

History 2423F
RUSSIA AND UKRAINE. PAST AND PRESENT
Fall 2026

When: Wednesday 12:30 – 2:30
Where: TBD

Instructor: **Professor Marta Dyczok**
Email: **mdyczok@uwo.ca**
Office: **Department of History, Lawson Hall Room 2246**
Office Hours: TBD

DRAFT SYLLABUS

What This Course is About

In 2014 Russia launched an unprovoked war against Ukraine. One dimension of the war is a history war. Russia is disseminating a false colonial narrative that Russians and Ukrainians are one people and always have been. This course examines the current war through a historical lens by exploring the encounters between Ukraine and Russia over the past 1,000 years. It investigates how the past is casting a shadow onto the present, how historical narratives were colonized and are now being de-colonized. Russian and Ukrainian histories are placed in a larger international context, and investigated through concepts of state, empire, and nation, as well as the role of mass media in construction of modern history. All of this provides a larger framework for understanding today's events.

Antirequisite(s): Political Science 2423F/G

How This Course is Structured

This is an in-person lecture course which meets once a week. Every week students will be expected to complete the required readings, attend the lecture, participate in an in-class discussion, and afterwards to complete a short online quiz. Students will be asked to write one essay on a topic from a list that will be provided by the instructor, although there will be an option to select your own topic in consultation with the professor. At the end of the course there will be an in-person final exam.

What Students Will Learn

This course is designed to increase student knowledge and skills. At the end of this course students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the main developments in Russian and Ukrainian history
- Critically evaluate competing historical narratives and sources
- Explain the inter-connectedness of national and international history
- Explain the meaning of concepts such as empire, state, nation
- Explain the role of the mass media in politics
- Express themselves clearly and analytically in written assignments.

What Students Need to Do

- Complete the assigned weekly required readings and take individual notes
- Attend the weekly lectures, including the film, take individual notes, and participate in weekly in-class discussions
- Complete the weekly quiz, each one is worth 2% of the final mark
- Write a 2,500-3,000 word essay worth 20% of the final mark
- Complete the in person final exam worth 50% of the final mark

How Students Will Be Evaluated

1.	Participation	10%
2.	Weekly quiz, each worth 2%	20%
2.	Essay of 2,500 – 3,000 words (due in week 10)	20%
3.	Final Exam, Exam period	50%

Every week there will be a lecture followed by an in-class discussion. Afterwards students will be asked to complete a short online quiz based on the material from the required readings and lecture. The quizzes will be on the OWL site in the Tests and Quizzes section. Each quiz will have 2 short questions, each correct answer worth 1%, for a possible total of 2% per quiz. Students will have one week to complete each quiz. **No extensions are possible for quizzes for any reason.** There will be 11 quizzes, each student is required to complete 10 quizzes for a total of 20% of the final mark. In Week 10 students will be asked to submit a 2,500-3,000-word essay, which will be worth 20% of your final mark. There will be an in person 2-hour final exam during the exam period.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Part I. INTRODUCTION

Week 1: Introduction to course themes and requirements

(9 September 2026)

Required

MacMillan, Margaret. 2008. *The Uses and Abuses of History*. Toronto: Viking Canada.
[http://www.mchrddi.gov.in/FC2020/reading%20material/history/The%20Uses%20and%20Abuses%20of%20History%20by%20Margaret%20MacMillan%20\(z-lib.org\).epub.pdf](http://www.mchrddi.gov.in/FC2020/reading%20material/history/The%20Uses%20and%20Abuses%20of%20History%20by%20Margaret%20MacMillan%20(z-lib.org).epub.pdf)

Week 2. What is History? Empire? State? Nation?

(16 September 2026)

Required

Carr, E. H., *What Is History?* 2nd. ed. (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986) Chapter 1

Plokhly, Serhii. "History and Territory," Serhii Plokhly, in *Ukraine and Russia: Representations of the past* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), Chapter 9

Smith, Anthony D., 'Nations and their Past'; Gellner, Ernst, 'Do nations have navels?'
<http://gellnerpage.tripod.com/Warwick.html>
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/14698129/2/3>

Part II. A SURVEY of the UKRAINIAN-RUSSIAN HISTORICAL ENCOUNTER

Week 3. The Kyivan-Rus' Era and Muscovy's Imperial Expansion

(23 September 2026)

Required

Dyczok, Marta. 2024. "The Princes." In *Ukraine not 'the Ukraine*. Chapter 1. Cambridge Elements. Series: Elements in Soviet and Post-Soviet History.
<https://www.cambridge.org/core/elements/abs/ukraine-not-the-ukraine/1A0CC1D8913162C5A65763614CCC39E1>

Kappeler, Andreas, *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History* [translated by Alfred Clayton] (Harlow, England: Longman, 2001), Introduction

Plokhly, Serhii, *The Gates of Europe* (New York: Basic Books, 2015), Introduction

Recommended

Lieven, Dominic, *Empire. The Russian Empire and Its Rivals* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001) Chapter 6

Magosci, Paul Robert, *A History of Ukraine. The Land and its Peoples*. 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), Chapter 2

30 September 2026 National Day for Truth and Reconciliation NO CLASS

Week 4. New Ideas Challenge Imperialism

(7 October 2026)

Required

Dyczok, Marta. 2024. "The Nation-Builders." In *Ukraine not 'the Ukraine*. Chapter 3. Cambridge Elements. Series: Elements in Soviet and Post-Soviet History. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/elements/abs/ukraine-not-the-ukraine/1A0CC1D8913162C5A65763614CCC39E1>

Mayall, James. 2008. "Nationalism and imperialism." In Terence Ball and Richard Bellamy (eds.) *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Political Thought*. Chapter 4. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/cambridge-history-of-twentiethcentury-political-thought/nationalism-andimperialism/EB2E1C60B530194D909608CA407A7A62>

Wintle, Michael. 2006. "Visual Representations of Europe in the Nineteenth Century: The Age of Nationalism and Imperialism." In Stefan Berger (ed.) *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Europe. 1789-1914*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Recommended

Hroch, Miroslav. 1996. 'From National Movement to the Fully-Formed Nation: The Nation-Building Process in Europe', in Geoff Eley and Ronald G. Suny (eds), *Becoming National. A Reader*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 59-77. https://escholarship.org/content/qt4n1147f1/qt4n1147f1_noSplash_0c833a27c21bf7f74c25e37b1c6e3816.pdf?t=lnq3fr

Renan, Ernest. 1996. 'What is a Nation?' in Geoff Eley and Ronald G. Suny, eds., *Becoming National. A Reader* New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 41-55.
<https://tamilnation.org/selfdetermination/nation/renan.htm>

**Week 5. The Short Twentieth Century and The Blank Spots
 + Library Instruction with Jason Dyck**
 (21 October 2026)

Required

Suny, Ronald Grigor, "Reading Russia and the Soviet Union in the twentieth century: how the 'West' wrote its history of the USSR," in *The Cambridge History of Russia, Volume 3* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) on-line:
<https://alpha.lib.uwo.ca/search/?searchtype=t&searcharg=The+Cambridge+History+of+Russia%2C+Volume+3&searchscope=20>

10 – 18 October 2026 Fall Reading Week NO CLASS

Week 6. Film: Haytarma (Akhtem Seitablayev, Ukraine, 2013)
 (28 October 2026)

Haytarma is a 2013 Crimean Tatar-language film. It portrays Crimean Tatar test pilot and Hero of the Soviet Union Amet-khan Sultan against the background of the 1944 deportation of the Crimean Tatars. The title of the film means "Return"

Part III. CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

Week 7. 1991-2014 Part 1: Russia
 (4 November 2026)

Required

Brzezinski, Zbigniew. 1994. The Premature Partnership. *Foreign Affairs*, 1994. Vol. 73(2) (Mar. - Apr): 67-82.

Colton, Timothy J. 2016. *Russia: what everyone needs to know*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press. Chapters 4, 5, 6.

Week 8. 1991-2014 Part 2: Ukraine
 (11 November 2026)

Required

Dyczok, Marta. 2024. "The State Builders." In *Ukraine not 'the Ukraine*. Chapter 4. Cambridge Elements. Series: Elements in Soviet and Post-Soviet History. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/elements/abs/ukraine-not-the-ukraine/1A0CC1D8913162C5A65763614CCC39E1>

Yekelchyk, Serhy. 2020. *Ukraine: What Everyone Needs to Know*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press. Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7.

Week 9. Russia's War Against Ukraine (2014-2026)

(18 November 2026)

Required

Bugayova, Nataliya, Kateryna Stepanenko, and Frederick W. Kagan. 2023. WEAKNESS IS LETHAL: WHY PUTIN INVADED UKRAINE AND HOW THE WAR MUST END. ISW Press. <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/weakness-lethal-why-putin-invaded-ukraine-and-how-war-must-end>

Delanty, G. (2023). Introduction to the special issue on the Russo-Ukrainian War: A new European war? Considerations on the Russo-Ukrainian War. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 26(4), 431-449. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13684310231174098>

Dyczok, Marta. 2024. "The Defenders." In *Ukraine not 'the Ukraine*. Chapter 5. Cambridge Elements. Series: Elements in Soviet and Post-Soviet History. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/elements/ukraine-not-the-ukraine/1A0CC1D8913162C5A65763614CCC39E1>

Recommended

Katerji, Oz and Vladislav Davidzon. 2023. "Ukraine's Counteroffensive Is More Successful Than You Think. The focus on the stalled land war obscures major successes in Crimea and the Black Sea." *Foreign Policy*. 20 October.

Week 10. International Dimensions

ESSAY DUE

(25 November 2026)

Required

Dickinson, Peter. (2023) Historic progress: Ukraine receives green light for EU membership talks. *UkraineAlert*. Atlantic Council. 9 November.

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/historic-progress-ukraine-receives-green-light-for-eu-membership-talks/>

Dyczok, Marta. 2024. Introduction. Conclusion. Ukraine not 'the' Ukraine. Cambridge University Press. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/elements/ukraine-not-the-ukraine/1A0CC1D8913162C5A65763614CCC39E1>

Popova, Maria and Oxana Shevel. 2022. "Russia's Invasion of Ukraine Is Essentially Not About NATO." Just Security. February 24. <https://www.justsecurity.org/80343/russias-new-assault-on-ukraine-is-not-entirely-maybe-not-even-largely-about-nato/>

Recommended

Dyczok, Marta. 2015. "The Ukraine Story in Western Media," in Agnieszka Pikulicka-Wilczewska and Richard Sakwa (eds.) Ukraine and Russia: People, Politics, Propaganda, and Perspectives (London: e-international relations), <https://www.e-ir.info/2015/04/30/the-ukraine-story-in-western-media/>

McFaul, Michael. 2023. The Case for Supporting Ukraine Is Crystal Clear. Note to Congress: Ukraine aid is not charity but serves critical U.S. interests. Foreign Policy. 16 November. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/11/16/ukraine-russia-war-us-congress-aid-weapons/>

Week 11. Information and Historical Warfare

(2 December 2026)

Required

Dutkiewicz, J., & Smolenski, J. (2023). Epistemic superimposition: the war in Ukraine and the poverty of expertise in international relations theory. *Journal of International Relations and Development*, November 26(4): 619-631. [https://advance-lexis-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/document/?pdmfid=1516831&crd=b8dcb0b4-8867-4cf7-b9a9-721e246e941f&pddocfullpath=%2Fshared%2Fdocument%2Fnews%2Furn%3AcontentItem%3A69J1-1CW1-F129-P3WY-00000-00&pdcontentcomponentid=483278&pdteaserkey=sr0&pditab=allpods&ecomp=tmyk&earg=sr0&prid=12b81f05-a6cd-45eb-b766-17ad5609348e](https://advance.lexis-com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/document/?pdmfid=1516831&crd=b8dcb0b4-8867-4cf7-b9a9-721e246e941f&pddocfullpath=%2Fshared%2Fdocument%2Fnews%2Furn%3AcontentItem%3A69J1-1CW1-F129-P3WY-00000-00&pdcontentcomponentid=483278&pdteaserkey=sr0&pditab=allpods&ecomp=tmyk&earg=sr0&prid=12b81f05-a6cd-45eb-b766-17ad5609348e)

Finnin, Rory. 2022. West must beware the language of appeasement and see Russia's war on Ukraine for what it is. *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/west-must-beware-the-language-of-appeasement-and-see-russias-war-on-ukraine-for-what-it-is-180914>

Pomerantsev, Peter. 2015. "Authoritarianism Goes Global (II): The Kremlin's Information War." *Journal of Democracy* 26(4): 40-50.
<https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/authoritarianism-goes-global-ii-the-kremlins-information-war/>

Vushko, Iryna. 2018. "Historians at War: History, Politics and Memory in Ukraine." *Contemporary European History*, 27(1): 112 – 124. DOI:
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0960777317000431>

Recommended

Torbakov, Ihor. 2017. "Ukraine and Russia: Entangled Histories, Contested Identities, and a War of Narratives." In Olga Bertelsen (ed.) *Revolution and War in Contemporary Ukraine: The Challenge of Change*. Stuttgart : ibidem-Verlag.
https://books.google.ca/books?hl=en&lr=&id=xCLADgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PT103&dq=history+wars+ukraine+russia&ots=HRL_8vsDj8&sig=5kqL8GwF-lz2ReWVSguBTzEAts#v=onepage&q=history%20wars%20ukraine%20russia&f=false

Week 12. De-colonizing History and Prospects for Peace

(9 December 2026)

Required

Kuromiya, Hiroaki. 2023. Russia's undue influence on Western scholars and scholarship. *Forum for Ukrainian Studies*. 30 June. <https://ukrainian-studies.ca/2023/06/30/russias-undue-influence-of-western-scholars-and-scholarship/>

McFaul, Michael. 2023. The Case for Supporting Ukraine Is Crystal Clear. Note to Congress: Ukraine aid is not charity but serves critical U.S. interests. *Foreign Policy*. 16 November. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/11/16/ukraine-russia-war-us-congress-aid-weapons/>

Zayarnyuk, Andriy. 2022. Historians As Enablers? Historiography, Imperialism, and the Legitimization of Russian Aggression. *East/West: Journal of Ukrainian Studies*. 9(2): 191–212.
<https://browzine.com/libraries/654/journals/107082/issues/484370263>

Recommended

Hrytsak, Yaroslav. 2014. "Ignorance Is Power." *Ab Imperio*. 3: 218-228.
<https://doi.org/10.1353/imp.2014.0074>; <https://muse-jhu-edu.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/article/564144>

Zayarnyuk, Andriy. 2015. A Revolution's History, A Historians' War. *Ab Imperio*. 1/2015: 449-479. <https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/178/article/582781>

Readings

Most readings will be available online and students will not be required to purchase any reading materials. Additions may be made during the term.

Students must complete all coursework. Failure to complete all assigned coursework will result in a failing grade.

Make-up tests, midterms, and exams can only be approved by Academic Counselling. Please see

https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html for department procedures and requirements involving make-up tests and exams.

Absences and Late Assignments

Students are expected to take responsibility for keeping up to date with the course. Attendance will be taken in class and 10% of your total mark is for participation. In order to successfully answer the weekly quiz questions students need to attend the lectures. If you miss a lecture, it is your responsibility to get the lecture notes from a fellow student. There is no possibility of making up the weekly quiz. If you miss it, you miss it. There are 11 quizzes and you need to complete 10, so that provides for any absences for valid reasons. The essay is due in week 10. Extensions may be granted upon request.

Additional Statements

Use of Generative AI Tools

All work submitted in this course must be your own.

The use of generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT, is permitted in this course for activities such as brainstorming and refining your ideas, drafting an outline to organize your thoughts, or checking grammar and style. Any use of such tools should be clearly acknowledged and explained. If in doubt, please ask me for clarification.

Communication policies

The best way to communicate with me is at the end of class or during my office hours which I hold every week in my office. I set aside time every week and make myself available to students who have questions or would like additional information. Students can also contact me via email, and I do my best to respond within 48 hours on business days, not weekends.

Use of Electronic Devices

Electronic devices of any kind will not be allowed during tests and examinations.

Please review the Department of History's shared policies and statements for all undergraduate courses at:

https://history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/program_module_information/policies.html

for important information regarding accessibility options, make-up exams, medical accommodations, health and wellness, academic integrity, plagiarism, and more.