

HIST 129a. Medieval Russia.

Fall 2022 ver. 8-23-22

Part 1: Course information

Time and place: Tuesdays and Thursdays from noon-1:15 p.m. in Brighton 210.

Instructor information

Instructor: Aaron J. Cohen, PhD.

Office hours: TuWeTh 1:30-2:30 p.m. or by appointment in Tahoe Hall 3092 OR via Zoom @ <https://csus.zoom.us/my/cohenofficehours>.

E-mail: cohenaj@csus.edu.

Catalog description

Emergence of early modern Russia from the principalities of medieval Russia. Emphasis on Eastern European, Byzantine, and Eurasian contributions to Russian history.

Registration details

Graded: Graded Student.

Units: 3.0.

Prerequisite: None.

GE area: **C2 (Humanities).**

Course description

For most people, medieval Rus and early modern Muscovy are unknown chapters in the wider European and Eurasian historical experience. In this course we will study a broad outline of early Russian political, cultural, social, and economic history from the ninth to the seventeenth century, including the formation of Rus, the significance of Byzantium and the Mongols for early Russian history, and the rise of Novgorod, Lithuania, and Muscovy. Major themes include the emergence of different cultural traditions and political regions out of the shared historical experience of medieval Rus, the importance of war and religion in these changes, and early Russia's place in the wider medieval world.

Textbooks and course materials

Required texts.

1. *Reinterpreting Russian History* (Kaiser and Marker). ISBN 9780195078589.
2. *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales* (Zenkovsky). ISBN 9780452010864).
3. Occasional short documents posted on Canvas.

Course technology requirements

Handouts and assignments are distributed only via Canvas. **Students have a responsibility to access course materials and assignments in a timely manner**; the instructor will not be held responsible for any circumstances, technical or personal, that prevent access to course material.

All required technology is available at low or no cost through student support services at Sac State. Students may use personal computers or similar devices, but they must meet the following requirements:

- High-speed internet connection.
- Access to Canvas throughout the semester.
- Ability to use Zoom, Microsoft Word, and Adobe software. **Do NOT use Google Docs OR portable devices as word processors in this course.**

The CSUS library and Instructional Resource Technology office provide **free laptops** and **Microsoft Word** for students to use on a short- or long-term [basis](#).

Technical assistance

For other technical questions, please:

- See [Canvas for Students](#) for common Canvas questions and solutions.
- Email the [Academic Technology Center](#) in AIRC 2005.
- Call (916) 278-7337.

Safety and wellness

You should be aware by now of Sacramento State's Fall 2022 COVID-19 policies. You can find out more at Sacramento State's [COVID-19 page](#). We will be following those policies in this classroom. Vaccines are required for everyone on campus except those who have been granted a religious or medical exemption per the [CSU's COVID-19 vaccination requirement](#). Masks are NOT required at this point but are recommended indoors. Please respect your fellow students' decision to mask or not mask. You can schedule a vaccine at [My Turn California](#) and find out more about vaccines and booster eligibility on the [CDC website](#). Remember that COVID-19 is still a threat, even for those who are vaccinated and boosted. Please practice self-care, monitor your health for any possible symptoms of COVID-19, and contact a health care provider immediately should you believe you may be infected.

Attendance and COVID-19

Do not come to class if you have COVID-19 symptoms or test positive. COVID-19 tests and safety supplies are available at many locations around campus, including the library and student union. The University will continue to offer free testing to students who are symptomatic through [Student Health and Counseling Services](#). To increase safety on campus, you are required to report a positive COVID-19 test. You will find a confidential reporting form on the [Student Affairs COVID-19 web page](#). Everyone who tests positive, regardless of vaccination status, is required to

stay home for at least 5 days. You should stay home for up to 10 days if your symptoms are not resolved or you continue to test positive. If you come into contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, please refer to this [flowchart](#).

If you need to isolate, please notify me immediately.

- If you are isolating and not ill, I expect you to stay up to date with your academic work remotely as best you can. Checking in with me for assignments will be your responsibility.
- If you are ill, please contact me as soon as you are well so we can work together to catch you up with the rest of the class.
- You will find the latest updates to academic continuity during COVID-19 [here](#).

Flexibility and COVID-19

The degree to which COVID-19 will impact the Sacramento State campus this fall is hard to predict. We want to focus on making your time as a Hornet a memorable and fulfilling experience. But patience and flexibility on all our parts will still be necessary as we navigate COVID-19 -related absences. Communicating with me in a clear and timely manner will help you stay on track academically and help all of us stay healthy.

Basic needs support

If you are experiencing challenges with food, housing, financial or other unique circumstances that are impacting your education, help is just a phone call or email away! The CARES office provides case management support for any enrolled student. Email the CARES office at cares@csus.edu to speak with a case manager about the resources available to you. Check out the [CARES website](#).

Inform your instructor of any accommodations needed

If you have a documented disability and verification from the [Office of Services to Students with Disabilities \(SSWD\)](#) and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact your instructor as soon as possible. It is the student's responsibility to provide documentation of disability to SSWD and meet with a SSWD counselor to request special accommodation *before* classes start. SSWD is located in Lassen Hall 1008 and can be contacted by phone at (916) 278-6955 (Voice) (916) 278-7239 (TDD only) or via email at sswd@csus.edu.

Important notes: Any form of academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, may be reported to the office of student affairs. **This syllabus and course policies are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances or typographical errors. In case of a conflict between the syllabus and Canvas instructions, the syllabus will take precedence unless the syllabus shows a clear error.** Any changes will be announced in class and posted on Canvas. It is the student's responsibility to check Canvas for corrections or updates to the syllabus.

All students are expected to behave according to the [Hornet honor code](#).

Part 2: Course objectives

General course learning objectives

In this course, students will be able to

- Recount a broad outline of Russian history from 800 to 1698 CE.
- Understand the contribution of non-Russian peoples to early Russian history and the political, cultural, and social differences between early Russia and medieval Europe, including issues of class, gender, ethnicity, and religion.
- Practice written communication, critical thinking, and other skills necessary for professional development in history, teaching, and related occupations.
- Discover something interesting about the world and about the self.

Specific topical learning objectives are available on Canvas.

Area C2 learning outcomes

Students completing C2 requirements should be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the conventions and methods of the study of the humanities.
- Investigate, describe, and analyze the roles and effects of human culture and understanding in the development of human societies.
- Compare and analyze various conceptions of humankind.
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the historical development of cultures and civilizations, including their animating ideas and values.

Part 3: Course assignments

Students will meet these objectives through a combination of these course activities:

- I. Two (2) short in-class identification quizzes.
- II. Three (3) 750 word (ca. 3-4 pages double spaced) formal take-home essays.
- III. Online commentaries due each week before class on **Tuesdays, 11:45 a.m.**
- IV. Attendance. Roll will be taken in class.
- V. One (1) in-class final examination. The final is an integral part of the course.
Failure to complete it will result in failure for the course.

Detailed information about these assignments is posted on the course Canvas site.

Part 4: Course schedule

Note: Readings should be completed for the week they are listed. **Students are not expected to read duplicate assignments if they occur in the schedule.** The instructor may add assignments or alter the schedule for special events as needed. Changes will be communicated via Canvas.

Week 0 (read this material first). **Course information.**

Week 1 (August 30, September 1): **Introduction.** *Read:* Kaiser, preface; Zenkovsky, introduction; Canvas readings: Putin.

Week 2 (September 6, 8): **Slavs, Varangians, Constantinople, and the steppe.** *Read:* Kaiser, chapter 1; Zenkovsky, 43-77.

Week 3 (September 13, 15): **Rus.** *Read:* Kaiser, chapters 2-3; Zenkovsky, 85-108.

Week 4 (September 20, 22): **Religion and culture in Rus.** *Read:* Kaiser, chapters 4-5; Zenkovsky, 108-152.

Week 5 (September 27, 29): **Mongols and Kipchaks.** *Read:* Kaiser, chapter 6; Zenkovsky, 193-211, 224-236, 243-248.

Week 6 (October 4, 6): **Essay 1 due (October 6). Vladimir-Suzdalia and Novgorod.** *Read:* Zenkovsky, 77-83, 211-223, 310-314; Canvas reading: Chronicle of Novgorod.

Week 7 (October 11, 13): **Quiz 1 (October 13). Lithuania and Moscow.** *Read:* Kaiser, chapter 7-8; Zenkovsky, 83-84, 315-322.

Week 8 (October 18, 20): **The rise of Muscovy.** *Read:* Zenkovsky, 323-332; Canvas readings: Shields-Kollman, Contarini, Herberstein.

Week 9 (October 25, 27): **Society and economy in Muscovy.** *Read:* Kaiser, chapters 10-11.

Week 10 (November 1, 3): **Ivan IV.** *Read:* Kaiser, chapter 9; Zenkovsky, 366-376; Canvas readings: Perrie (Ivan IV), Ivan IV's early life, Chancellor.

Week 11 (November 8, 10): **Essay 2 due (November 10). Religion and culture in Muscovy.** *Read:* Kaiser, chapters 12-13; Zenkovsky, 259-310.

Week 12 (November 15, 17): **Quiz 2 (November 17). Beginnings of empire.** *Read:* Zenkovsky, 354-365; Canvas readings: Diplomatic Letters, Fletcher, Ermak.

Week 13 (November 22): **In the borderlands.** *Read:* Zenkovsky, 333-353; Canvas readings: Plokyh, Ukraine, Siberia, Nerchinsk, Cossacks.

Week 14 (November 29, December 1): **The Time of Troubles.** *Read:* Zenkovsky, 379-390, 487-489, 503-505; Canvas readings: Bussow, Shuiskii, Conditions for Ascension, Dunning, Perrie (Legends).

Week 15 (December 6, 8): **Essay 3 due (December 8). More troubles.** *Read:* Zenkovsky, 452-486, 511-519; Canvas readings: Olearius, Ulozhenie, Martin.

Final exam: Tuesday, December 13, 12:45 - 2:45 p.m., in our classroom.

Important policies: Course deadlines are enforced by Canvas and cannot be extended for any reason. Keep copies of all your work on a hard drive, flash drive, or paper in the event of computer malfunction or other technical problem.

Part 5: Grading policy

Graded course activities

The final course grade will be based on the average grade for each activity category. **In category III (commentaries) the lowest five (5) scores will be dropped to allow for circumstances that might cause students to miss assignments.** Missing work will be scored as 0.

Each category will be combined using this weighting:

Category	Assignment	% of final course grade
I	Identification quizzes	20
II	Formal written essays	30
III	Weekly commentaries (lowest 5 scores dropped)	20
IV	Attendance	10
V	Final examination	20

Note: To pass the class, students must demonstrate passing competence (60% or above) attempted in 60% or more of assignments within categories AND in 60% or more of all categories. In this class, then, students who fail more than two categories will fail the course. Students must also pass the final to pass the class.

Late work

To be fair to students who work hard to make deadlines, late essays will receive a full letter grade penalty. **No other assignments will be accepted late.** Late essays will normally be graded at the end of the semester, not when submitted, except upon request by the student directly to the instructor. **Final deadline for late essays is before the beginning of the final examination.**

These late policies will be in force also for foreseeable scheduled power outages, COVID-19 physical distancing regulations, travel, and work schedule changes. Students are expected to be aware of technical and social

limits that may impact their area of residence and to plan around them by completing work in advance and notifying the instructor.

Viewing grades in Canvas

Marks received for graded activities will be posted in the Canvas grade book. The instructor will update the online grades each time a grading session has been complete (typically 7 days after the completion of an activity).

Letter grade assignment

Grades for most work are given as letter grades, calculated and averaged using a 12-point system. Attendance is graded on a standard percentage scale. All are computed and rounded by Canvas or Excel.

Letter grade earned	Points used in calculation	Percentage equivalent	GPA equivalent	Standard
A	12	93-100	4.0	Excellent work
A-	11	90-92	3.7	Nearly excellent work
B+	10	87-89	3.3	Very good work
B	9	83-86	3.0	Good work
B-	8	80-82	2.7	Mostly good work
C+	7	77-79	2.3	Above average work
C	6	73-76	2.0	Average work
C-	5	70-72	1.7	Mostly average work
D+	4	67-69	1.3	Below average work
D	3	63-67	1.0	Poor work
D-	2	60-62	0.7	Very poor work
F	1	59 and below	0.0	Failing work
F	0	0	0.0	Not attempted

Part 6: Course policies

Build rapport

If you find that you have any trouble keeping up with assignments or other aspects of the course, make sure you let your instructor know as early as possible. As you will find, building rapport and effective relationships are key to becoming an effective professional. Make sure that you are proactive in informing your instructor when difficulties arise during the semester so that we can help you find a solution.

Complete assignments

All assignments for this course will be submitted electronically through Canvas. Assignments must be submitted by the given deadline. Late or missing assignments will impact the student's grade.

Understand when you may drop this course

It is the student's responsibility to understand when they need to consider disenrolling from a course. Refer to the Sac State Course Schedule for dates and deadlines for registration. After this period, a serious and compelling reason is required to drop from the course. Serious and compelling reasons include documented and significant change in work hours, leaving student unable to attend class, or documented and severe physical or mental illness or injury to the student or student's family.

Incomplete policy

Under emergency or special circumstances students may petition for an incomplete grade. Incompletes will not be given except for a documented emergency that prevents completion of the final assignments (missing online work is not eligible).

Communication policy

The instructor monitors email daily and will respond when contacted with questions. Normally a response should come immediately, but students should wait at least 24 hours before sending follow-up communications. The instructor will normally give feedback on assignments only through Canvas course rubrics but is happy to provide more personalized feedback by email, Zoom, or in person.

Part 7: Commit to integrity

By taking this class you agree to abide by the guidelines described in this syllabus and on the academic honesty page available on the Canvas site.

Students must respect the intellectual property of others in this class. Make sure to cite sources of other people's ideas; do not pass them off as your own. Copying from other students, assigned course work, or outside web sites without quotation and attribution will be treated as plagiarism and dealt with according to university policy. Students who plagiarize will be warned and receive an F for that assignment.

On the second infraction, the student will receive an F for the course.

Turnitin tool

Formal written essays are reviewed using the Canvas Turnitin tool for writing feedback and originality check purposes.

Consistent with Sacramento State's efforts to enhance student learning, foster honesty, and maintain integrity in our academic processes, instructors may use a tool called Turnitin to compare a student's work with multiple sources. The tool compares each student's work with an extensive database of prior publications and papers, providing links to possible matches and a "similarity score." The tool does not determine whether plagiarism has occurred or not. Instead, the instructor must make a complete assessment and judge the originality of the student's work.

Students should submit essays to Turnitin assignments without identifying information included in the paper (e.g., name or student number), the system will automatically show this info to faculty in your course when viewing the submission, but the information will not be retained by Turnitin.

Sac State's academic honesty policy & procedures

"The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of scholars and teachers. California State University, Sacramento expects that both faculty and students will honor these principles, and in so doing, will protect the integrity of academic work and student grades."

Definitions (from the Sacramento State University Library)

At Sac State, "**cheating** is the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through the use of any dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means." For clarity, "**plagiarism is a form of cheating**," defined by the university as "the use of distinctive ideas or works belonging to another person without providing adequate acknowledgement of that person's contribution."

Read more about Sac State's [Academic Honesty Policy & Procedures](#).