



MHIS325

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

S2 External 2019

Dept of Modern History, Politics & International Relations

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Professor

David Christian

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Contact via email

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Credit points

3

Prerequisites

39cp at 100 level or above or (6cp in MHIS or HIST or POL at 200 level including 3cp in MHIS units)

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:

Students who have completed this course 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 their ability to undertake efficient and focused research, to write up their research clearly and logically, and to meet deadlines.

Assess the significance of modern Russian and Soviet history for fundamental discussions within the history discipline about the nature and evolution of modern societies throughout the world.

General Assessment Information

- **Short Essay 1:** 1000 words 15 %
- **Draft of Major Essay:** 2 pages 10%: **NOTE FOR EXTERNAL STUDENTS:** You will be linked with one or two other students through "Peer Mark" to give and receive feedback on each other's essays before the final submission date for the major essay. You will use a rubric that I will supply. This is a wonderful chance to help and to learn from each other, and the quality of your feedback will affect your participation grade.
- **Short Essay 2:** 1000 words 20 %
- **Major Essay:** 3000 words 40 %
- **Active Tutorial Participation:** 15 %: **NOTE FOR EXTERNAL STUDENTS:** Every week, before the Monday classes for Day Students, you will be expected to post a paragraph or two giving your answer to the week's question. You will also be expected to post at least one comment on posts by other students during the next 7 days. I will respond to all comments that show serious thought and significant reading on the topic. Failure to post is a sign of lack of engagement on your part, and engagement is the key to learning. Failure to post will also affect your 15% Participation grade.

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>	15%	Yes	Week 5, Mon Aug 26
<u>DRAFT OF MAJOR ESSAY</u>	10%	No	Week 9, Mon Oct 7
<u>ESSAY 2</u>	20%	Yes	Week 10, Mon Oct 14
<u>MAJOR ESSAY</u>	40%	Yes	Week 13, Mon Nov 4
<u>ACTIVE TUTORIAL PARTICIPATION</u>	15%	No	Entire Semester

ESSAY 1

Due: **Week 5, Mon Aug 26**

Weighting: **15%**

This is a hurdle assessment task (see [assessment policy](#) for more information on hurdle assessment tasks)

On any of the tutorial questions from weeks 1-6 inclusive

On successful completion you will be able to:

- 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 their ability to undertake efficient and focused research, to write up their research clearly and logically, and to meet deadlines.

DRAFT OF MAJOR ESSAY

Due: **Week 9, Mon Oct 7**

Weighting: **10%**

A 2 page outline and plan for major essay (describing main themes of each paragraph) + Bibliography

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Students who have completed this course 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.
- Build their ability to undertake efficient and focused research, to write up their research clearly and logically, and to meet deadlines.
- Assess the significance of modern Russian and Soviet history for fundamental discussions within the history discipline about the nature and evolution of modern societies throughout the world.

ESSAY 2

Due: **Week 10, Mon Oct 14**

Weighting: **20%**

This is a hurdle assessment task (see [assessment policy](#) for more information on hurdle assessment tasks)

On any of the tutorial questions from weeks 7-13 inclusive

On successful completion you will be able to:

- 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 their ability to undertake efficient and focused research, to write up their research clearly and logically, and to meet deadlines.

MAJOR ESSAY

Due: **Week 13, Mon Nov 4**

Weighting: **40%**

This is a hurdle assessment task (see [assessment policy](#) for more information on hurdle assessment tasks)

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

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Students who have completed this course 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.
- Build their ability to undertake efficient and focused research, to write up their research clearly and logically, and to meet deadlines.
- Assess the significance of modern Russian and Soviet history for fundamental discussions within the history discipline about the nature and evolution of modern societies throughout the world.

ACTIVE TUTORIAL PARTICIPATION

Due: **Entire Semester**

Weighting: **15%**

Based on attendance and contributions to seminar discussions and peer review; grades will be awarded at half-semester and at the end of the semester

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Students who have completed this course 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 modern Russian and Soviet history for fundamental discussions within the history discipline about the nature and evolution of modern societies throughout the world.

Delivery and Resources

iLearn site: More information about this unit is available on the iLearn site, which you can find at: <http://ilearn.mq.edu.au>. Check the special tab of information for external students.

Classes: Day classes will meet on Mondays from 10 am to 1 pm in 12SW (Second Way), Room 310. Normally, I will begin by asking students (picked randomly) to offer their answers to the week's main questions. Then there will be a lecture, followed by in-class work, group discussions and discussion of assessment tasks. **NOTE FOR EXTERNAL STUDENTS:** The preliminary discussions and lecture will be recorded; recording quality is always an issue and I will try my best to make sure that most of the discussion is audible on the recordings, but no guarantees of perfect recordings. External students will be asked to post at least two comments each week to the Weekly Forum for External Students.

Recommended Texts: 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. Copies should be available in the Coop Bookstore.

- **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

- 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

Wk 1: Mon, July 29: Organizational: and the idea of "Inner Eurasia". QUESTIONS: "What is meant by "Inner Eurasia" and how can the idea help us better understand Russian and Soviet history?" **NOTE FOR EXTERNAL STUDENTS:** Please introduce yourself to other external students using the Weekly Forum for External Students.

Wk 2: Mon, Aug 5: Modernity: The Russian Empire meets the Fossil Fuels Revolution. QUESTIONS: "What is meant by the "Fossil Fuels Revolution", and why did it destabilize traditional states such as the Russian Empire?"

Wk 3: Mon, Aug 12: Challenges for an ancient Empire: Economic, social and political reforms in the late 19th century. QUESTIONS: "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?"

Wk 4: Mon, Aug 19: New Ideologies and the 1905 Revolution. QUESTIONS: "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?"

Wk 5: Mon, Aug 26: The Russian Empire in Revolution and War: Problems and Possibilities. QUESTIONS: "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.**

Wk 6: Mon, Sept 2: Breakdown and Revolution: Socialism, Leninism and Utopian hopes for the future. QUESTIONS: "How do you explain the breakdown after the February Revolution and the successful Bolshevik seizure of power in October 1917?"

Wk 7: Mon, Sept 9: Holding on to power: Civil War and the building of a new mobilizational system. QUESTIONS: "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 16-27]

Wk 8: Mon, Sept 30: A Turning Point in World History: the 1920s, *NEP*, and the turn to a Command Economy. QUESTIONS: "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?" **DRAFT OF MAJOR ESSAY DUE FROM EXTERNAL STUDENTS. NOTE FOR EXTERNAL STUDENTS:** Once you have submitted your draft, you will be linked to one or two other students through "Peer Mark" in order to give and receive feedback on early drafts of your major essay.

Wk 9: Mon, Oct 7: Industrialization and the Cauldron of War: A Triumph for the Stalinist System? QUESTIONS: "What were the main achievements of Stalinism in the 1930s and 1940s, and what were its major failures?"

Wk 10: Mon, Oct 14: Post-Stalin reforms and Social and Economic change: A resurgent Communist world? **ESSAY 2 DUE.** QUESTIONS: "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?"

Wk 11: Mon, Oct 21: Stagnation, *Perestroika* and Collapse. QUESTIONS: "Why did the Soviet government embark on radical changes after 1985, and why did the attempt at reform fail?"

Wk 12: Mon, Oct 28: The 1990s: The End of an Experiment. QUESTIONS: "Was Russian society democratic or capitalist in the 1990s?"

Wk 13: Mon, Nov 4: Russia today: Russian or Capitalist? QUESTIONS: "What do regard as the main achievements of post-Soviet Russia and the major challenges it faces in the future?" **MAJOR ESSAY DUE.**

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.*)

Undergraduate 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 or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Student Support

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

Learning Skills

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

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

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

If you are a Global MBA student contact 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/.

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.

Graduate Capabilities

Creative and Innovative

Our graduates will also be capable of creative thinking and of creating knowledge. They will be imaginative and open to experience and capable of innovation at work and in the community. We want them to be engaged in applying their critical, creative thinking.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Assess, interpret, and make sophisticated use of written and visual evidence, much of which was generated in highly charged polemical environments.
- Assess the significance of modern Russian and Soviet history for fundamental discussions within the history discipline about the nature and evolution of modern societies throughout the world.

Assessment tasks

- DRAFT OF MAJOR ESSAY
- ACTIVE TUTORIAL PARTICIPATION

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Evaluate different theoretical and historiographical approaches to the Soviet attempt to build a new type of society.
- Build their ability to undertake efficient and focused research, to write up their research clearly and logically, and to meet deadlines.

- Assess the significance of modern Russian and Soviet history for fundamental discussions within the history discipline about the nature and evolution of modern societies throughout the world.

Commitment to Continuous Learning

Our graduates will have enquiring minds and a literate curiosity which will lead them to pursue knowledge for its own sake. They will continue to pursue learning in their careers and as they participate in the world. They will be capable of reflecting on their experiences and relationships with others and the environment, learning from them, and growing - personally, professionally and socially.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Construct complex historical arguments, and defend and modify them rigorously and persuasively, both in class and in their written work.
- Build their ability to undertake efficient and focused research, to write up their research clearly and logically, and to meet deadlines.
- Assess the significance of modern Russian and Soviet history for fundamental discussions within the history discipline about the nature and evolution of modern societies throughout the world.

Assessment tasks

- DRAFT OF MAJOR ESSAY
- MAJOR ESSAY
- ACTIVE TUTORIAL PARTICIPATION

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Students who have completed this course 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 modern Russian and Soviet history for fundamental discussions within the history discipline about the nature and evolution of modern societies throughout the world.

Assessment tasks

- ESSAY 1
- DRAFT OF MAJOR ESSAY
- ESSAY 2
- MAJOR ESSAY
- ACTIVE TUTORIAL PARTICIPATION

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Students who have completed this course 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, interpret, and make sophisticated use of written and visual evidence, much of which was generated in highly charged polemical environments.

Assessment tasks

- ESSAY 1
- DRAFT OF MAJOR ESSAY
- ESSAY 2
- MAJOR ESSAY
- ACTIVE TUTORIAL PARTICIPATION

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Students who have completed this course 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.
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Assessment tasks

- ESSAY 1
- DRAFT OF MAJOR ESSAY
- ESSAY 2
- MAJOR ESSAY

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Students who have completed this course 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.
- 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 their ability to undertake efficient and focused research, to write up their research clearly and logically, and to meet deadlines.

Assessment tasks

- ESSAY 1
- ESSAY 2
- MAJOR ESSAY
- ACTIVE TUTORIAL PARTICIPATION

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Assess the significance of modern Russian and Soviet history for fundamental discussions within the history discipline about the nature and evolution of modern societies throughout the world.

Assessment tasks

- DRAFT OF MAJOR ESSAY
- MAJOR ESSAY

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active

participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Assessment tasks

- DRAFT OF MAJOR ESSAY
- MAJOR ESSAY