

Spring 2022

History of Russia: From Medieval Times to 1861

HIST 238, Monday-Wednesday-Friday, 10:30-11:20 am, Prof. M.G. Smith



This course explores the rise of the Russian empire, spanning the Eurasian plains and woodlands, the tundra and forests of Siberia and the Far East, the mountains and valleys of the Caucasus, and the conquered lands of Eastern Europe. This process was sometimes peaceful, often violent, always unrelenting. What were the hallmarks of Russian culture, social structure, and political life? What were the sources of its triumphs and tragedies? What did the Russians give and take as they gathered hundreds of foreign peoples into the “all-Russian” state? We will survey the history of Kyivan Russia, Orthodox Christianity, the Mongol Conquest, the rise of Muscovy, Ivan the Terrible, the Romanovs, the revolution of Peter the Great, peasant and national rebellions, Napoleon’s invasion, radical movements, and the rise of empire to the Crimean War. Students will also play a serious-game simulation on “The Rise of Muscovy.”