

# EXAMINATION #2

**Instructions:** Below you will find two essay questions. Choose **ONE** of these questions and answer it in an essay of three pages or so. Make sure that your essay actually answers the question posed. Do your best to articulate a clear thesis or argument early on in the essay (best of all in the first paragraph). Use the body of the essay to develop that thesis and to provide specific evidence from the readings specifically assigned in this course. Do not restrict yourself to one or two sources when a wider range of materials will allow you to compose a much better and more comprehensive answer. Remember that instructors will have to read many of these essays, so clarity of organization and expression is essential for success.

**QUESTION #1. Autocracy, Bolsheviks, and Constitutions.** Evaluate the attitude of the Russian autocracy and the Bolsheviks to the constitutions and law. What were the different conditions in which the tsarist regime and the Bolsheviks produced their constitutions? How willingly did they write constitutions, and what aspects of policy and administration were *exempt* from constitutional regulation? To what extent did these regimes seem to respect these constitutions in practice, and what efforts did they make to limit the constraints of constitutional provisions on their actions? Here you might think about the goals of each regime and the degree to which constitutional forms and practices were perceived to be relevant for their attainment. Be sure to consider the October Manifesto, various provisions in the Fundamental Laws of 1906, Lenin's *State & Revolution*, and the Soviet constitutions in your answer. Other sources may also be relevant as well.

**QUESTION #2. Violence in Russian Politics.** We know that the Americans had to fight a war against the British in order to secure the independence of their new country. But it seems safe to say that violence occupied a more prominent place in the revolutionary process in Russia from 1905 to 1936. Write an essay addressing this problem of political violence in Russia from the late tsarist period through the first two Soviet decades. It will not be enough simply to list acts of violence. Rather, you should seek to explain the role and function of violence in comparison to other ways of resolving political problems. In what cases were tsarist statesmen or Bolsheviks willing to use instruments like law, constitutions, elections, and compromise? And in which cases did these same people resort to force, coercion, or even violence to solve political problems? What do the answers tell us about the nature of the late tsarist and early Bolshevik regimes?

**General guidelines & advice.** The basic idea of this exercise and the standards by which it will be assessed are the same as in exam #1. It should be immediately apparent that these questions are complex and need to be answered by including a range of factors and issues. The space allotted for your answer is nonetheless quite limited. This means that you will have to think very

carefully about organization and about which issues are truly important to answering the question and which are of only secondary significance. You will also need to distill your main ideas to their essence, while also choosing evidence that is both succinct and effective. Clear topic sentences are always crucial to a good essay, and no essay can possibly earn an "A" or "B" grade if topic sentences are missing or badly related to the content of each paragraph. In short, doing well will involve a good deal of work, so you should be sure to allot yourself an appropriate amount of time.

There also arises the question of whether the Fundamental Laws of 1906 should be considered a constitution. There is no correct answer to this question, but you will probably have to make some kind of assessment of your own in order to answer either question above. Alternatively, you could say that the Laws, even if they do not represent a constitution, had constitutional significance or were part of a larger process of constitution-making.

**Formal Requirements:** Make sure that your essay fulfills all the formal requirements listed below. Violations will be penalized in the assessment of your exam.

- The essay should be around 3 pages in length. That means substantially longer than 2 pages, but not more than 4.
- The text should be double-spaced, with 1-inch margins on all sides. Attempts to inflate the size of the essay artificially with triple-space, large margins, huge font, etc., will be treated accordingly (i.e. mercilessly).
- Pages must be **numbered**.
- Your name, the name of your TA, and the number of your section **must** appear in the upper right-hand corner of the essay.
- Your essay must have a title, preferably something more informative than "Exam" or "Russia." There is no need for a title page. Simply put your title at the top of the first page.
- Your essay must be typed or computer-printed. Handwritten documents will not be accepted.
- References to specific texts and to specific pages or articles are essential. These should ideally take the shortest form possible, for example: (Weinberg, 75), (Lenin, 7), etc. For longer titles use the following: "FL" = Fundamental Laws, "OM" = October Manifesto, "Const-1918" = Soviet Constitution of 1918 (ditto for 1924), etc. If you wish to make specific reference to a piece of information related in lecture, you may write (lecture, 10/26) = lecture of October 26. The idea here is to keep citations clear without having them clutter up the body of the text.
- Your exam essay should reflect your own thinking and writing. Discussing the issues in the question(s) with others in the class is certainly acceptable, but the final written product should be your own. Please bear in mind that the instructors of this course take the issue of academic honesty very seriously and will keep vigilant watch for examples of plagiarism. In the case of a violation of academic honesty, you will be failed in the course and formal proceedings against you will be initiated.