Interesting & Useful Handout #1
Kievan Rus'

Proposed Course of Our Discussion:
I. Basic Geographical Conditions
II. The Political Landscape & Human Geography
III. The Issue of Sources and the Primary Chronicle
IV. The Problem of Rus' & the issue of Scandinavian Influence

Peoples & Languages:
Settled & forest peoples
- Slavs - various tribes, e.g. Derevlianians, Severians, etc.
- Finnic - Merians, Cheremis, etc.
- Bulghars - Turkic group; some go to Bulgaria, others stay on Volga
- Baltic - along Baltic coast: Lithuanians, Prussians, etc
- Greeks - Byzantine Empire, Black Sea coast

Nomads
- Magyars = Hungarians (nomads with Ugric language)
- Khazars - Turkic; elite converts to Judaism and establishes a state (Khaganate)
- Pechenegs - Turkic; crucial force in destabilizing Khazar regime
- Polovtsians (or Cumans) - appear later and drive out the Pechenegs
- Vikings/Varangians/Normans – "nomads of the sea." from Scandinavia

Other items:
Khazar Khaganate (Empire); Pax Khazarica (The Khazar peace)
Trade routes: Saracen route from Baltic Sea, down Volga, to Caspian Sea
- Route "from the Varangians to the Greeks" (Baltic-Dniepr-Black Sea)

Normanist theory: issue of the origins of Rus'
Rurik & the "calling of the Varangians"

A Basic Timeline
650-850 Khazar Khaganate at its height
830 Appearance of Rus' Khaganate (probably on upper Volga)
860 Rus' attack on Constantinople (one of the earliest records of Rus')
862 Traditional date for arrival of Rurik of the Varangians (founder Rurikid dynasty)
882 Supposed date that Oleg moved Rus' "capital" from Novgorod to Kiev
907 & 911 Rus' raids on Constantinople leading to trade agreements
922 Conversion of Volga Bulghars to Islam
965 Sviatislav inflicts major defeat on Khazars