This course introduces the student to the history of the Caucasus from the early nineteenth century to the post-Soviet period. We explore the ethnic, cultural, and religious components of the region and the role the Caucasus has played in modern international political economy. First, we examine the emergence of Armenian, Azerbaijani, and Georgian nationalism and the impact of outside powers on their efforts toward modernization beginning in the early nineteenth century. The Caucasus became a battleground for the three empires—Ottoman, Persian, and Russian—contending for regional hegemony, and Armenian, Azerbaijani, and Georgian cultural, political, and economic development took place within the context of the territorial conflicts among the empires. Further, the triangular imperial competition also attracted the Western powers, most notably Britain and France, each with its own imperial ambitions but with a common geostrategic objective toward the Caucasus: namely, the prevention of Russian expansionism farther south to the Middle East and the Mediterranean Sea.

The course pays close attention to Armenian, Azerbaijani, and Georgian responses to the foreign policies of the three empires. Initially local Christians (Georgians and Armenians) viewed the Russian conquests as liberation from Muslim Persian and Ottoman rule, but they were soon disillusioned, as Tsar Alexander I annexed Georgia in 1801 and seized parts of Armenia in 1804, and Tsar Nicholas I instituted the Polozhenie that, while granting certain rights, severely restricted the activities of the church. The Persian military, unable to withstand the competition, finally withdrew from the Caucasus, but the subsequent invasions and counter-invasions by the Russian and Ottoman armies eventually gave rise to intense resentment and hostility toward the two empires, as each power insisted on imposing its own culture and institutions on the local nationalities. Equally important, the regional conflicts generated by the competing empires also inevitably generated national and religious hostilities between the Armenian, Azerbaijani, and Georgian peoples.

This course also covers the collapse of the Russian and Ottoman empires by the end of World War I and the emergence of the three independent republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia in 1918. These short-lived republics were annexed yet again by the end of 1921 as constituent republics of the Soviet Union. We examine in some detail the Kremlin’s policies toward the three republics from Lenin to Gorbachev, the clash between Communism
and nationalism, and the events leading to the disintegration of the Soviet Union. We then analyze the various problems associated with nation-building and state-building in the three republics since their (re)independence in 1991. We pay particular attention to the historical causes of some of the major military conflicts in the region (eg, Nagorno Karabagh, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Chechnya) and to the geopolitical implications of Western investments to exploit Caspian oil. As in the nineteenth century, the major powers today continue to exert considerable influence on the region’s political economy.

Two decades have passed since Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia gained independence from the Soviet empire. How do we assess the relationship between the history of each country and the current political and economic conditions? How do we evaluate their relations with the neighboring countries, the Middle East, the West, and the East? How realistic is the pursuit of territorial sovereignty in such a turbulent region? What are the advantages and disadvantages of attracting international actors such as multinational corporations, the IMF, the World Bank, and NATO to the region? The course concludes by briefly exploring the role of international mediation and the prospects for conflict resolution and by reviewing some of the major events in recent years as well as efforts toward bilateral and regional cooperation.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

The following books are available for purchase at the BU bookstore:


Books on reserve at the Mugar Library:


**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

The final course grade for the course will be assessed on the basis of the following:

- Term paper 20%
- Midterm exam 35%
- Final exam 45%
**Exams (Midterm 35%; Final 45; total 80%) 1,600 words each**
Both the midterm and the final are take-home exams. They cover the material presented in lectures and the readings. A week or so in advance, your instructor will hand out four or five essay questions, and students are required to write on one of them. The essay for each exam must be about 1,600 words in length.

**Term Paper (20%) 4,300 words**
The research paper examines in some detail a specific aspect of the history of the Caucasus. Students should discuss their paper topics with the instructor as soon as possible. The paper topic is due during the week of February 13 and a preliminary paper outline and bibliography are due during the week of February 27.

The paper must be 4,300 words in length, typed in 12 font size, and double-spaced. The research paper requires proper documentation (that is, footnotes or endnotes) and a bibliography—for example, see Kate Turabian's *Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Before submitting the final draft of your term paper, you should reserve sufficient time to reread and revise it. Students are encouraged to become familiar with Mary Lynn Rampolla's *A Pocket Guide to Writing History* and the classic handbook, *The Elements of Style*, by William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White. These manuals are not “required texts” for this course, but they should remain on your desk during your college education and long thereafter.

**Note on Extensions & University Academic Conduct Code**
Extensions for written assignments are strongly discouraged and will be allowed in extremely urgent emergencies only and with adequate documentation. Otherwise, five points will be subtracted from the grades for each day delayed after the scheduled due dates.

Students must adhere to all university standards of academic conduct. Please consult the Boston University Code of Academic Conduct. Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Students violating the rules of academic conduct will automatically fail the course. Please be familiar with the University’s Code of Academic Conduct.

**Course Outline**

In case we need to make any changes in the schedule for reading assignments below, your instructor will announce them in class.

*W Jan. 18* Introduction to course  
The Caucasus: Regional characteristics and general background

*Week of Jan. 23* Civilizations, Ethnicity, and Territory  
Week of Jan. 30  Nationalism and Social Change under Tsarist Rule  
de Waal, *The Caucasus*, Ch. 2 (Pp. 37-70)  
Suny, *Transcaucasia*, Chapters by Suny, Ter Minassian, Libaridian,  
Altstadt, Chs. 6-9 (Pp. 109-209)  

Week of Feb. 6  Nationalism and Social Change under Tsarist Rule [continued]  
de Waal, *The Caucasus*, Ch. 2 (Pp. 37-70)  
Suny, *Transcaucasia*, Chapters by Suny, Ter Minassian, Libaridian,  
Altstadt, Chs. 6-9 (Pp. 109-209)  

Week of Feb. 13  Revolution and Soviet Transformation  
de Waal, *The Caucasus*, Ch. 3 (Pp. 71-97)  
Suny, *Transcaucasia*, Chapters by Swietochowski, Suny,  
Hovannisian, Arsrlanian, Chs. 10-13 (Pp. 211-306)  

**Paper topic due**

Week of Feb. 20  
**Monday, Feb. 20**  Classes suspended / Tuesday, Feb. 21 scheduled as “Monday”  
Nation-Building, Sovietization, and Independence  
Suny, *Transcaucasia*, Chapters by Blank, Fairbanks, Suny, Saroyan,  
Chs. 14-17 (Pp. 307-426)

Week of Feb. 27  Nation-Building, Nationalism, and Independence  
de Waal, *The Caucasus*, Chs. 4-5 (Pp. 98-166)  

**Paper outline and bibliography due**

Week of March 5  Conflict Theory, Chechnya, and Georgia  

**Midterm Exam due**

Week of March 12  Spring recess

Week of March 19  Nagorno-Karabagh and the Geopolitics of Empires  
Suny, *Transcaucasia*, Chapters by Dudwick, Jones, Schroeder,  
Anderson and Silver, Chs. 18-21 (Pp. 427-506)  
Chorbajian, *Caucasian Knot*, Chs. 2-3, App. VIA-XIV (Pp. 49-108,  
180-191)

Week of March 26  Nagorno-Karabagh on the Road to Independence  
Zürcher, *The Post-Soviet Wars*, Ch. 6 (Pp. 152-185)  
Week of April 2  Territorial Conflict and the Search for Peaceful Resolution
Chorbajian, Caucasian Knot, Ch. 4 (Pp. 109-170)

Week of April 9  The Caucasus and the Regional Context
de Waal, The Caucasus, Ch. 6 (Pp. 167-187)
Dekmejian, Troubled Waters, Chs. 5-7 (Pp. 43-114)

Week of April 16  Classes Suspended

Monday, April 16  W April 18  The Caucasus, the Major Powers, and Non-State Actors
de Waal, The Caucasus, Ch. 7 (Pp. 188-224)
Dekmejian, Troubled Waters, Chs. 8-11 (115-174)

Week of April 23  The Caucasus in the Global Village: A Diplomat’s View
Chryssanthopoulos, Caucasian Chronicles [entire book]

Week of April 30  A Region between War and Peace
Zürcher, The Post-Soviet Wars, Ch. 7 (Pp. 186-208)

W  May 2  The Caucasus and Its Future
de Waal, The Caucasus, Conclusion (Pp. 225-227)
Suny, Transcaucasia, Conclusion (Pp. 507-512)
Chorbajian, Caucasian Knot, Conclusion (Pp. 171-173)
Dekmejian, Troubled Waters, Epilogue (Pp. 175-184)
Zürcher, The Post-Soviet Wars, Ch. 8, Conclusion (Pp. 209-230)

Last day of class. Term papers due

Final exam due date: Monday, May 7.
Time: 12:30-2:30p.m.  Please bring a hard copy of your final exam to my office:
Room 508, Department of History, 226 Bay State Rd.

Study period  Thursday, May 3 - Sunday, May 6
Final exam period  Monday, May 7 - Friday, May 11