

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
HSTAS/SIS 348

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Courses\HSTAS 348

SIS\HSTAS 348 is a course which compares the entry of the Chinese and Russian empires into the modern world. The course begins with the conquest of China and Russia by the Mongols, then considers the two empires' liberation from the Mongol yoke, and the creation of their early modern political forms. In subsequent weeks, we shall look at the redirection of these empires at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the evolution of absolutism, the challenges of the early nineteenth century, the growth of intellectual alienation, the birth of pre-modern radicalism, Marxism and communism. Each of these events would be worthy of a study, perhaps an entire course, in themselves. The goal here is to set them in historical context, and consider collective meaning. No knowledge of Russian or Chinese language or history is required as a prerequisite; but an effort will be made to incorporate previous knowledge into teaching.

Through much of recent history, China and Russia have been seen as two major alternatives to the Euro-American model of modernization, and part of the idea of comparing them is to explore such alternatives. We will ask questions like: how much of their current political form have they inherited from the past? To what extent is state building a universal process, and in what ways is it particular to a social and cultural context? How have non-Western intellectuals negotiated the tension between modern and western, and what may we learn from their experience? It may not be possible to reach final answers to these questions, but we shall argue that they are questions we should be asking.

The course is explicitly in comparative history. Although comparison is quite common in both popular and academic history, and is a skill that most historians should master, it is not often made explicitly the theme of a class. It will be the foundation of this class. Each week we will consider periods from both Russian and Chinese history, and ask how they may be compared, and what we may learn from doing so. We will also consider the craft of comparative history; how to shape effective comparisons, and how to express the comparisons one has observed. As much of comparative history consists in the ability to express comparisons, this class will have frequent writing exercises, both in class and out, both graded and non-graded. Students will regularly consult with each other and with the instructor about writing.

Course Outline

I. Introduction

- a. Monday 28 March: Comparative History and the Starting Point, Mongol Conquests
- b. Wednesday 30 March: No Class

Readings (March 30-April 6):

Riasanovsky and Steinberg, History of Russia, pp. 89-113.; Fairbank, Reischauer and Craig, East Asia, pp. 177-208; Frederick Mote, “The Growth of Chinese Despotism” pp. 1-40.; and Nancy Shields Kollman, Kinship and Politics: The Making of the Muscovite Political System

II. Ming and Muscovy: “Oriental Despotism?”

- a. Monday 4 April: Ming and Muscovy
- b. Wednesday 6 April: The Idea of ‘Oriental Despotism’

Readings (6 April-13 April):

Riasanovsky and Steinberg, History of Russia,. Pp. 139-172; and 211-238; Spence, Search for Modern China, pp., 26-73.

III. Peter the Great and the Kangxi Emperor

- a. Monday 11 April: What happened to Despotism?
- b. Wednesday. 13 April: Peter the Great and Kangxi

Readings (13 April – 20 April)

Riasanovsky and Steinberg, History of Russia,. Pp. 239-271; Spence, Search for Modern China, pp., 74-116

IV. Eighteenth Century Absolutism

- a. Monday 18 April: Eighteenth Century Histories
- b. Wednesday 20 April: The Idea of Absolutism

Readings (20 April-17 April):

Kenneth Pomeranz, The Great Divergence: China, Europe and the Making of the Modern World Economy, pp. 1-118; Arkadius Kahan, “The Costs

of Westernization: The Gentry and the Economy the Eighteenth Century,” Slavic Review 35:1 (1966), pp. 40-66. (Slavic Review is available in electronic form through the UW library)

V. The Economics of Imperial Forms

- a. Monday 25 April: The Eighteenth Century Peasant and Serfdom
- b. Wednesday, 27 April: The Great Divergence: Notions of the Chinese Economy

Reading: (27 April to 4 May):

Pomeranz, The Great Divergence, pp 111-263; Spence, Search for Modern China, 90-164; Riasanovsky and Steinberg, History of Russia, 296-318.

VI. The Turn of the Eighteenth Century

- a. Monday, 2 May: The Great Age of Aristocracies
- b. Wednesday, 4 May: Napoleon and the Rise of the Military State

Reading (4 May to 11 May):

Riasanovsky and Steinberg, History of Russia, pp. 319-343; Spence, 214-275; Lu Xun, “Diary of a Madman;” Nikolai Gogol, “Diary of a Madman”

VII. Alienation

- a. Monday, May 9: New World: Kang Yu-wei and Peter Chaadayef
- b. Wednesday, May 11: Diaries of Madmen

Reading (May 11 to May 18):

Riasanovsky and Steinberg, History of Russia, 363-421; Spence, Search for Modern China, 300-333; Martin E. Malia, Alexander Herzen and the Birth of Russian Socialism, pp. 276-297; 335-337; and 350-356 (UIW Library E-book)

VIII. Western or Modern?

- a. Monday, May 16: Herzen and Liang Qichao
- b. Wednesday, May 18: The Road to Revolution

Reading: (May 18 to May 25):

Riasanovsky and Steinberg, History of Russia, pp, 421-479; Spence, Search for Modern China, pp. 334-435

IX. Marxism in China and Russia

- a. Monday, May 23: Li Dazhao
- b. Wednesday May 25: Lenin

Reading (May 25- June1):
Readings from Communism in Every Day Life

Assignments and Grading

A. Assignments

A.. Each student will be expected to write two of the following three assignments: The responses to the assignments should be essays of 5 pages (except in the case of the third assignment, see below) double spaced, and should be submitted on the date indicated below. Students may choose two among the three assignments; students who choose to do all three will receive credit for the best two assignments. Further instructions and grading rubrics will be provided in class.

1. A summary of the career of Peter the Great or the Kangxi Emperor. In this paper, you should indicate what you think the most important contributions of the monarch to Chinese or Russian history. Due Wednesday, April 20.
 2. An assessment of one chapter of The Great Divergence. In this paper, you should summarize and critique the argument of one chapter of the Great Divergence. Your paper may focus on the terms of comparison used in the chapter, the sources, whether or not the argument is proven adequately and its significance.
Due Wednesday, May 4.
 3. A précis for the final paper. This should be a brief discussion of the issues and hypotheses of you final paper.
The prose part of this paper need only be 3 pages; but bibliography and an outline should be included. Due Wednesday, May 18.
- B. Each student will be expected to hand in a comparative paper on June 1. This should be a paper comparing some aspect of Russian and Chinese history. You

may expand on one of the comparisons we have discussed in class, or develop your own new comparison. The paper should be 7-10 pages, double spaced.

B. Grading

Grading in this class will be on a 400 point scale (see below). Students thus may calculate the number of points they have received on each assignment. Two elements of this scale may require some explanation. One is the portfolio. At the end of the quarter, I would like to review all the work you have done in the class, including in-class written assignments, short papers and long paper. You should thus save all your papers from the class, to hand them in at the end. Portfolios will be evaluated on the extent to which they show progress in writing and analytical skills.

A second unusual element is the writing conferences. Much of comparative history is writing, and I look forward to reviewing your written work and talking to you about it. I would like to schedule two writing conferences with each person during the quarter. After each conference I will add 20 points to your total score. This is not a grade; I will simply assign twenty points for a writing conference.

Point distributions:

2 SHORT PAPERS, 80 POINTS EACH	160 PTS
1 COMPARATIVE PAPER	120 PTS
WRITING CONFERENCES	40 PTS
PORTFOLIO	40 PTS
CASS PARTICIPATION	40 PTS

Points in the class will be converted to UW decimal grades as follows: 400 pts., = 4.0; 360 pts. = 3.5; 320 pts. = 3.0; 280 pts = 2.5; etc.