

«Central Asian Studies World Wide»
Course Syllabi for the Study of Central Eurasia
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John Schoeberlein
History and Culture of the Islamic Peoples of the Former Soviet Union (Islamic Civilizations 125)
Syllabus for the course offered in Spring 2002
Harvard University
Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

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**Islamic Civilizations 125.
History and Culture of the Islamic Peoples of the Former
Soviet Union**

Spring term, Wednesdays, 2:00 - 4:00.
Coolidge Hall, Room 215.

Additional meeting time to be arranged.

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The Course

Themes in the history of cultural change, from prior to Russian expansion into Muslim lands until the post-Soviet period. The course encompasses territories falling under Russian dominion by the nineteenth century that are inhabited by peoples which are culturally more akin to Asia and the Islamic Middle East than to Europe: Central Asia, the Caucasus, and southern Russia. Themes include the background of Iranian, Turkic and Islamic culture, problems of induced cultural change (Russification/Europeanization/modernization), social transformation under the establishment and dissolution of Russian rule and the Communist system, the institutionalization of national identities, and changing family and community organization.

Note: Intended primarily for graduates and advanced undergraduates; some background in the Near East and/or the Soviet Union desirable. Enrollment limited.

Islam and Russia's "Orient"

The focus of this course may be defined roughly as Russia's "Orient" — the intersection of the Islamic world and the Russian Empire/Soviet Union. Geographically, this is primarily Central Asia (the current republics of Uzbekistan, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan), the Caucasus (often designated as the Transcaucasus — south of the Caucasus Mountains — and the Northern Caucasus within today's "Russia Proper"), and Southern Russia. Political or geographic boundaries do not define a neat domain, however, because Islam ranges widely across Russia, and at the same time, Islam is not a fully adequate definition of what the "Orient" means. In thematic terms, the Soviet "Orient" might be defined as the "Otherness" encompassed by Russia on the south. As such, it constitutes a domain of cultural and political clash: between Russian Imperialism and Muslim resistance, between Soviet modernization and Islamic and other kinds of tradition, between political integration and cultural homogenization on the one hand and community integrity and alternative cultural universes on the other.

The Soviet "Orient" is doubly peripheral. The days when Central Asia was the center of the world largest empires — those of Chinggis Khan and Timur — are long past. Russia is peripheral and "Oriental" in the context of European Civilization as it has formed over recent

centuries, and this part of the former Russian Empire is at a further remove, as the “Oriental” periphery of Russia. Many of the Islamic regions of the Russian Empire were, in times past, integral to the Islamic world, but in recent centuries they have been peripheral in this context as well. This doubly peripheral status is epitomized by the world public’s stance regarding the recent wars in Tajikistan and Chechnya: Are they only Russia’s business? And do we even care much about Russia’s business?

As a periphery, this region has been seen as a relatively unimportant part of other wholes: the Soviet Union and the Islamic World. The importance of the region waxes in Western eyes when it threatens to disturb the surrounding world about which we care more: The Civil War in Tajikistan and the rise of Islamic opposition movements, the war in Chechnya, the war in Karabagh, and now — most prominently — with the America military in Afghanistan. One important consequence of this is that only sporadically has there been institutional support for the study of the region. When trouble arose in Tajikistan or Chechnya, there was almost no one who could explain it to the world. The war in Afghanistan has been followed by a blossoming of “instant expertise”, but is this more helpful or harmful? This course will take us into this “largely unknown territory” and hopefully bring us out with some relatively scarce knowledge.

At the same time that this region resembles in some ways an unknown abyss, it also shares much with the experience of other parts of the world. In the context of the Soviet “Orient”, we may examine many of the issues that are of most current concern for inquiring minds: The notion of the “Orient” and Otherness in the (post-)colonial world, Modernity and Modernization, Islam as a belief system and a social system, the role of women in tradition and anti-tradition, and so on. There is a particular advantage in exploring our central intellectual questions in a world about which we have only relatively weak preconceptions.

Requirements

Corresponding to the relatively unstudied character of the region, there is no established canon of essential knowledge. Our goal will be less to absorb a specified body of knowledge, than to develop the intellectual tools that will be of use in exploring this world. We will develop the basic factual knowledge that is necessary to address the important questions: What is the nature of Islamic tradition and civilization in this part of the world? What are the cultural strains from which it has emerged? What diversity does it encompass? How has it changed? What has been the role of domination in defining culture? What is the nature and role of community in cultural integrity and political integration? What are the cultural and social strains and counter-strains which define the Islamic culture of Russia/the Soviet Union? What has independence meant for these societies? What can we expect from the American intervention in this region? And what are the pitfalls that we face in our effort to comprehend this doubly Oriental Orient?

Class time will be a balance between exposition of information and concepts, and group exploration of what these things should mean to us as we explore the history and culture of the region. Thus, the conduct of the course hinges crucially on the students’ thought and group discussion.

The following are the requirements of the course:

- 1) Presentations: Each student will occasionally have specific responsibility for selected assigned readings and will offer her/his own creative responses to them.

- 2) Participation: Each student is expected to keep current on the readings and to make regular, constructive contributions to discussions.
- 3) Short exam: This will aim to ensure that students have basic, essential knowledge of the history, geography, and cultures of the region. The exam will be held in the week of March 11.
- 4) Two short papers: These will not be exhaustive studies, but rather thematic explorations. The aim should be to make use of the subject matter of the course to explore issues of import. Topics will be selected in consultation with the instructor. The first paper will be due on the week of April 5, and the second, on the last day of reading period (May 15).

Readings

The reading load will amount to about three articles or book chapters per week. All students will be expected to keep up with these readings. The beginning of the semester will include some introductory sessions, but subsequently, class will be conducted as a seminar, and students will be expected to participate actively in discussion of the weekly topic and to critically assess the readings. One student will have specific responsibility for each given reading, leading the discussion and raising salient issues. Copies of the readings will be distributed as photocopies. The specific topics and corresponding readings will be finalized taking into consideration the particular interests of the students in the course.

Week of February 4

Introduction

Week of February 11

What defines the Region? Religious, "Ethnic", Political Identity

Machleder, Joshua

2002 "Confusion and cynicism mark Uzbek referendum," *Eurasia Insight*, 28 January 2002.
New York: Open Society Institute/ EurasiaNet,
<http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav012802.shtml>

Allworth, Edward A.

1994 Chapter 1: "Encounter," in Edward A. Allworth, ed., *Central Asia: 130 years of Russian dominance: A historical overview*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press. [Revised and supplemented third edition of: *Central Asia: A century of Russian rule*, New York 1967].

Micallef, Roberta and Ingvar Svanberg

1999 "Turkic Central Asia," In: David Westerlund and Ingvar Svanberg (eds.), *Islam outside the Arab world*, Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, pp. 149-165.

Freedman, Robert O.

1997 "Radical Islam and the struggle for influence in Central Asia," In: Bruce Maddy-Weitzman and Efraim Inbar (eds.), *Religious Radicalism in the Greater Middle East*, London: Frank Cass, pp. 216-238.

Week of February 18

Formation of Peoples and History

Golden, Peter

1998 *Nomads and sedentary societies in medieval Eurasia*. Washington, DC: American Historical Association. In series: Essays on global and comparative history.

Caroe, Olaf Kirkpatrick [Sir]

1967 Chapters 3 ("Pattern of peoples") and 4 ("Crucible of empires") in: *Soviet Empire: The Turks of Central Asia and Stalinism*. London: Macmillan. (2nd ed.; first published in 1953).

Bacon, Elizabeth Emaline

1966 Chapter I: "The land and the people," in *Central Asians under Russian rule: A study in culture change*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University.

Week of February 25

Understanding History —Russian Imperial Expansion

Atkin, Muriel

1988 "Russian expansion in the Caucasus to 1813," in: Michael Rywkin, ed., *Russian colonial expansion to 1917*, pp. 139-187. London.

Wheeler, Geoffrey

1964 Chapter 3: "On the eve of the Russian conquest" and Chapter 4: "The Russian conquest of Central Asia," in: *The modern history of Soviet Central Asia*, pp. 31-64. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press.

Bregel, Yuri

1996 *Notes on the study of Central Asia*. In series: *Papers on Inner Asia*, 28. Bloomington, Ind.: Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies.

Week of March 4

Trends of History: Islamic history; Russian expansion; Origins of group concepts

Bosworth, Clifford Edmund

1976 "The historical background of Islamic civilization," In: R. M. Savory, ed., *Introduction to Islamic civilisations*, pp. 15-31. Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press.

Slezkine, Yuri

1997 "Naturalists versus nations: Eighteenth-century Russian scholars confront ethnic diversity," In: Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini, eds., *Russia's Orient: Imperial borderlands and peoples, 1700-1917*, pp. 27-56. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press.

Altstadt, Audrey L.

1992 Chapter I: "Origins of the Azerbaijani Turks" and Chapter II: Russian colonial rule," In: *The Azerbaijani Turks: Power and identity under Russian rule*, pp. 1-26. Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press.

Atabaki, Touraj

2000 Chapter 1: "Origins of the Azerbaijanis" and Chapter 2: "Genesis of the autonomous movement in Azerbaijan," In: *Azerbaijan: Ethnicity and the struggle for power in Iran*, pp. 7-51. London: I. B. Tauris.

Week of March 11

Group Concepts Over Time — I

Allworth, Edward

1990 Chapter 3: "Names and tribes," In: *The modern Uzbeks: From the fourteenth century to the present: A cultural history*, pp. 30-43. Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Press.

Rorlich, Azade-Ayşe

1994 "One or more Tatar nations?" In: Andreas Kappeler et al, eds., *Muslim communities reemerge: Historical perspectives on nationality, politics, and opposition in the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia*, pp. 61-79. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Bregel, Yuri

1978 "The Sarts in the Khanate of Khiva," *Journal of Asian history*, 12(2) 120-151.

Week of March 18

Group Concepts Over Time — II

Baldauf, Ingeborg

1991 "Some thoughts on the making of the Uzbek nation," *Cahiers du monde Russe et Soviétique*, 32(1) 79-96. Paris.

Schoeberlein, John

1996 "The prospects for Uzbek national identity," *Central Asia monitor*, 1996(2) 12-20.

Manz, Beatrice

1992 "The development and meaning of Chaghatay identity," in: Jo-Ann Gross, ed., *Muslims in Central Asia: Expressions of identity and change*, pp. 27-45. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Week of March 27 - Spring Break***Week of April 1******Islam, Politics and Identity under Soviet Government***

Bennigsen, Alexandre, and S. Enders Wimbush

1985 Part 1 (pp. 1-44) in *Muslims of the Soviet Empire: A guide*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University. NOTE: You needn't focus on the section covering the pre-Soviet period.

Atkin, Muriel

1989 *The subtlest battle: Islam in Soviet Tajikistan*. Philadelphia: Foreign Policy Research Institute.

Hetmanek, Allen

1990 "The political face of Islam in Tajikistan: A review of Muriel Atkin's *The subtlest battle*," *Central Asian survey*, 9(3)99-111.

Tyson, David

1997 "Shrine pilgrimage in Turkmenistan as a means to understand Islam among the Turkmen," *Central Asia monitor*, 1997(1)15-32.

Week of April 8***Post-Soviet Developments: "Transition", Social Transformation, National Identity, Conflict***

Smith, Graham, et al.

1998 Chapters 3, 4 and 7 in: *Nation-building in the post-Soviet borderlands: The politics of national identities*, pp. 48-90 139-164. Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press.

Roy, Olivier

1999 "Kolkhoz and civil society in the independent states of Central Asia," In: M. Holt Ruffin and Daniel Waugh, eds., *Civil society in Central Asia*, pp. 109-121. Seattle/London: University of Washington Press.

Schoeberlein-Engel, John

1994 "Conflict in Tajikistān and Central Asia: The myth of ethnic animosity," *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic review*, 2: 1-55.

Week of April 15***Social Politics of Language, Culture, Gender, and Minorities***

Landau, Jacob M. and Barbara Kellner-Heinkele

2001 Chapter 5: "Language politics: The independent republics," In: *Politics of language in the ex-Soviet Muslim states*, pp. 63-108. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Levin, Theodore

1996 Chapter 1: "Tashkent," In: *The hundred thousand fools of God: Musical travels in Central Asia (and Queens, New York)*, pp. 1-84. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press.

Tadjbakhsh, Shahrbanou

1998 "Between Lenin and Allah: Women and ideology in Tajikistan," In: H. L. Bodman and N. Tohidi, eds.: *Women in Muslim societies: Diversity within unity*, p. 163-185. Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner.

Meskhetian Turks: Solutions and human security

1998 Forced Migration Projects Series. New York: Open Society Institute.

Week of April 22

Visions of Society in Transformation: Marketization, Democratization, Islamization

Ilkhamov, Alisher

2001 "Impoverishment of the masses in the transition period: Signs of an emerging 'new poor' identity in Uzbekistan," *Central Asian survey*, 29(1) 33-54.

Polat, Abdumannob

1999 "Can Uzbekistan build democracy and civil society," In: M. Holt Ruffin and Daniel Waugh, eds., *Civil society in Central Asia*, pp. 135-157. Seattle/London: University of Washington Press.

Mandel, Ruth

1998 "Structural adjustment and soap opera: A case study of a development project in Central Asia," *Central Asia survey*, 17(4) 629-638.

Islamist mobilisation and regional security

2001 ICG Asia Report No. 14. Brussels: International Crisis Group, 1 March 2001.

Week of April 29

Security Challenges: Unrest, Drugs and Corruption, International Context

Tishkov, Valery

1995 "'Don't kill me, I'm a Kyrgyz!': An anthropological analysis of violence in the Osh ethnic conflict," *Journal of peace research*, 32(2) 133-149.

Khamidov, Alisher

2002 "Cult of personality may undermine Kyrgyz civil society," EurasiaNet Human Rights, April 22, 2002 (available at: <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/rights/articles/eav042202.shtml>)

Goodhand, Jonathan

2000 "From holy war to opium war? A case study of the opium economy in North Eastern Afghanistan," *Central Asian survey*, 19(2) 265-280.

Olcott, Martha Brill

2001 "Revisiting the twelve myths of Central Asia," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Working paper*, No. 23, September 2001.

Ram, Harsha

1999 "Prisoner of the Caucasus: Literary myths and media representations of the Chechen conflict," *Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies, Working paper series*, Summer 1999. Berkeley: University of California.