

EUH4584 - Medieval Russia

Time and Location

MWF 10:40-11:30

Keene-Flint 101

Description

It has long been accepted that there was in fact no such thing as "Russia" in the Middle Ages. Instead, this is a course about the history of Russia in the original Latin sense: a history of the land ruled by people known as the Rus. As such, this is not a course about the modern state of Russia, but about the lands now included in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. All three states currently claim the legacy of "Kievan Rus," despite the fact that the traditional center of that medieval polity is now the capital city of Ukraine. The city of Kiev was the key to the economic, political and cultural life of the Rus, but the history of the lands of the Rus' is not the same thing as the history of Kievan Rus'. This course will try to move away from a "kievocentric" point of view of medieval Russian history, which has been the object of much nationalist manipulation in the recent past. Following a chronological order, we will look, each week, at the questions and problems raised by the study of this region, and at some of the primary sources from which historians draw their analysis.

Textbooks

- Janet Martin, *Medieval Russia, 980-1584*. 2nd ed. Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011. ISBN: 9780521859165 [hereafter *Martin*].
- Basil Dmytryshyn, *Medieval Russia. A Source Book, 850-1700*. Gulf Breeze: Academic International Press, 2000. ISBN: 9780875692180 [hereafter *Dmytryshyn*]

Assignments and grading policies

There is no attendance policy, but you are responsible for attending all lectures and reading the required texts. Class participation may be taken into account to determine the overall grade. The basis for evaluation of performance will be a reading journal and five in-class assignments. Below is a detailed description of these assignments and the corresponding percentages of your final grade. You are otherwise encouraged to keep in touch with me by e-mail, if you have any questions: I check my mailbox regularly, and promise to answer quickly.

Reading journal. A quick glimpse at the list of weekly topics (see below) will no doubt convince you that this is a course with serious readings. You will be expected to digest a substantial amount of information in a fairly short period of time. The best way to do this is to keep a journal. Before every class meeting, you will post an e-mail message on my address (on top of this syllabus), in which you will discuss briefly the readings for the coming meeting, ask questions and/or make comments, raise issues that need clarification, etc. All e-mails should

arrive at least 12 hours before class meetings. Be sure to keep your postings to a reasonable length (175 to 250 words long). I do not want you to spend too much time on them, but I expect you to give an articulate presentation of your thoughts. Needless to say, I also expect you to check on correct grammar and spelling before clicking on "Send." Because the journal is designed to demonstrate your efforts towards an initial understanding of the readings, I must have ***in time*** one report for each class meeting, every week. The reading journal represents seventy percent of your final grade, 2.06 percent for each entry. I will send written feed-back (via e-mail) on weekly entries midway through the term. Reading reports *cannot* be made up; you simply *need* to have a journal entry for every class meeting. Be aware that missed reports may result in a substantially lower grade.

In-class assignments. The remaining thirty percent of your final grade will be based on five short assignments in class. All five will consist of multiple-choice, map, matching, short-essay questions, or a combination thereof. Besides material covered in class lectures, the in-class assignments will focus primarily on primary source readings from the *Dmytryshyn* book. A careful study of those texts is necessary for a good performance at the test. Because in-class assignments are announced, I do not intend to grant any make-ups, except for emergencies (e.g., illness), in which case I may ask for official justification.

Grades. The following scale will be used in determining your final grade

Percentage	Grades
96-100	A
91-95	A-
86-90	B+
81-85	B
75-80	B-
68-74	C+
61-67	C
55-60	C-
48-54	D+
41-47	D
35-40	D-
under 30	E

Weekly Topics

Week 1 (August 24-26): Introduction

- A history of words: Rus', Russia, Russian; see a [map of Uppland](#) (with Roslagen marked in red) and an image of [Roslagen](#)
- Where was medieval Russia? The geography of Eastern Europe; see maps of [Russia](#), the [northwestern region](#), the [Volga River drainage area](#), the basin of the [river Dnieper](#), and [Volhynia](#) within Ukraine; see also images of the [Ural Mountains](#), the [Novgorod region](#), [Lake Ladoga](#), Lake Onezhskoe, the [Valdai Heights](#) region, the river [Volga](#) (at Rzhev), the river [Dnieper](#) (in Kiev), [Smolensk](#), [Yaroslavl](#), the [Kremlin of Moscow](#), the [Lutsk](#) fortress in Volhynia, [Bukovina](#) at the foot of the Carpathian Mountains, the valley of the [Oka](#), [Desna](#), and [Kliaz'ma](#) rivers, [Nizhnii Novgorod](#), an [elk](#), and a [marten](#)

Week 2 (August 29-September 2): Sources

- The Russian Primary Chronicle and historiographic problems of medieval Russia; see the [Lord's prayer](#) in Old Church Slavonic with samples of [Cyrillic](#) and [Glagolitic](#) alphabets; see the portraits of [Nikolai Karamzin](#) and [Aleksandr Pushkin](#), the creators of literary Russian; see a page from [Ostromir's Gospels](#) and the [Arkhangelsk Gospels](#); read Metropolitan Ilarion's [Sermon on Law and Grace](#) and the beginning of the [Russian Primary Chronicle](#); visit the [monastery of St. Michael](#) in Vyduhichi; see a [map](#) of all the Rus' towns in which birchbark letters have been found, and an example of a [gramota](#); browse the [Pravda russkaia](#) (short version).
- Archaeology and the rise of the medieval state in Russia; visit [Riurik's Stronghold](#) near Novgorod; see a map of an [excavated block](#) of medieval Novgorod with a sample of the [deep stratigraphy](#) of the site; see samples of the [pottery](#) and [leather artifacts](#) found in Novgorod; visit the [region of Lake Kuben](#) and the burial mounds in [Gnezdovo](#)

Week 3 (September 6-9): Slavs, Khazars, and others

- Eastern Europe in the early Middle Ages (6th to 9th centuries) [*Dmytryshyn* 2-6]; read the paragraph in Jordanes' [Getica](#) which mentions the peoples submitted by Ermanaric; see an image of a [silver torc](#) typical for the Ryazan'-Oka group; see a [distribution](#) of sites of the long-barrow group in northwestern Russia and a picture of a [sopka](#); see a wooden bowl with a bear-shaped handle from [Vanvizardino](#) and examples of [bronze figurines](#) used by local shamans along the Viatka and Kama rivers
- **In-class assignment #1.** The Khazars; see portraits of [Arthur Koestler](#) and [Itzhak Ben Zvi](#); see maps of [Khazaria](#) and of [the conflicts in its history](#); see a view of the [recent excavations near Astrakhan](#) on a site (wrongly) believed to be Itil; see an [aerial view](#) and a [model reconstruction](#) of Sarkel, as well as a [dirhem](#) struck in Khazaria with the (Arabic) inscription mentioning Moses as the prophet of God; see examples of the [curved sabre](#) introduced by Khazars to the military equipment of the East European steppe lands

Week 4 September 12-16): The coming of the Varangians

- Eastern Europe during the Viking Age [*Dmytryshyn* 9-21]
- Vikings in Eastern Europe [*Dmytryshyn* 6-9]; visit [Staraja Ladoga](#) and see a [runic inscription](#) (with "twig runes"); see examples of Viking-age [oval brooches](#) and [swords](#); see also examples of [dirhams](#) struck in Suwar; visit the [Ustyurt Plateau](#)

Week 5 (September 19-23): From the conversion of Olg'a to the conversion of Vladimir

- The Rus foothold on the Middle Dnieper: Igor, Ol'ga and Sviatoslav [*Dmytryshyn* 22-30]; see a map of the [Pecheneg migration](#), a description of the [Greek fire](#), and an example of [Byzantine silk](#); visit [Chernihiv](#) and read about the finds in [Shestovytsia](#); visit [Birka](#) (Sweden) and see a 19th-century portrait of Sviatoslav with [shaved scalp](#); see a map of [northern Dobrudja](#) with the location of Nufaru and visit [Silistra](#)
- Vladimir and the conversion of Rus' [*Martin* 1-23; *Dmytryshyn* 30-35]; visit [Quedlinburg](#), [Przemysł](#), and [Chersonesus](#); see a map of [Turov](#) and the plan of the [Tithe Church in Kiev](#) (with a [reconstruction](#)); see an example of a Viking-age [pectoral cross](#), examples of [silver earrings](#) from the area inhabited by the Radimichi, a [gold](#) and a [silver](#) coin struck for Vladimir

Week 6 (September 26-30): Martyrs and mercenaries (1015-1125)

- The Riurikid dynasty and the Rus' principalities [*Martin* 24-46; *Dmytryshyn* 47-72]; see a facsimile of a page in [Thietmar of Merseburg's chronicle](#); see a coin struck for [Sviatopolk Vladimirovich](#) and another struck for King [Knut \(Canute\) the Great](#); see also a statue of [St. Olaf](#); visit the [Cathedral of the Savior in Chernihiv](#), the [Church of St. Sofia in Kiev](#) (with examples of surviving [mosaics](#)), the [Church of St. Sofia in Polotsk](#), as well as the [Golden Gate](#) in Kiev
- **In-class assignment #2.** Kievan Rus' and medieval Europe [*Martin* 46-63]; see a map of [eleventh- and twelfth-century Rus'](#)

Week 7 (October 3-7): Kievan Rus' society

- Economic and social relations, law, and written culture [*Martin* 64-81 and 85-99; *Dmytryshyn* 36-41]; visit the [Church of the Assumption](#) at the [Monastery of the Caves](#), the [Church of St. Michael](#) at the Vydbichi Monastery, and the [Church of St. Michael of the Golden Domes in Kiev](#); see (modern) examples of [pisanki](#), an example of Rus' silver ingot ([grivna](#)), the icon of the [Mother of God in Vladimir](#), and an [enameled temple pendant](#) from the Tithe Church
- Church in Kievan Rus' [*Martin* 81-85; *Dmytryshyn* 41-47]; visit the [Monastery of the Caves](#)

Week 8 (October 10-14): The last century of Kievan Rus' (1140-1240)

- Peripheral principalities and dynastic relations [*Martin* 100-138; *Dmytryshyn* 72-92, 105-114, 119-132]; see a [map](#) of the Rus' principalities in the twelfth and early thirteenth century; see the [Abbey of St. Emmeram in Regensburg](#) and a Romanesque [aquamanile](#) (water-holder); visit the castle of [Halych](#) and [Zawichost](#) on the

Vistula; see maps of medieval [Novgorod](#) (showing the Prussian Street in the "Cathedral Side") and [Moscow](#); see the statue of [Iurii Dolgoruki](#) in Moscow and a portrait of [Andrei Bogoliubskii](#) in the fifteenth-century Radzwill Chronicle; visit the [Church of the Intercession of the Veil on the Nerl](#) (with a carved [image of King David](#) on one of the exterior walls), [Kostroma](#), [Unzha](#), [Nizhnii Novgorod](#), and [Smolensk](#)

- **In-class assignment #3.** Rus' and the steppe nomads [*Martin* 138-148]; visit the [Mirozhskii Monastery](#) near Pskov with its [church](#) dedicated to the Transfiguration of the Savior, and [Princess Evfrosiniia's Monastery](#) in Polotsk with its [church](#) dedicated to the Savior (with a later example of [kokoshniki](#))

Week 9 (October 17-21): The Golden Horde

- Invasion and conquest [*Martin* 149-161; *Dmytryshyn* 97-99 and 147-167]; see maps of the [Mongol Empire](#) and of the [Mongol invasion of Europe](#); visit the [Cathedral of the Assumption](#) in Vladimir
- Mongol suzerainty and Rus' accommodation [*Martin* 161-174; *Dmytryshyn* 168-179]; see nineteenth-century version of the execution of [Mikhail of Chernihiv](#) in Sarai (1246); see an illustrated [Life of Alexander Nevskii](#), a clip from [Sergei Eisenstein's 1938 movie](#); and the [Order of Alexander Nevskii](#) (For Toil and Fatherland) reinstated by Stalin in 1942; visit the fort built by the German Knights at [Kopor'e](#)

Week 9 (October 24-28): The Russian lands within the Golden Horde

- Dynastic and economic recovery [*Martin* 175-186; *Dmytryshyn* 99-105, 114-119]; see a [map](#) of the northern Rus' principalities during the first half of the fourteenth century; see an aerial view of [Tver](#) and a view of [Kostroma](#); see views of [Pereiaslav' Zaleskii](#) and of the citadel of [Pskov](#) strengthened by Daumantas; see a list of the [Golden Horde khans](#), a view of the ruins of the [Isaccea fortress](#), and a silver [coin](#) struck in Nogai's name
- Intradynastic competition and the rise of Moscow [*Martin* 187-219; *Dmytryshyn* 190-198]; visit [Moscow](#) and see an icon of Metropolitan [Peter](#), who was buried in the [Cathedral of the Assumption](#); see a coin struck for [Boleslaw-Iurii II](#)

Week 10 (October 31-November 4): The rise of the Danilovich

- Tuesday: Lithuanian expansion, Dmitrii Donskoi and Kulikovo [*Martin* 220-238; *Dmytryshyn* 179-183 and 198-209]; see a [map of Muscovy](#) and portraits of [Timur Lenk](#) (Tamerlane) and [Jogaila](#) (Władysław Jagiełło); see a modern rendition of the [battle at Kulikovo](#) as a clash between infidels and Christians and before the battle; see a view of [Lissner's interpretation of St. Sergius' blessing of Grand Prince Dmitrii](#); visit [Kulikovo Pole](#) and see a medieval illustration of Tokhtamysh's [1382 sack of Moscow](#); see a portrait of [Vytautas](#) (on his seal) and a map of the [Tatar khanates](#); see a modern rendition of the [battle of Grünwald](#) and an icon of [St. Sergius of Radonezh](#)
- Thursday: Late 14th- and early 15th-century Muscovy [*Martin* 239-260]; visit the monasteries of the [Holy Trinity in Sergiev Posad](#), [Andronikov](#), [Simonov](#), and [Chudov \(Miracle\)](#) in Moscow, [St. Cyril's Monastery](#) near Beloozero, and the [Soloveckii Monastery](#) on an island in the White Sea; see an example of the [script](#) invented by St.

Stephen of Perm to render the language of the Komi; see the [Church of the Transfiguration of the Savior on the Ilina Street](#) in Novgorod, with an image of [Christ Pantokrator](#) painted by Theophanes the Greek in its dome; see an [icon of Prophet Elijah](#) painted in the early 15th century in Novgorod; see a [dialogue](#) between Theophanes the Greek and Andrei Rublev as imagined by Andrei Tarkovskii in his 1966 film, *Andrei Rublev*; see Rublev's icons of the [Savior](#) (ca. 1410) and of the [Old Testament Trinity](#) (ca. 1411)

Week 11 (November 7-10): Unification and centralization of Muscovy

- Dynastic strife and territorial expansion [*Martin* 261-281; *Dmytryshyn* 214-220, 222-243]; see dirhems struck for [Ulugh Muhammad](#), a denar struck for [Ivan of Mozhaisk](#), coins of [Vasilii II](#), and seals of [Casimir IV of Poland](#); see a nineteenth-century representation of the [1477 removal of Marfa Boretskaia and the veche bell from Novgorod](#); see a map of the [Crimean khanate](#)
- **In-class assignment #4**. Church and political legitimacy [*Martin* 281-297; *Dmytryshyn* 243-261]

Week 12 (November 14-18, 21): Muscovite domestic consolidation

- Muscovite economy and administration [*Martin* 298-330; *Dmytryshyn* 261-275]
- Political integration [*Martin* 330-335]

Week 13 (November 28-December 2): Foreign policy and foreign trade

- Muscovy's relations with its European neighbors [*Martin* 336-347]
- Muscovite relations with the Tatar khanates [*Martin* 347-363]

Week 14 (December 5-7): Ivan the Terrible

- **In-class assignment #5**. The political system and the foreign policy under Ivan IV [*Martin* 364-415; *Dmytryshyn* 276-308]