

PAPER TOPICS
History 344
Prof. David-Fox, Spring 2008

Devising the specific focus and argument of your paper is part of the assignment. The paper should be an historical essay exploring a specific, well-defined issue and drawing on readings, lectures and discussions. This implies the paper should have an introduction, raising the problems and themes you will discuss, perhaps suggesting why they are important; a coherent and organized argument that is built throughout the text; and a conclusion that goes beyond summarizing what has already been said. The more evidence, material, analysis, and examples you bring to bear on your discussion, the stronger it will be.

You do not need to do any outside reading for this paper, but can use as many course materials as you wish. If you do wish to do outside reading, it would be a good idea to get my recommendations or run your choices by me..

Within these parameters, you may choose from the following topics:

1. An essay on Babel's *Red Cavalry*. As you devise your essay, you may consider such questions as: In what ways does this literary work illuminate the period of revolution and civil war? What does it say about violence, popular mentalities, and the experience of civil war? How can one decipher Babel's own attitudes?
2. An essay analyzing and comparing various kinds of violence in revolutionary Russia. As you devise your essay, you might consider such questions as: Can you construct a typology of the different kinds of violence from such works as Figes, Weinberg, Lohr, and Holquist? Is it useful to make a distinction between violence "from above" and violence "from below," or state-sponsored vs. popular violence? Where do different kinds of violence overlap, and where do they differ?
3. An essay on any aspect of Figes's views of the Russian Revolution as expressed in *A People's Tragedy*. As you devise your essay, you could think about issues such as: How does Figes make his views and interpretations known? When is he reflecting historical consensus, and when is he articulating his own particular point of view? How convincing are his arguments and the evidence that he presents? What issues do the biographies of individuals illuminate?

Format and Submission of Papers: All papers should be typed, double-spaced with normal 1" margins, and approximately 7 pages long. **Papers are due in class on Thurs. April 24.**

Please note: late papers will be accepted only with a valid, written excuse. Unfortunately, computer errors are not a valid excuse; you are responsible for making backup copies.

Citations: All quotations and references to facts not generally known should be properly cited either in parentheses in the text (i.e. Figes, p. 23) or in footnotes/endnotes.

A piece of advice. Start soon. Think about presenting a refined, nuanced thesis that is explicitly developed in the paper. The best papers are always thought out in advance and go through at least one or two drafts. A little advance planning and editorial polishing can improve your essays a lot.