

COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Academic School/Department: Social Sciences and Humanities

Programme: International History
International Relations
Political Science

FHEQ Level: 5

Course Title: Russian History and Politics

Course Code: HST 5101

Total Hours: 120

Timetabled Hours: 45

Guided Learning Hours: 0

Independent Learning: 75

Credits: 12 UK CATS credits
6 ECTS credits
3 US credits

Course Description:

This course focuses on the political evolution of the world's first Communist state - its birth, development, collapse and recent transformation. The course will introduce students to the major developments in Russian history and politics from the revolution of 1905 to the First and Second World Wars, to the Cold War, the rise and fall of the Soviet Union and to its successor.

Pre-requisites:

GEP 4180 Research and Writing 2

Aims and Objectives:

- To introduce students to the major developments of Russian history and politics over the last century in an international context
- To thematically compare the Tsarist empire, the USSR and contemporary Russia
- To provide a background for eventual careers in fields which require articulate, clear-thinking individuals with a grasp of international history
- To foster the acquisition, development, and consolidation of a variety of historical and transferable skills through the study of particular themes in international history
- To promote critical engagement with a wide range of primary and secondary historical sources, and the development of both a succinct writing style and the ability to present complex arguments orally

Programme Outcomes:

International History: A5(i); A5(iii); B5(i); B5(iii); C5(i); C5(ii); C5(iii); D5(ii); D5(iii)

International Relations: A5i, B5i, C5ii, C5iii, D5i, D5ii, D5iii

Political Science: A5i, B5i, C5ii, C5iii, D5i, D5ii, D5iii

A detailed list of the programme outcomes is found in the Programme Specification. This is maintained by Registry and located at:

<https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, the students will have achieved the following learning outcomes.

- Demonstrates a detailed understanding of the historical development of economic and political institutions in the Soviet Union and Russia, including the internal understanding of these processes.
- Demonstrates a detailed understanding of the dynamic transitions in social, political, and economic life in the Soviet Union and Russia in an international context.
- Demonstrates a historiographical engagement with core problems and issues in studying social, politics and economic processes in studying the Soviet Union and Russia.
- Completes assigned work with a degree of autonomy, clarity, technical competence, capacity for self-evaluation and critical thinking appropriate for a 5000-level course

Indicative Content:

- Collapse of Imperial Russia/Birth of the Soviet Union
- Russia and the Soviet Union in International Relations
- Social realities and the economic and political systems of the Soviet Union
- The Soviet transformation, 1985-1991
- The fall of communism and the rebirth of Russia
- Social, political and economic institutions and processes in post-Soviet Russia
- The evolution of foreign policy in modern Russia

Assessment:

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/university-policies/>

Teaching Methodology:

This course will be taught through a combination of lectures and seminar-type activities, including group work, sub-group activities, classroom discussion, and the showing of documentaries. The general approach to classes is informal, and discussion is viewed as an essential part of an interactive and participatory learning program. Audio-visual aids, study materials and electronic learning resources will be used as appropriate.

Lectures provide a framework for the course, and are designed to ensure students have an overview of main issues and concerns on a particular topic, receive clarification on the major points of debate, understand the broad dimensions of core problems, and are aware of relevant literature in the specific area of concern. It is essential that lectures are

supplemented with assigned readings; together, the readings and the lectures are designed to provide guidance for seminar discussion.

Seminar classes are based on the principle of active and student-directed learning, and are designed to be Safe, Enjoyable, Managed, Inclusive, Necessary, Academic, Respectful & Stimulating. The seminars provide an opportunity for discussion of contentious issues, addressing questions and exploring academic debates in more depth, group and sub-group discussion. They are encouraged to share their opinions freely, but must also maintain respect for the opinions of others. It is expected that students will participate regularly in discussions in a creative, competent and critical way, as the formulation of their own thoughts and clarification of their assumptions, often in contradiction to other students' thoughts and assumptions, form a crucial part of the learning process. Students are expected to come to seminar classes prepared.

Indicative Texts:

Richard Sakwa, *Russian Politics and Society*, 5th ed. Routledge, 2020

Daniel Treisman, *The Return: Russia's Journey from Gorbachev to Medvedev*, Simon & Schuster, 2011

John M. Thompson, *A Vision Unfulfilled: Russia and the Soviet Union in the Twentieth Century*, Houghton Mifflin, 2020

See syllabus for complete reading list.

Change Log for this CSD:

Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or LTPC)	Change Actioned by Academic Registry
Various updates as part of the UG programme review	AB Jan 2022	
Revision – annual update	May 2023	
Total Hours Updated	April 2024	