



# MHIS3025

## History of Russia, the Soviet Union and the post-Soviet World

Session 2, Fully online/virtual 2020

*Department of Modern History, Politics & International Relations*

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#### Disclaimer

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#### Notice

As part of [Phase 3 of our return to campus plan](#), most units will now run tutorials, seminars and other small group learning activities on campus for the second half-year, while keeping an online version available for those students unable to return or those who choose to continue their studies online.

To check the availability of face-to-face and online activities for your unit, please go to [timetable viewer](#). To check detailed information on unit assessments visit your unit's iLearn space or consult your unit convenor.

## General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Professor

David Christian

[david.christian@mq.edu.au](mailto:david.christian@mq.edu.au)

Contact via email

Rm 266, Dept. of Modern History, Level 2 25 Wally's Walk Building B

Credit points

10

Prerequisites

130cp at 1000 level or above OR (20cp in HIST or MHIS or POL or POIR or MHIX or POIX units at 2000 level)

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit explores the evolution of Russia from the early modern period, through the Soviet period and up to today. After a period of decline since the breakdown of the Soviet Union, Russia is once again becoming a powerful and assertive nation, and it retains a large nuclear arsenal. How did Russia first become a great power? Why was the Tsarist system overthrown and replaced by an entirely new governmental system after 1917? How did the Soviet Union re-build its power and establish itself as a modern superpower? Why did the Soviet Union breakdown? And how powerful and influential is Russia today? In an increasingly multi-polar world, these questions are becoming particularly important.

## Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

**ULO1:** Demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the major social, economic and political changes in Russian society from the Tsarist era, through the Soviet era, up to the post-Soviet era.

**ULO2:** Evaluate different theoretical and historiographical approaches to the Soviet

attempt to build a new type of society.

**ULO3:** Construct complex historical arguments, and defend and modify them rigorously and persuasively, both in class and in their written work.

**ULO4:** Assess, interpret, and make sophisticated use of written and visual evidence, much of which was generated in highly charged polemical environments.

**ULO5:** Build the ability to undertake efficient and focused research, to write up their research clearly and logically, and to meet deadlines.

**ULO6:** Assess the significance of the 1917 Revolutions and Soviet history for twentieth century world history.

## General Assessment Information

**SUBMISSION OF ESSAYS:** All essays will be submitted through Turnitin, from the iLearn site for this course.

**ASSESSMENT OF SEMINAR PARTICIPATION:** Participation in the online discussion groups is an important part of the course and counts for 15% of your final grade. You will be expected to post at least once a week, commenting on the week's central questions, and explaining your answers to those questions. I will respond to all thoughtful and serious responses. Your responses will be assessed at the end of the semester for their rigour, the evidence they give for wide reading, and for their thoughtfulness. I will always be interested in responses that take a different line from the lectures or the recommended texts, but you should always give some evidence to back up your arguments.

**LATE SUBMISSION OF ESSAYS:** Departmental rules on penalties for late submission: Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.

## Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Essay 1</u>	20%	No	26/08/2020
<u>Essay 2</u>	25%	No	14/10/2020
<u>Major Essay</u>	40%	No	04/11/2020
<u>Seminar Participation</u>	15%	No	06/11/2020

## Essay 1

Assessment Type <sup>1</sup>: Essay

Indicative Time on Task <sup>2</sup>: 16.00 hours

Due: **26/08/2020**

Weighting: **20%**

A response to one of the questions tackled in the first 6 seminars

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Evaluate different theoretical and historiographical approaches to the Soviet attempt to build a new type of society.
- Construct complex historical arguments, and defend and modify them rigorously and persuasively, both in class and in their written work.
- Assess, interpret, and make sophisticated use of written and visual evidence, much of which was generated in highly charged polemical environments.
- Build the ability to undertake efficient and focused research, to write up their research clearly and logically, and to meet deadlines.

## Essay 2

Assessment Type <sup>1</sup>: Essay

Indicative Time on Task <sup>2</sup>: 21.00 hours

Due: **14/10/2020**

Weighting: **25%**

A response to one of the questions tackled in the last 7 seminars

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the major social, economic and political changes in Russian society from the Tsarist era, through the Soviet era, up to the post-Soviet era.
- Evaluate different theoretical and historiographical approaches to the Soviet attempt to build a new type of society.
- Construct complex historical arguments, and defend and modify them rigorously and persuasively, both in class and in their written work.

- Assess, interpret, and make sophisticated use of written and visual evidence, much of which was generated in highly charged polemical environments.
- Build the ability to undertake efficient and focused research, to write up their research clearly and logically, and to meet deadlines.
- Assess the significance of the 1917 Revolutions and Soviet history for twentieth century world history.

## Major Essay

Assessment Type <sup>1</sup>: Essay

Indicative Time on Task <sup>2</sup>: 34.00 hours

Due: **04/11/2020**

Weighting: **40%**

Essay in response to a larger, more conceptual problem to be developed in the course of the semester

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the major social, economic and political changes in Russian society from the Tsarist era, through the Soviet era, up to the post-Soviet era.
- Evaluate different theoretical and historiographical approaches to the Soviet attempt to build a new type of society.
- Construct complex historical arguments, and defend and modify them rigorously and persuasively, both in class and in their written work.
- Assess, interpret, and make sophisticated use of written and visual evidence, much of which was generated in highly charged polemical environments.
- Build the ability to undertake efficient and focused research, to write up their research clearly and logically, and to meet deadlines.
- Assess the significance of the 1917 Revolutions and Soviet history for twentieth century world history.

## Seminar Participation

Assessment Type <sup>1</sup>: Participatory task

Indicative Time on Task <sup>2</sup>: 20 hours

Due: **06/11/2020**

Weighting: **15%**

Based on contributions to asynchronous iLearn online forums

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the major social, economic and political changes in Russian society from the Tsarist era, through the Soviet era, up to the post-Soviet era.
- Evaluate different theoretical and historiographical approaches to the Soviet attempt to build a new type of society.
- Assess the significance of the 1917 Revolutions and Soviet history for twentieth century world history.

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<sup>1</sup> If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
- the [Writing Centre](#) for academic skills support.

<sup>2</sup> Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation

## Delivery and Resources

**iLearn site:** More information about this unit is available on the iLearn site, which you can find at: <https://ilearn.mq.edu.au/course/view.php?id=42975>.

**Classes:** Please be aware that arrangements could change during the course of the semester. At present, I intend to record lectures in advance each week and hold voluntary on campus and zoom tutorials, as described below. Participation in the asynchronous online discussion forums on iLearn is required, as explained below.

**Lectures** will be available online by Monday of each week on Echo. They will be recorded in several short segments.

**Tutorials/Seminars/Discussion Groups:** will focus on questions raised in the readings for the week and the lectures.

- **On campus seminars** will be held on **Wednesdays from 4-6 pm in the 14SCO (Sir Christopher Ondaatje Ave) 100 Theatre** for those enrolled under the "Special Circumstances" mode.
- **Zoom tutorial:** I intend to hold a voluntary Zoom tutorial in the time scheduled for the

lecture, on **Wednesdays from 2-3 pm**. All students are welcome to take part.

Depending on numbers, we may use zoom break-out sessions to form separate discussion groups.

- **Asynchronous online discussion forum on iLearn:** In addition, there will be an asynchronous online discussion forum using the iLearn site for this course. Participation in this on-line seminar is compulsory for all students, and 15% of your grade will be based on the extent and seriousness of your contributions to this seminar.

**Texts and Readings:** All recommended texts are available online through the library, or you can buy them through the Booktopia Textbook Finder, at <https://www.booktopia.com.au/books-online/text-books/textbook-finder/cXC-p1.html> I have checked and all the recommended readings seem to be available. But because this is a third year course, there will be a strong emphasis on your own bibliographical class. Obviously, much of your research will be online but in marking essays I will give credit to those that show the creativity and resourcefulness needed to do good research under difficult circumstances. Macquarie's library offers many forms of support for students doing research.

There is no required textbook for this unit, and you will be encouraged to do much of your own bibliographical research. But I strongly recommend that you buy and use either the book by Figes, or the two books by Weeks and Lovell.

- Orlando Figes. **Revolutionary Russia, 1891-1991**. London: Penguin 2014. An interpretation of modern Russian and Soviet history that focuses mainly on politics, society and culture.
  - If you enjoy this you may also want to use Figes very fine history of the revolutionary era: Orlando Figes. **A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution 1891-1924**. London: Pimlico, 1996
- I also recommend a pair of books from the Blackwell History of Russia that will work well together:
  - Theodore R. Weeks. **Across the Revolutionary Divide: Russia and the USSR 1861-1945**. Chichester: Wiley/Blackwell, 2011. Avoids the normal textbook break at 1917, and covers Russian and early Soviet history thematically, with separate chapters on politics, society, nations, modernization, belief, relations to the wider world, and culture.
  - Stephen Lovell. **The Shadow of War: Russia and the USSR 1941 to the Present**. Chichester: Wiley/Blackwell, 2010. Argues that the most fundamental event in modern Russian/Soviet history may have been World War II (the "Great Patriotic War") rather than 1917.
- I will also make available through the library some chapters from a recent book of my own, which develops many of the arguments I will offer in lectures: David Christian. **A History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia: Vol 2: Inner Eurasia from the Mongol Empire to today: 1260-2000**. UK and US: Wiley Blackwell, 2018.
  - In order to follow the arguments I will be defending in the lectures, you may also find it helpful to use an earlier work of mine (that is in the library but no longer in print): David Christian. **Imperial and Soviet Russia: Power, Privilege and the Challenge of Modernity**. UK:

Macmillan, 1997.

## Unit Schedule

MHIS325 History of Russia, the Soviet Union and the post-Soviet World: 2020 CALENDAR				
WEEK	WK STARTING	TOPICS	QUESTIONS	DEADLINES
1	Mon, July 27	Organizational, and the idea of "Inner Eurasia"	"What is meant by "Inner Eurasia" and how can the idea help us better understand Russian and Soviet history?"	
2	Mon, Aug 3	Modernity: The Russian Empire meets the Fossil Fuels Revolution	"What is meant by the "Fossil Fuels Revolution", and why did it destabilize traditional states such as the Russian Empire?"	
3	Mon, Aug 10	Challenges for an ancient Empire: Economic, social and political reforms in the late 19th century	"How did the Russian government respond to the challenge of the fossil fuels revolution, and what were the main social and economic changes in Russia by 1905?"	
4	Mon, Aug 17	New Ideologies and the 1905 Revolution	"What were the main ideologies competing for support in Russia in 1905, and to what extent do they represent responses to the challenges of modernization and the fossil fuels revolution?"	
5	Mon, Aug 24	The Russian Empire in Revolution and War: Problems and Possibilities	"What sort of political and economic system emerged from Russia after the 1905 Revolution, and do you see any parallels with Russia today?"	Essay 1 due, Wed Aug 26, midnight
6	Mon, Aug 31	Breakdown and Revolution: Socialism, Leninism and Utopian hopes for the future	"How do you explain the breakdown after the February Revolution and the successful Bolshevik seizure of power in October 1917?"	
7	Mon, Sept 7	Holding on to power: Civil War and the Building of a new mobilizational system	"Why did the Bolsheviks win the civil war, and to what extent did the methods they used borrow from the Tsarist past and prefigure the Soviet future?"	
RECESS	Sept 14-25			
8	Mon, Sept 28	A Turning Point in World History: the 1920s, NEP, and the turn to a Command Economy	"What were the major challenges facing the Soviet government in the 1920s, and why, eventually, did they opt for Stalin's solutions to those challenges?"	
9	Mon, Oct 5	Industrialization and the Cauldron of war: A Triumph for the Stalinist System?	"What were the main achievements of Stalinism in the 1930s and 1940s, and what were its major failures?"	
10	Mon, Oct 12	Post-Stalin reforms and Social and Economic change: A resurgent communist world?	"To what extent was the Stalinist system dismantled after Stalin's death, and what were the main changes in Soviet society in the 1950s and 1960s?"	Essay 2 due, Wed Oct 14, midnight
11	Mon, Oct 19	Stagnation, Perestroika, and Collapse	"Why did the Soviet government embark on radical changes after 1985, and why did the attempt at reform fail?"	



12	Mon, Oct 26	The 1990s: The end of an Experiment	"Was Russian society democratic or capitalist in the 1990s?"	
13	Mon, Nov 2	Russia today: Russian or Capitalist?	"What do regard as the main achievements of post-Soviet Russia and the major challenges it faces in the future?"	Major Essay due, Wed Nov 4, midnight

## Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central>). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central>).

## Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/getting-started/student-conduct>

## Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit [ask.mq.edu.au](https://ask.mq.edu.au) or if you are a Global MBA student contact [globalmba.support@mq.edu.au](mailto:globalmba.support@mq.edu.au)

## Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://stu>

[dents.mq.edu.au/support/](https://dents.mq.edu.au/support/)

## Learning Skills

Learning Skills ([mq.edu.au/learningskills](https://mq.edu.au/learningskills)) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to help you improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Getting help with your assignment](#)
- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

## Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

## Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at [ask.mq.edu.au](https://ask.mq.edu.au)

If you are a Global MBA student contact [globalmba.support@mq.edu.au](mailto:globalmba.support@mq.edu.au)

## IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit [http://www.mq.edu.au/about\\_us/offices\\_and\\_units/information\\_technology/help/](http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/).

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.