

# Revolutionary Subjectivity: How Geography and Identity Affected Revolutionary Experiences

- Dr. Colleen M. Moore, May 2021
- Revolutionary Russia, 1914-22
- Advanced undergraduate history seminar



Boris Kustodiev, *The Bolshevik*, 1920, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

# Overview of Course and Lesson Plan

Descriptions, Objectives, and Definitions of Key Terms

# Course description and objectives:

- In 1917, Russia experienced two revolutions: The first overthrew the last absolutist regime in Europe; the second established the world's first socialist society. This course examines the causes, main events, and consequences of these developments from a variety of historical and historiographical perspectives.
- The goals of this course are as follows:
  - To introduce students to the ways in which historical interpretations of the revolution have evolved over time; and
  - To impress upon students that different people in different places experienced the revolution in different ways.

# Relationship of the lesson plan to the course:

- The course is divided into three parts:
  - 1. *Interpretations:*** Students read examples of conservative, revisionist, and post-revisionist or subjectivity scholarship on the revolutionary era.
  - 2. *Experiences:*** Students read works on the revolutionary experiences of various peoples and places, such as workers, peasants, women, Socialist Revolutionaries, in the provinces, and in the non-Russian regions of the empire.
  - 3. *Reflections:*** Students read analyses of the impact of the revolution outside Russia and on the occasion of its centenary.
- This lesson plan fits into ***Part 2. Experiences.***

# Sequence of the lesson plan in the course:

Week	Topic	Sample Readings
7	Non-Bolshevik parties	From memoir accounts by Chernov, Sukhanov, Kerensky, Miliukov
8	Workers and peasants	Graeme Gill, "The Mainsprings of Peasant Action"; Aaron Retish, "Creating Peasant Citizens"
9	Women and minorities	Alexandra Kollantai, "Communism and the Family"; from Wendy Goldman, <i>Women, the State, and Revolution</i> ; Peter Holquist, "Making Cossacks Counter-Revolutionary"
10	Provinces and periphery	From Donald Raleigh, <i>Revolution on the Volga</i> ; from Ronald Suny, <i>The Baku Commune</i>
11	MAPRR lesson plan	<a href="https://mpgrr.herokuapp.com/home">https://mpgrr.herokuapp.com/home</a>

# Lesson plan description and objectives:

- Events in Petrograd determined the primary narrative of the Russian Revolution, but people's experiences of the revolution differed based on *who* and *where* they were. The purpose of this assignment is to investigate how geographical location and political/socioeconomic identity influenced revolutionary experiences.
- The goals of this assignment are as follows:
  - To examine how individuals from various political and socioeconomic groups experienced revolutionary events.
  - To investigate the influence of place or space on revolutionary experiences.
  - To explore the relationship between place and identity.

# What do historians mean by “subjectivity”?

- No two people experience the same event in the exact same way.
- How we experience events is determined by who we are (our identity), and our identity is determined by where we live (geography), how we live (socioeconomic status), and what we believe (political outlook), among other factors.
- Historical documents (primary sources) do not present an objective, factual accounting of an event; rather, they offer an interpretation of an event based on the author’s identity.
- These subjective interpretations highlight the meaning or significance of historical events to those who experienced them.

# How does MAPRR define location?

A **location** is a specific piece of terrain mappable by latitude and longitude, such as a city, town, or village; and for our purposes, a specific region, mountain range, or river. A location becomes a meaningful “place” when it is attached to a place-based concept (PBC). A location in a PBC connects common themes, emotions, and reactions, revealing a multidimensional map of experiences that authors shared during the turbulent years of World War I, the Revolution, and the Civil War in Russia.

# What is a place-based concept?

A ***place-based concept*** is a conjunction that highlights the commonalities and complexities of place-based identity among a vast array of political allegiances and experienced emotions. Each unique conjunction connects up to six categories of components to each textual spatial image.

Those categories and components are as follows:

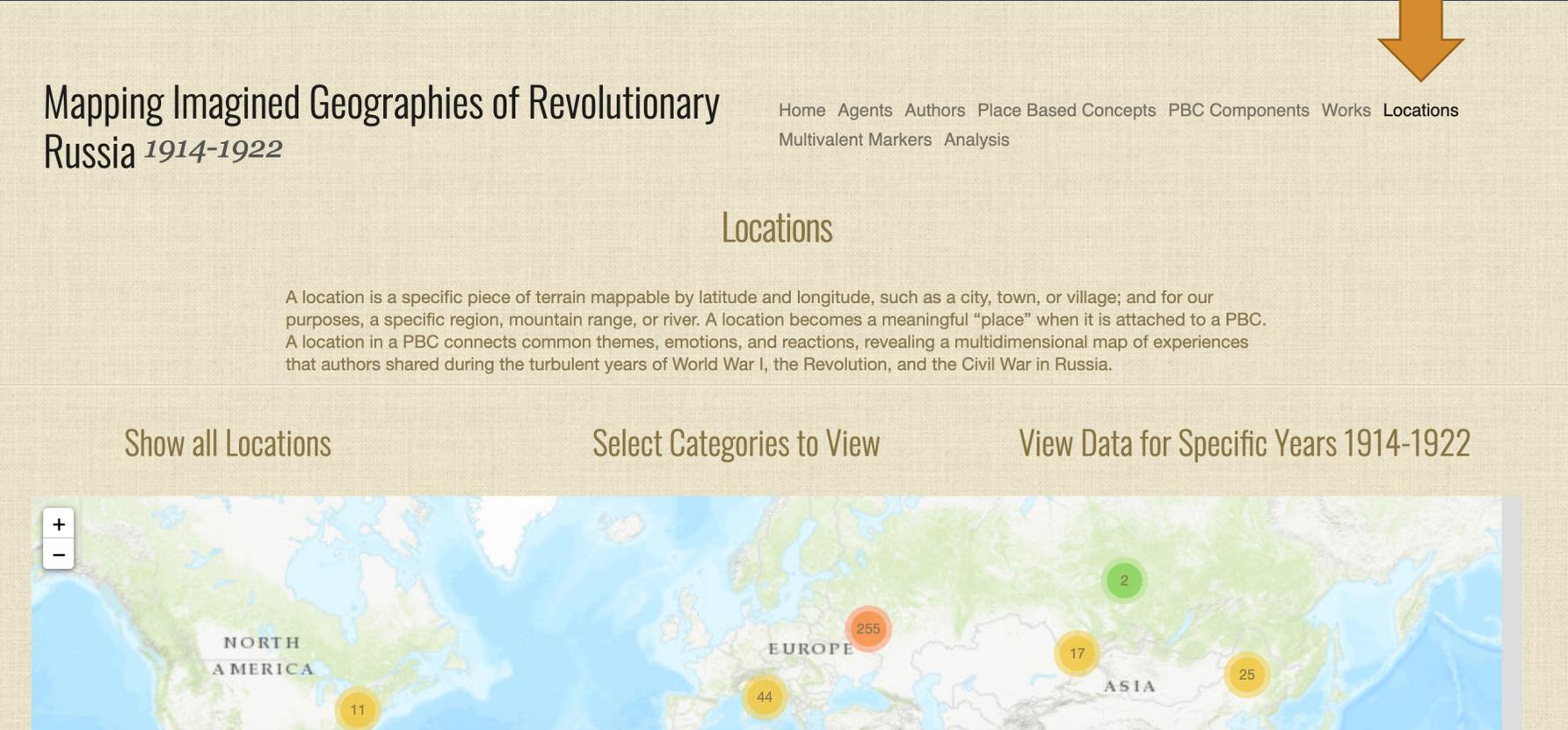
- type (e.g. home, not-home, fantasy place, road, edge, front)
- scale (e.g. village, city, region, nation, empire, world)
- politics (e.g. Bolshevik, tsarist, nationalist, regionalist)
- feeling (e.g. jubilation, grief, irony, love, belligerence)
- time (e.g. epic time, apocalyptic time, bad past)
- genre (e.g. place, liminal space)

# Activity: Navigating the MAPRR website

Examining the impact of location and politics on revolutionary identities.

# Step 1: Analyze the PBCs associated with a specific location.

- From the MAPRR main menu, click on [“Locations.”](#)



Mapping Imagined Geographies of Revolutionary Russia *1914-1922*

Home Agents Authors Place Based Concepts PBC Components Works **Locations**  
Multivalent Markers Analysis

## Locations

A location is a specific piece of terrain mappable by latitude and longitude, such as a city, town, or village; and for our purposes, a specific region, mountain range, or river. A location becomes a meaningful “place” when it is attached to a PBC. A location in a PBC connects common themes, emotions, and reactions, revealing a multidimensional map of experiences that authors shared during the turbulent years of World War I, the Revolution, and the Civil War in Russia.

Show all Locations Select Categories to View View Data for Specific Years 1914-1922



Region	Count
North America	11
Europe	44
Europe	255
Asia	17
Asia	2
Asia	25

- Working in pairs, select a location from the list below the map.

- Example: [“Don River”](#)



Cyprus	ID: 364
Danube River	ID: 245
Dniestr River	ID: 323
Don River	ID: 228
Dorogomilovo	ID: 315
Dudenovo	ID: 198
Dvinsk	ID: 92
Egypt	ID: 243
Ekaterinburg	ID: 17



- Click on the entries for the works associated with this location.

## Don River

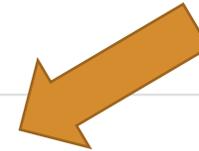
### Textual Data

#### Associated Multivalent Markers

- [Дон \(Don River\)](#)

#### Works Where Don River Acts as a Setting

- [Bednyi, Brat'iam kazakam](#)
- [Bednyi, Kazach'ia pesnia](#)
- [Bednyi, Trudovoe voisko](#)
- [Esenin, Otchar'](#)
- [Gret, Blazhennyi den'](#)
- [Gret, Vesna](#)
- [Tsvetaeva, Budu vysprashivat' vody shirokogo Dona...](#)
- [Tsvetaeva, Gde lebedi? - A lebedi ushli...](#)



Note what PBCs are assigned to each work.

## Bednyi, Brat'iam kazakam

Russia 1914-1922

View Information About This Work    Display Textual Elements ▾

**Демьян Бедный**  
**Братьям Казакам**

**PBC 198: SOLIDARITY WITH COSSACKS**

- Кубани [mm227]
- Дону [mm228]

Обращение Демьяна Бедного  
К донцам и кубанцам

**PBC 195: MOCKERY OF ELITES**

- Руси [mm339]

У бивачного огня,  
Братца, слушайте меня.  
Все скажу вам без остатку.

**PBC 5: MOCKERY OF TSARISM**

- Москву [mm38]

Буду резать правду-матку  
Вам, голубчикам, в глаза.  
Коль проймет кого слеза

**PBC 70: POLITICAL ALIENATION**

- Сибирь [mm226]

И всего зальет румянцем,  
Будь доном он, будь кубанцем,  
Он мне брат родной, в нем есть,



## Esenin, Otchar'

Russia 1914-1922

Multivalent Markers    Analysis

View Information About This Work    Display Textual Elements ▾

**Сергей Есенин**  
**ОТЧАРЬ**

**PBC 249: LOVE OF HOMELAND**

- Русь [mm339]

1

**PBC 28: DREAD OF OPEN ROAD**

- дороге [mm357]

Тучи — как озера,  
Месяц — рыжий гусь.  
Пляшет перед взором

**PBC 71: DREAD OF ANARCHY**

- Волга [mm210]
- Каспий [mm248]
- Дон [mm228]

Буйственная Русь.  
Дрогнул лес зеленый,  
Закипел родник.  
Здравствуй, обновленный

**PBC 72: DREAD OF OPPRESSION**

- Урал [mm216]
- Соловки [mm155]

Отчарь мой, мужик!  
Голубые воды —  
Твой покой и свет,  
Гибельной свободы



With your partner, consider the following questions:

- What similarities and differences do you notice among the PBCs assigned to the works associated with your location?
- How did the PBCs change over time, among works written during World War I, the revolution, and civil war (as applicable)?

# Step 2: Analyze the identity of authors associated with a location.

- To view more information about an author of a given work, click on “View Information About This Work” and then click on the author’s highlighted name.

Mapping Imagined Geographies of Revolutionary Russia 1914-1922

Home Agents Authors Place Based Analysis Multivalent Markers

View Information About This Work Display Textual Elements

<b>PBC 249: LOVE OF HOMELAND</b>	
• <a href="#">Русь</a> [mm339]	1
<b>PBC 28: DREAD OF OPEN ROAD</b>	Тучи — как озера, Месяц — рыжий гусь. Пляшет перед взором
• <a href="#">дороге</a> [mm357]	Буйственная <a href="#">Русь</a> .
<b>PBC 71: DREAD OF ANARCHY</b>	
• <a href="#">Волга</a> [mm210]	Дрогнул лес зеленый, Закипел родник.
• <a href="#">Каспий</a> [mm248]	Здравствуй, обновленный
• <a href="#">Дон</a> [mm228]	Отчарь мой, мужик!
<b>PBC 72: DREAD OF OPPRESSION</b>	
• <a href="#">Урал</a> [mm216]	Голубые воды — Твой покой и свет.

Сергей Есенин  
**ОТЧАРЬ**

Mapping Imagined Geographies of Revolutionary Russia 1914-1922

Home Agents Authors Place Based Analysis Multivalent Markers

View Information About This Work Display Textual Elements

**Title:**  
Отчарь'

**First Line:**  
Tuchi - kak ozera, mesiac - ryzhii gus'...

**Author:**  
[Sergei Aleksandrovich Esenin](#)

**Composition Date:**  
June 19, 1917 to June 20, 1917

<b>PBC 249: LOVE OF HOMELAND</b>	
• <a href="#">Русь</a> [mm339]	1
<b>PBC 28: DREAD OF OPEN ROAD</b>	Тучи — как озера, Месяц — рыжий гусь. Пляшет перед взором
• <a href="#">дороге</a> [mm357]	Буйственная <a href="#">Русь</a> .
<b>PBC 71: DREAD OF ANARCHY</b>	
• <a href="#">Волга</a> [mm210]	Дрогнул лес зеленый, Закипел родник.
• <a href="#">Каспий</a> [mm248]	Здравствуй, обновленный
• <a href="#">Дон</a> [mm228]	Отчарь мой, мужик!
<b>PBC 72: DREAD OF OPPRESSION</b>	
• <a href="#">Урал</a> [mm216]	Голубые воды — Твой покой и свет.

- Or, from the main menu, click on [“Authors”](#) and use the search function [command + F] to look up the author by last name.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL 'app.com/authors'. The browser's address bar contains several tabs: 'ning', 'Grants/Fellowships', 'ASEEES', 'Lingvo Live — онл...', 'Словар', and 'James'. A search bar in the top right corner contains the text 'Esenin' and is highlighted with an orange arrow. The main content area has a light beige background and features a navigation menu with links: 'Home', 'Agents', 'Authors', 'Place Based Concepts', 'PBC Components', 'Works', 'Multivalent Markers', and 'Analysis'. The title 'Authors' is displayed in a large, bold font. Below the title is a table listing authors and their IDs.

<a href="#">Pavel Leonidovich Daletskii</a>	ID: 19
<a href="#">Grigorii Dmitrievich Deev-Khomiakovskii</a>	ID: 20
<a href="#">M. Did</a>	ID: 21
<a href="#">Aleksii Iakovlevich Dorogoichenko</a>	ID: 22
<a href="#">Matvei Semënovich Dudorov</a>	ID: 23
<a href="#">Evsei Davydovich Erkin</a>	ID: 24
<a href="#">Sergei Aleksandrovich <b>Esenin</b></a>	ID: 25
<a href="#">Leonid Evseevich Eshchin</a>	ID: 26

In the box labeled "Typology," note the Family Social Strata and Political Affiliations of each author.

## Sergei Aleksandrovich Esenin

October 3, 1895 - December 28, 1925

### Names

- Sergei Aleksandrovich Esenin (birth, preferred)

### Snac Record

<https://snaccooperative.org/view/19253425>

## Associated Works

### Authored

- "Sypuchei rzhavchinoi..."
- [Goi ty, Rus', moia rodnaia...](#)
- [Ia pokinul rodimyi dom...](#)
- [Inoniia](#)



## Typology

### Type of Agent

person

### Sex

male

### Occupations

**poet** **typographer**

### Family Social Strata

**worker** **peasant**

### Literary Affiliations

**Imaginists**

**Novokrest'ianskii poets**

### Political Affiliations

**unknown**

With your partner, consider the following questions:

- What similarities and differences do you notice about the authors' family social strata and political affiliations?
- Do authors whose works have similar PBCs share similar social and political characteristics?

# Step 3: Look at the components of the PBCs associated with a location.

The screenshot shows a modal window for PBC0147: pride in nation. The modal title is 'PBC0147: pride in nation'. The description reads: 'PBC 147 exclaims the national pride held by nationalists in the years leading up to and during the Revolution and Civil War. Patriots proclaim, "I will never yield what was bequeathed to Rus" (W517). Another emotes, "My motherland! My river source and mouth!" (W487). A common term used in this PBC is the ancient "Rus". One praises "our Russian Rus" which lives and will live (W92)'. Below the description, there are five component buttons: 'place', 'home', 'nation', 'nationalist', and 'national pride'. Underneath these is a section titled 'Other Works That Contain This PBC' with a list of works: Balashov, Srodnim serdtsa!; Balashov, Tesnei kol'tso!; Gumilëv, Zmei; Tsvetaeva, Belogvardeitsy! Gordiev uzel...; Tsvetaeva, Don; Tsvetaeva, Gde lebedi? - A lebedi ushli...; Tsvetaeva, Tsar' i Bog! Prostite malym...; Viatkin, Ogni; and Viatkin, Otechestvo. At the bottom of the modal are two buttons: 'View Full PBC Details' and 'Close'. In the background, a map interface is visible with the title 'Mapping Imagined Russia 1914-1922' and a sidebar with 'View Information About' and 'PBC 147: PRIDE IN NATION'.

- You can view the components by clicking on a work listed under your location and then clicking on the associated PBCs.

- Or, you can search for the associated PBCs by selecting [“Placed Based Concepts”](#) from the main menu.

The detailed view shows the PBC0147: pride in nation. The title is 'PBC0147: pride in nation'. The description is: 'PBC 147 exclaims the national pride held by nationalists in the years leading up to and during the Revolution and Civil War. Patriots proclaim, "I will never yield what was bequeathed to Rus" (W517). Another emotes, "My motherland! My river source and mouth!" (W487). A common term used in this PBC is the ancient "Rus". One praises "our Russian Rus" which lives and will live (W92)'. Below the description are two rows of component buttons: 'place [Genre]', 'home [Type]', 'nation [Scale]' and 'nationalist [Politics]', 'national pride [Feeling]'. To the right, under the heading 'Associations', there are two columns: 'Works Using This PBC' and 'Multivalent Markers'. The 'Works Using This PBC' column lists: Balashov, Srodnim serdtsa!; Balashov, Tesnei kol'tso!; Gumilëv, Zmei; Tsvetaeva, Belogvardeitsy! Gordiev uzel...; Tsvetaeva, Don; Tsvetaeva, Gde lebedi? - A lebedi ushli...; Tsvetaeva, Tsar' i Bog! Prostite malym...; and Viatkin, Ogni. The 'Multivalent Markers' column lists: Дон (Don River); Русь (Rus); небо (heaven, sky); and родина (motherland).

With your partner, consider the following questions:

- What components do the PBCs associated with the Don River have in common?
- How do they differ?

## Step 4: Discuss the activity findings as a class.

- How did geographical location affect the PBCs?
- How did political allegiance affect the PBCs?
- What other factors affected the PBCs? How and/or why?

# Assignment: Using MAPRR as a primary source

What can MAPRR teach us about the diversity of revolutionary experiences?

Write a research paper using the MAPRR website that compares the revolution from two opposing perspectives.

- **Examples:**

- Search the [“Location”](#) page to find works associated with a Red Army-controlled region v. a White Army-controlled region.
- Search the [“Multivalent Markers”](#) page to find works associated with the city v. the village.
- Search the “Politics” category on the [“PBC Components”](#) page to find works associated with pro-revolution v. tsarist nationalist political affiliations.
- Identify the similarities and differences in the perspectives by analyzing the PBCs associated with them.
- Relate your findings to the relevant secondary literature assigned in this course.
- Reflect on how analyzing place-based identity help us understand Revolutionary Russia.