REES-549: The Caucasus: Histories, Cultures, Politics

Summer Session I: 22 May-30 June 2017
MW 6:00-9:10pm, ROOM TBD
Instructor: Dr. Claire P. Kaiser
Office Hours: By Appointment
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Course Description:
This course examines the history of the Caucasus as a discrete area – that is, including both North and South Caucasus in the current parlance – in the period of Russian interaction and incorporation. We will explore how such concepts as religion, nation, ethnicity, territory, and class have been employed to explain components of Caucasian history and the extent to which they succeed or fail to explain developments from the perspective of the Caucasus' diverse populace. Moreover, we will explore how entanglements and tensions among actors in the Caucasus in the imperial period evolved through the twentieth century.

Though the focus of the course is on the Caucasus region during the Russian encounter (18th-20th centuries), students are encouraged develop projects highlighting other key imperial interactions in the region (e.g. Ottoman/Turkish and Iranian). In addition to history, we will incorporate perspectives from anthropology and ethnography, literature, and sociology to broaden our conceptual and methodological toolkit for examining this region.

Course Requirements:
This class is a discussion seminar. Active, informed, thoughtful, and constructive class participation is a part of the assessment criteria for the course. Students are expected to come to class fully prepared to engage in a critical analysis of the assigned readings. Strong and effective class participation is characterized by:

- Demonstrated mastery of the assigned material;
- Critical examination of the assumptions and implications of the assigned readings;
- Ability to identify key issues, synthesize information (including making connections or exploring contrasts with previously assigned readings); and
- Respectful but probing examination of the contributions of your peers and effective facilitation in clarifying different points of view, thereby contributing to the learning of the whole group.

Students are expected to attend all classes and to complete assigned readings in advance of class. Students will be graded on both class participation and written work based on the following distribution:
• Active participation in seminar preparations and discussions (30%)
• Book review of one of the recommended books and its reception (8-10 pages, double-spaced) (30%)
• Research project proposal (10 pages, double spaced, plus bibliography) on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor (40%)

Reading knowledge of Russian is not required, but is encouraged. Students with reading knowledge of Turkish, Persian, or a Caucasian language (in addition to or in lieu of Russian) are especially welcome in the course. A good deal of German- and French-language secondary literature is also available on the Caucasus. Students must draw from their own foreign language toolkit for their research proposals.

Required Reading:
Required and recommended readings are listed in the course schedule. To ensure informed discussion, it is essential to read that day's items prior to the session's date. Articles may be found via JSTOR or Project Muse. I will provide pdfs of book excerpts from required readings, and books are available on reserve in Lauinger Library and/or as e-books.

Policy on Late Assignments:
Writing assignments are due on the date/time listed in the syllabus. For each 24-hour period thereafter, a submitted assignment will be penalized by one letter grade increment (e.g. from B+ to B for an assignment that is a day late, from B+ to B- for two days late, etc.).

University Honor System:
Academic work at Georgetown is governed by an Honor System (see http://gervaseprograms.georgetown.edu/honor/system/). Plagiarism – defined as when a writer deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (as opposed to common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source – is a serious academic offense. Copying published or online information or prose into a paper without source attribution for the purposes of claiming the information as your own, or turning in material written by someone else, will be treated as academic misconduct.

Academic Resource Center:
If you believe you have a disability, then you should contact the Academic Resource Center (arc@georgetown.edu) for further information. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.

Instructional Continuity:
In case of a disruption to our weekly meetings due to weather or other causes, Dr. Kaiser will send regular updates via e-mail to ensure content and discussion continue.
Course Schedule:

**May 22: Frames and Maps**

**May 24: Encounters, Annexations, Conquests**

Muriel Atkin, *Russia and Iran, 1780-1828* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980).

**May 29: NO CLASS – MEMORIAL DAY**

**May 31: In the Service of Empire vs. Antimonies of Empire**


*Book review due via email to instructor by 11:59am Monday, 5 June*

**June 5: The Caucasus in the Age of Nationalism**

**June 7: Wars, Independence, Revolutions**


**June 12: The Caucasus, Imagined**
Read one of the following works of fiction:
Mikhail Lermontov, *A Hero Of Our Time*
Leo Tolstoy, *Hadji Murat* [E-BOOK] and *The Cossacks*
Aleksandre Qazbegi prose
Kurban Said, *Ali and Nino*

June 14: Into the Soviet Fold


June 19: The Caucasus in “Developed Socialism”

Recommended: Maike Lehmann, Eine sowjetische Nation: nationale Sozialismusinterpretationen in Armenien seit 1945 (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2012).

June 21: Caucasus as Site of Contestation

June 26: Wars of Collapse and “Frozen” Conflicts
Derluguian, Bourdieu’s Secret Admire in the Caucasus: 1-28, 166-287

June 28: The 21st Century Caucasus

*The Stalin Puzzle: Deciphering Post-Soviet Public Opinion*, available:


Caucasus Research Resource Center Caucasus Barometer survey analysis, available:


*Research proposals due via email by 11:59pm on Wednesday, 5 July*