1. **Course description.** This course traces economic factors leading to the downfall of the Russian Empire and the rise of the USSR, followed by an assessment of the decline and aftermath of the USSR. Particular attention is devoted to the NEP period, earlier Soviet economic models, the famine of the 1930s, the impact of the Great Patriotic War (WWII), industrialization and urbanization, Soviet planning, and declining productivity growth and life expectancy in the 1970s and 1980s. The course then explores the economic consequences of the USSR's collapse as well as the nature of recovery in various countries that followed. The course concludes with an overview of formal political economy models. Students will be encouraged to explore Census data, household surveys, and other data sources.

2. **Partnership with the Kyiv School of Economics.** This course will include roughly 6 participants and 1 TA (Ms. Olha Halytsia, now in the World Bank's Kyiv office) from the Kyiv School of Economics' [https://kse.ua/](https://kse.ua/) MA program. They will be linked via Zoom, and are expected to follow the same program as Duke students. Depending on areas of interest, I may allow teams to work on research projects. In any case, I will expect KSE and Duke students to interact, including by making comments on each other’s term papers.

3. **Duke Reader Project.** The course has a significant writing and presentation requirement, as noted below. Students will have the option to participate in the Duke Reader Project, through which students get feedback on drafts of their written work from Duke alumni who have professional experience relevant to their projects. For our course, volunteer readers will have backgrounds in some area of economics, history, or business related to the cold war or USSR. Students are also encouraged to make use of the Duke Writing Studio for help with writing assignments.

4. **Learning objectives.** This course has multiple objectives. [QS] There is a significant amount of economic theory, which presumes and uses mathematics through Math 202/212 to build economic models that explain economic and political behavior. The course also expects students to obtain and utilize a data set of their choice, but with my approval, to analyze issues related to Soviet/post-Soviet economic history, or current issues. All Russian/Soviet censuses are available online, as are standard household datasets such as the Russian and Ukrainian Longitudinal Monitoring Surveys, the Life in Kyrgyzstan survey, a multitude of DHS (Demographic and Household Surveys), World Bank firm-level surveys, and housing and real estate databases such as [www.krisha.kz](http://www.krisha.kz).

[CZ, CCI] While this is not a humanities course, it is expected that students will gain an appreciation of civilizations both with respect to Russia and its neighbors/satellite states. Toward that end, a substantial history component will be required (and covered on exams), and on many topics there will be reference to relevant literary works. For example, it is difficult to cover the full impact of the war from dry statistics; the work of Nobel Laureate Svetlana Alexievich will be a valuable complement to the technical work, much as will be the work of the satirist/novelist Andrei Kurkov when we discuss the 1990s transition period.

[EL] Finally, the entire course focuses on the causes of the rise and collapse of the USSR and then the behaviors
of those in its successor states. The political economy aspect of the course focuses on human motivations and seeks to understand the consequences of actions, both individual and societal, and address the ethical and political implications of political choices. This is particularly important in the Soviet/post-Soviet context because of the large number of decisions that had cataclysmic – and generally negative – effects on human welfare.

5. **Prerequisites:** Econ 201 (intermediate micro I) and 208 (econometrics) or equivalent. If you have not had 208, I urge you to take it this fall with Prof. Thomas. Working knowledge of differential and integral calculus, and some data-handling skills are necessary. **Useful skills:** some familiarity with Russian or Ukrainian language, basic familiarity with Soviet/Russian empire political history. This will help you navigate websites and access databases which, of course, is the key purpose of language study.

6. **Honor code and course policies.** Failure to acknowledge assistance on an assignment, or to cite a source of information used in an assignment, or to represent the work of others as your own, violates the University's honor code. Any violations may result in failure of the assignment or the course, or expulsion from the University.

Any exam missed for a non-legitimate reason will be accorded the grade of 0. Any exam missed for a legitimate reason will be made up with an oral exam as soon as EcoTeach can schedule it.

Late work will be penalized by 1/3 grade point per day late (excluding Sundays).

Assignments must be submitted via Sakai. An electronic and a hard copy of the term paper must be submitted to the instructor.

Standard formatting for regular text material shall be as follows: 1-inch margins top/bottom/left/right; 1.5 line spacing; extra space between paragraphs; Garamond 12 font; right hand justification for main text. References and footnotes should be single space (with space between individual citations) and Garamond 11 font.

Assignments and term papers that have not gone through a basic spell and grammar check will not be accepted. Files attached with viruses will be deleted and not regarded as submitted; if for some reason the virus gets through and infects one of my computers, you will receive a grade of 0 for the assignment.

7. **Grading and assignments.** The grades will be determined as weighted averages of exam and homework performances:

- USSR overview quiz 5% Sept 4
- Literature review and research project proposal 15% Sept 18
- Critical analysis of a scholarly journal research paper 15% Oct 21
- Research paper (including oral presentation) 40% Nov 26
- Final examination¹ or final draft of research project 25% Dec 12 (7:00 pm)

- The essays/presentations include two technical presentations of recent papers in economics journals, with dissemination via Sakai to the class, and one "live" classroom presentation. These should be short but detailed presentations of a formal (i.e., mathematical) economic model or econometric application pertinent to the USSR. Topics must receive the instructor's approval.

- The research paper is expected to be a journal article-type research paper that could be developed into or submitted as an honors thesis. It should be 15-30 pages in length plus tables, on a topic of the student's choice, but subject to instructor approval. The paper is expected to involve [a] original empirical or theoretical research, or [b] a comprehensive survey a topic, and provide policy analysis in light of recent data and research. However, I will push strongly for all students to undertake original empirical work, regardless of

¹ I reserve the right to cancel the final, in which case the presentation and survey will count for 30% (combined) and the term paper 45% of the total grade.
whether or not it makes use of sophisticated statistical techniques

- The final examination, if it takes place, will be comprehensive.

8. **Texts and major books.** There are no required books, though I recommend buying and skimming through the Gregory-Stuart text. I may ask you to read from Alexeev-Weber as well. My class slides will be posted on Sakai. These are intended to be supplemental, and are neither a perfect substitute for class or for the readings. Special thanks are due to Andrei Markevich, Yuri Zhukov, and Rustem Nureev for thoughtfully posting their reading lists on line, and to Gani Aldashev, Anna Chorniy, Anna Rafferty, Aleksandr Rubin, Ai-Gul Seitenova, Lennart Samuelsson, and Natalya Tourdieva for help in preparing this reading list.


9. **Course outline and lots of literature.** As we come to each topic, I will note required and optional readings. The class itself will be conducted as a guided discussion, except when it is necessary to present formal models, or when students are making presentations. Thus, it is essential that everyone have done a substantial amount of reading on each subject prior to the class. **As a general policy, I expect each student to read the Alexeev-Weber book and Gregory-Stuart as useful background material, and as needed. Students also should read at least one paper (or chapter from a book) for each class, and to contribute to the discussion based on that reading. Readings may be chosen from the syllabus below, or from the journals and websites listed above, or found elsewhere.**

[1] **The big picture: becoming familiar with the USSR**

[2] **Economic conditions in the late Tsarist era**

• Dempster G. 'The fiscal background of the Russian Revolution', *European Review of Economic History*, 2006, 10: 35-50
• Dennison, Tracy and Nafziger, Peter. ‘Micro Perspectives on Russian Living Standards, 1750–1917,’ *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 2013 42(3): 397-441;
• Горюшкина, Наталья Евгеньевна. "Пьянство и борьба с ним в эпоху винного акциза (1863-1894 гг.)." *Известия Российского государственного педагогического университета имени А.И. Герцена* 143 (2011).
• Gregg, Amanda. 'Factory Productivity and the Concession System of Incorporation in Late Imperial Russia,' Mimeo http://economichistory.ca/pdfs/2014/gregg.pdf
• Gregory, Paul R. ‘Russian Living Standards during the Industrialization Era, 1885-1913’, Review of Income and Wealth, 1980, 26(1);
• Moon David ‘Reassessing Russian Serfdom’, European History Quarterly, 1996, 26: 483-526
• Nafziger, Steven. 'Peasant Communes and Factor Markets in Late Nineteenth Century Russia,’ Explorations in Economic History, 2010, 47(4): 381-402;
• Nafziger, Steven. ‘Did Ivan’s Vote Matter? The Case of the Zemstvo in Tsarist Russia,’ European Review of Economic History 2011, 15: 393-441.
• Шербина, Федор Андреевич. Крестьянские бюджеты. Изд. Имп. Вольнаго экон. об-ва, 1900. (Google books)
[3] **Revolution and economic chaos**

- Markevich Andrei and Mark Harrison. ‘Great War, Civil War, and Recovery: Russia's National Income, 1913 to 1928’, *Journal of Economic History* 71 (3): 672 – 703

[4] **The NEP years**

- Davies, Robert William. From tsarism to the new economic policy: Continuity and change in the economy of the USSR. Springer, 1990. (Google books)
- Ellman, Michael. ‘On a Mistake of Preobrazhensky and Stalin,’ *Journal of Development Studies*, 1978, 14(3)
- Ellman, Michael. ‘Did the Agricultural Surplus Provide the Resources for the Increase in Investment in the USSR During the First Five Year Plan?’ *Economic Journal*, 1975, 85(340);
- Erlich, Alexander. ‘Preobrazhenski and the Economics of Soviet Industrialization’ *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 1950, 64(1)
[5] **Industrialization**

Collectivization, income, and famine


War! (and terror)


Бородкина А.И., Грегори П., Хлевнюка О.В. (под ред.) Экономика принудительного труда. М-РОССПЭН, 2005.


Ellman, Michael. ‘Soviet Repression Statistics: Some Comments,’ Europe Asia Studies, 2002, 54(7);


Demographic consequences of the Great Patriotic War...


Kashcheev, V. V., S. Yu Chekin, M. A. Maksioutov, K. A. Tumanov, E. V. Kochergina, P. V. Kashcheeva, N. 


[8] \textbf{Chernobyl! ...and Semipalatinsk}

- Алишев, Н. В., Драгбин, Б. А., Шубик, В. М., Николаева, Н. А., & Пучкова, Е. И. (2012). Последствия ядерных испытаний на Семипалатинском полигоне. Медицина экстремальных ситуаций, (1 (39)).
- Kashcheev, V. V., S. Yu Chekin, M. A. Maksioutov, K. A. Tumanov, E. V. Kochergina, P. V. Kashcheeva, N.


• Morgan, William F. "Is there a common mechanism underlying genomic instability, bystander effects and other nontargeted effects of exposure to ionizing radiation?" Oncogene 22, no. 45 (2003): 7094.


[9a] Militarization


• Harrison, Mark, Contracting for Counterintelligence: the KGB and Soviet Informers of the 1960s and 1970s (May 1, 2019). Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3381522 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3381522


Industrialization, Stagnation, Agricultural Struggles, and Decline

• Шевельков, Анатолий Иванович. "Аграрная политика и нарастание кризиса в сельском хозяйстве РСФСР во второй половине XX века." Вестник Челябинского государственного университета 6 (2009).

[10] Demographic change
• Исупов, Владимир Анатольевич. "Гендерный дисбаланс сельского населения России (РСФСР) в годы Второй мировой войны (1939–1945 гг.)." Демографическое обозрение 6, no. 1 (2019).
• Пьянкова, Анастасия Ивановна, Тимур Асфанович Фаттахов, Кирилл Сергеевич Баканов, и Елена Дмитриевна Юрасова. "Смертность от дорожно-транспортных происшествий в Москве: анализ
связанных данных полиции и государственного статистического учета умерших." Демографическое обозрение 6, no. 1 (2019).

- Волков, Андрей Гаврилович, ed. Демографические процессы в СССР: сборник научных трудов. Наука, 1990.
- Росстат и МинЗдрав РФ, Репродуктивное Здоровье Населения России 2011. Москва 2012
- Шульгин С.Г., Щербов С.Я. Продолжительность здоровой жизни населения России. Моделирование, региональные оценки и прогнозирование. Федеральное государственное бюджетное образовательное учреждение высшего образования, Российская Академия Народного Хозяйства, 2018

Urbanization

- Махрова, Алла Георгиевна, Татьяна Григорьевна Нефедова, and Андрей Трйвиш. Московская область сегодня и завтра: тенденции и перспективы пространственного развития. Новый хронограф, 2008.
- Н. Косарева, Т. Полиди. Оценка валового городского продукта в российских городах и его вклада в ВВП России в 2000—2015 гг. Voprosy Ekonomiki 2017
Collapse, Crisis, and Catastrophe: the 1990s


• Yakovlev, Evgeny. "Demand for Alcohol Consumption in Russia and Its Implication for Mortality." *American

### Oligarchs and corruption

- Р. Кочнев, А. Поляшук, А. Рубин, Коррупция «одного окна»: теория и эмпирический анализ. unpublished manuscript 2018 (longer version; in Russian)
- Kurangaliev, Madina, Criminal Justice and Wealth Inequality: How Much Freedom Can Money Buy in...


Stefes, Christoph H. "Governance, the state, and systemic corruption: Armenia and Georgia in comparison." *Caucasian Review of International Affairs* 2.2 (2008): 73-83.

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[15] **Building a modern economy**

- Алексеев М.В., Арлашкин Н.Ю., Барбашова Н.Е., Дерюгин А.Н., Комарницкая А.Н., Могучев Н.С., Тищенко Т.В., Филиппова И.Л., Бюджетные правила на региональном уровне: основные подходы и рекомендации. Федеральное государственное бюджетное образовательное учреждение высшего образования, Российская Академия Народного Хозяйства, 2018
- Авраамова Е.М., Каравай А.В., Логинов Д.М., Адаптационные стратегии населения: между выживанием и развитием. Федеральное государственное бюджетное образовательное учреждение высшего образования, Российская Академия Народного Хозяйства, 2018


• Горлин, Ю.М., Лаков В.Ю., Малева Т.М., Повышение пенсионного возраста: позитивные эффекты и вероятные риски. Федеральное государственное бюджетное образовательное учреждение высшего образования, Российская Академия Народного Хозяйства, 2018


• Iwasaki, Ichiro, "Corporate governance system and regional heterogeneity: evidence from east and west Russia,” Hitotsubashi Univ: Russian Research Center working paper no. 72, Nov. 2017.


• Lukiyanova, Anna. "Earnings inequality and informal employment in Russia." *Economics of Transition* 23.2 (2015):
469-516.


An afterthought: you should be learning the literature as well. In case you haven’t had a course, favorite authors of mine who will give you a sense of different eras of the USSR and thereafter include:

Svetlana Alexievich
Mikhail Bulgakov
Dmitriy Bykov
Sergei Dovlatov
Andrei Kurkov
Alexandra Marinina
### Useful data and research sites:

- **Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn**
- **Vladimir Voinovich**

For those who read Russian:  
[Novaya Gazeta](https://www.novayagazeta.ru/articles/2017/12/06/74821-
vozhde-
ne-
sobiraetsya-
umirat)

### Films:

- **Road to Berlin**  
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHm8MqZw5Jg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHm8MqZw5Jg)
- **Komanda**  
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dz6bnVS9kFI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dz6bnVS9kFI)
- **Irony of Fate**  
  [http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1urcgk](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1urcgk)
- **He Isn’t a Demon to You**  
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qrwlk7_GF9g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qrwlk7_GF9g)
- **Road to Berlin**  
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHm8MqZw5Jg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHm8MqZw5Jg)
- **Irony of Fate**  
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U29CVBHTPu8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U29CVBHTPu8)
- **Irony of Fate**  
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qEssugLwxMo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qEssugLwxMo)
- **Brother 2**  
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K9TRaGNgjEU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K9TRaGNgjEU)
- **Russia88**  
- **Vlast.kz**  
  [https://vlast.kz/memorialday/23219-dokumentalnyj-film-karlag-
dolznost-hudoznik.html](https://vlast.kz/memorialday/23219-
dokumentalnyj-film-karlag-
dolznost-hudoznik.html)
- **The Strange Side**  
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_aHn1CUpf4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_aHn1CUpf4)
  (part 1)
  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0O1qON9p220](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0O1qON9p220)
  (part 2)

Novel by Gennadii Golovin:  
[https://www.e-
reading.club/bookreader.php/147367/Golovin_-Chuzhaya
storona.html](https://www.e-
reading.club/bookreader.php/147367/Golovin_-Chuzhaya
storona.html)

### Election commercials you always wanted to see:

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kk134Ma79og](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kk134Ma79og)

Dashcam favorites:
- [https://www.youtube.com/</embed/5RAaW_1FzYg?autoplay=1&modestbranding=1&rel=0&showinfo=0](https://www.youtube.com/embed/5RAaW_1FzYg?autoplay=1&modestbranding=1&rel=0&showinfo=0)
- [catchy Gazprom song](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xGbI87tyr_4)

Quick Russian language text (Alexander Lipson’s classic):  

Photos:
- [http://www.netlore.ru/sssr-foto](http://www.netlore.ru/sssr-foto)
- [https://repository.duke.edu/de/esr](https://repository.duke.edu/de/esr)

There are tons of great websites in former USSR countries (as long as you read Russian or the national language).  
Vlast.kz has a really nice urban environment series and also has a series on Kazakhstan on the eve of the Revolution and during the civil war:  

…and if you want to drive yourself (or others) crazy, it’s hard to beat the monotonous beat of rapper Timothy and his “My best friend is President Putin”  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jp9pfveKF4&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jp9pfveKF4&feature=youtu.be)
Amazing links from Dr. Natalia Tourdiyeva, CEFIR/nes and National Bank of Russia

1) Detailed economic information:
http://sophist.hse.ru

2) History of the WWII as seen from Russian official viewpoint:
https://www.pobediteli.ru
http://podyvmanoroda.ru/?#tab=navHome
http://pobeda.elar.ru

3) Gulag
https://gulagmap.ru
https://bessmertnybarak.ru

Gulag in Moscow: https://topos.memo.ru

Yury Dmitriev's case (how Gulag's mentality is fighting back right now people who try to build collective memory): https://les.media/articles/406627-de-lo-khottabycha. – he was one of those who discovered Sandarmokh mass grave (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sandarmokh)

1) Arzamas Academy website: (tons of interesting stuff on Russian culture) https://arzamas.academy/
2) A special project on the history of the 1917 in Russia (every possible small detail on February 1917 and October 1917 revolutions): https://project1917.com/
3) A follow-up project on Soviet history after 1917: https://kartaistorii.ru/

http://www.ristat.org - various regional indicators on economics and social development for five cross-sections (1795, 1858, 1897, 1959 and 2002);
http://www.hist.msu.ru/Dynamics/ - time-series on various aspects of Russian development (national level) in the 19th – early 20th century;
http://www.ggdc.net/maddison/ - Russian/Soviet statistics in cross-country comparison;
http://src-home.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/database/SESS.html - Soviet statistics;
http://www.hist.msu.ru/Labs/Ecohist/version/r_databa.htm - Russian statistics and some archival micro data;
http://www.demoSCOPE.ru/weekly/pril.php - population statistics;
http://memo.ru/history/ - historical sources and statistics on political repression.
http://history.nsc.ru/kapital/project/about.html - historical sources and statistics on Siberia.

Demographic & Health Surveys http://www.measuredhs.com/
Demoscope http://www.demoscope.ru
e-Library.ru https://eLibrary.ru
Gaidar Institute Институт экономики переходного периода
Gregory, Paul https://www.hoover.org/profiles/paul-r-gregory
Higher School of Economics, Institute of Demography https://www.hse.ru/org/hse/sci/demo
Human Mortality Database http://www.mortality.org/
Integrated Public Use Microdata Series – International https://international.ipums.org/international/
Kazakhstan health statistics http://www.medinfo.kz/#/stats
Kazakhstan real estate portal (Zillow-like) https://krisha.kz/ https://krisha.kz/content/analytics
Kommersant https://www.kommersant.ru/
Life in Kyrgyzstan survey https://lifeinkyrgyzstan.org/
Markevich, Andrei https://www.nes.ru/en/people/catalog/m/amarkevich
10. Useful journals and research centers:

Comparative Economic Studies
Demographic Review (Higher School of Economics) [https://demreview.hse.ru/en](https://demreview.hse.ru/en) (complete papers in Russian)
Economic History Review
Economics of Transition
European Review of Economic History
Explorations in Economic History
Journal of Comparative Economics
Journal of Economic History
Stockholm Institute of Transition Economics (SITE) [http://www.sbs.su/en/research](http://www.sbs.su/en/research)
World Development
Forbes Kazakhstan [https://forbes.kz/process/urbanity/kak_reanimiruyut_monogoroda](https://forbes.kz/process/urbanity/kak_reanimiruyut_monogoroda) (and many others)
Kleptocracy Initiative [http://kleptocracyinitiative.org/](http://kleptocracyinitiative.org/)
https://www.hse.ru/org/hse/sci/demo/index.html
https://demreview.hse.ru/
http://strelka.com/en/research