

SPRING 2020

History of Russia: Medieval Times to 1861

HIST 238, Monday-Wednesday-Friday, 10:30-11:20 am, WALC 2127, Prof. M.G. Smith



This course surveys the rise of the Russian state and land empire: spreading over the Eurasian plains and woodlands, into the tundra and forest of Siberia and the Far East, through the plains and mountains of Central Asia and the Caucasus, and back into the heart of Eastern Europe.

This process was sometimes peaceful, often violent, always unrelenting.

We pose several questions. What were the main characteristics of Russian culture, social structure, and political life? What were the sources of its triumphs and tragedies? What did the Russians give, what did they take, as they gathered hundreds of peoples around them into the “all-Russian” state? We search for answers in the history of Kievan Rus', Orthodox Christianity, the Mongol Conquest, the rise of Muscovy, Ivan the Terrible, the Romanovs. the reforms of Peter the Great, peasant and national rebellions, Napoleon Bonaparte’s invasion, revolutionary movements, and the rise of empire to the Crimean War.

Students will also help to create and play a serious-game simulation, with player cards and game pieces, on "Russia at the Gates: The Rise of Muscovy."