Orthodox priests wear beards
 - Orthodox cross - three fingers, Catholic cross - open palm
 - No pope for Orthodox
 - Only 1 Catholic church, several Orthodox
 - Orthodox has always been conducted in local languages, not Latin or Greek
 - Why do you think Eastern Orthodoxy was important for the future of Russia?
 - Why may it still be important today?