Economics 690: SOVIET AND POST-SOVET ECONOMIC HISTORY

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/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. **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.
5. **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 original empirical or theoretical research.
- The final examination, if it takes place, will be comprehensive.

6. **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 Seitanova, Lennart Samuelsson, and Natalya Tourdieva for help in preparing this reading list.


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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.
7. **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**
- Chernina, Eugenia, Paul Castañeda Dower and Andrei Markevich. ‘Property Rights and Internal Migration:

- Dennison, Tracy and Nafziger, Peter. ‘Micro Perspectives on Russian Living Standards, 1750–1917,’ *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 2013 42(3): 397-441;
- 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);
- Nafziger, Steven. ‘Peasant Communes and Factor Markets in Late Nineteenth Century Russia,’ *Explorations in...


- Nafziger, Steven. ‘Did Ivan’s Vote Matter? The Case of the Zemstvo in Tsarist Russia,’ *European Review of Economic History* 2011, 15: 393-441.


- Щербина, 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 tourism 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)


- Gregory, Paul and Mark Harrison. “Allocation under Dictatorship: Research in Stalin’s Archives”, *Journal of


Watkins, Thayer, "Soviet planning in the 1920s." San Jose State University, unpublished ms.

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**Industrialization**


[6] **Collectivization, income, and famine**


- Davies, Robert William. *The Industrialisation of Soviet Russia 2: Soviet Collective Farm, 1929-1930*. Springer,
1989.


[7] War! (and terror)


- Бородкина Л.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);


- Gregory, Paul R. The political economy of Stalinism: Evidence from the Soviet secret archives. Cambridge University Press,
2004.


[8] Chernobyl! ...and Semipalatinsk

- Алипьев, Н. В., Драбкин, Б. А., Шубик, В. М., Николаева, Н. А., & Пучкова, Е. И. (2012). Последствия ядерных испытаний на Семипалатинском полигоне. Медицина экстремальных ситуаций, (1 (39)).


• 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.


**Militarization**


**Industrialization, Stagnation, Agricultural Struggles, and Decline**

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[10] **Demographic change**

• Isupov, Vladimir Anatolevich. "Gendered disbalance of rural population of Russia (RSFSR) in the second half of the 20th century (1939–1945)." Демографическое обозрение 6, no. 1 (2019).


• Vishnevsky, Anatoly. "Mortality in Russia: the second epidemiological revolution that never was." Демографическое обозрение English Selection (2015).


• Н. Косарева, Т. Полиди. Оценка валового городского продукта в российских городах и его вклада в ВВП России в 2000—2015 гг. Voprosy Ekonomiki 2017

[12] Collapse, Crisis, and Catastrophe: the 1990s
• Anderson, Gary M., and Peter J. Boettke. 'Soviet Venality: a Rent-Seeking Model of the Communist State,' Public Choice, 1997, 93(1-2);
• Belova, Eugenia, and Paul R. Gregory. 'Dictators, Loyal and Opportunistic Agents: the Soviet Archives on Creating the Soviet Economic System,' Public Choice, 2002, 113 (3-4);
• Harrison, Mark. 'Coercion, Compliance, and the Collapse of the Soviet Command Economy,' Economic History Review, 2002, 55(3);
• Ponomareva, Maria, and Ekaterina Zhuravskaya. "Federal tax arrears in Russia. Liquidity problems, federal redistribution or regional resistance?" Economics of Transition 12.3 (2004): 373-398.

• Малева Т. М. *Родители и дети, мужчины и женщины в семье и обществе*. – НИСП, 2007.

**Oligarchs and corruption**

• Alexeev, Michael and James Leitzel "Collusion and Rent Seeking," *Public Choice* 69, 241-252, 1991
• Hedlund, Stefan. "Rents, Rights, and Service: Boyar Economics and the Putin Transition." *Problems of Post-

- Р. Кочнев, Л. Полищук, А. Рубин, Криминальная коррупция: теория и эмпирический анализ, unpublished manuscript 2018 (longer version; in Russian).
- Stefes, Christoph H. "Governance, the state, and systemic corruption: Armenia and Georgia in comparison." Caucasian Review of International Affairs 2.2 (2008): 73-83.

[15] Building a modern economy

- Алексеев М.В., Арлажин И.Ю., Барышева Н.Е., Дерюгин А.Н., Комарницкая А.Н., Могучев Н.С., Тищенко Т.В., Филиппова И.И., 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

• Баринова В.А., Земцов С.П., Ланьшева Т.А. „Развитие высокотехнологичного сектора экономики в России. Федеральное государственное бюджетное образовательное учреждение высшего образования, Российская Академия Народного Хозяйства, 2018


• Becker, Torbjörn, and Anders Olofsgård. From abnormal to normal—Two tales of growth from 25 years of transition. No. 43. Stockholm Institute of Transition Economics, Stockholm School of Economics, 2017.


• Горин, Ю.М., Ашапок В.Ю., Малева Т.М. „Повышение пенсионного возраста и его экономические последствия. Федеральное государственное бюджетное образовательное учреждение высшего образования, Российская Академия Народного Хозяйства, 2018


• Iwasaki, Ichiro, and Masahiro Tokunaga. "Macroeconomic impacts of FDI in transition economies: a meta-
• 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.
• Zubarev, Andrey, and Kristina Nesterova. "Моделирование повышения пенсионного возраста в российские экономики с помощью глобальной CGE-OLG модели (Modeling the Increase in the Retirement Age in the Russian Economy Using the Global CGE-OLG Model)." Available at SSRN 3362248 (2019).

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
Dmitrii Bykov
Sergei Dovlatov
Andrei Kurkov
Alexandra Marinina
Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn
Vladimir Voinovich

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

Films: There is an incredible collection of free Soviet era films at https://www.youtube.com/user/mosfilm/featuredsfns=mo&app=desktop Also check out:
• Road to Berlin https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHm8MqZw5Ig
• Komanda https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dz6bnVS9kFt
• Irony of Fate http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1urecgk (part I). parodies: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U29CVBHTPu8 and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qEssugLwxMo
• He Isn’t a Demon to You https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qrwlk7_GF9g (Navalny expose on Medvedev)
• Yachts, oligarchs, girls: a huntress of men exposes a bribe-taker (with sub-titles) https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=4&v=ROZr2NgKPiU (Navalny, on Russian oligarchs and Trump’s inner circle)
• Brother 2 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K9TRaGNNjEU
• Russia88 http://russia88.com/

Election commercials you always wanted to see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kk134Mn79og
Dashcam favorites:
Useful data and research sites:

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://podvignaroda.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-delokhottabycha  -- 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.  
CIS/SNG stat (also English link)  
http://www.cisstat.com/  - stat database:  
8. **Useful journals and research centers:**

- **Comparative Economic Studies**
- **Demographic Review (Higher School of Economics)**
- **Economic History Review**
- **Economics of Transition**
- **European Review of Economic History**
- **Explorations in Economic History**
- **Journal of Comparative Economics**
- **Journal of Economic History**
- **Municipality: economics & management**
- **Stockholm Institute of Transition Economics (SITE)**
- **World Development**
Forbes Kazakhstan https://forbes.kz/process/urbanity/kak_reanimiryat_monogerda (and many others)
Vlast Kazakhstan https://vlast.kz/novosti/19951-x-almaty-planiruet-sozdat-progulonno-zonu-ot-ulicy-saina-do-ozyera-sajran.html (and many others -- but especially great series on urban planning)
http://kleptocracyinitiative.org/
https://www.hse.ru/org/hse/sci/demo/index.html
https://demreview.hse.ru/
http://strelka.com/en/research