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HIST 239: Kiev, Muscovy, and Russia **Debate Assignment**

Overview

The goal of this assignment is to explore a major question in Russian history through debate and discussion. Using our primary documents and textbook as sources, we will examine the central question from all angles and develop a well-grounded scholarly interpretation of this moment in Russian history.

Instructions

Debate Teams: Work with your partner(s) to thoroughly prepare your arguments in favor of your assigned debate position. Make sure you are familiar with all relevant historical facts and primary sources; your arguments should be based first and foremost on these materials. Be prepared to answer **both** the questions outlined on this assignment sheet and relevant questions posed by the audience. *Please note: **collaboration** is a big part of this assignment! All team members should contribute to preparation and performance.

Audience Members: You must actively participate in the debate, as well! Be prepared to respond to the debate teams with your own comments and questions. Be sure to review the primary sources and textbook. Think about how you would answer the questions on this assignment sheet and about what other issues and questions you would like to discuss.

Procedure:

1. I read out the central question.
2. Each team gives a prepared **opening statement**, which clearly articulates their position and gives evidence for it.
3. The floor is open to further discussion

Debate #1 Specifics

The **central question** for this debate is: **Was Peter the Great really a great ruler?**

Supplemental issues to consider:

- Did Peter's drive for Westernization enable Russia to catch up to its peers elsewhere in Europe, or did it distract Russia from the unique natural course of its development?
- Did Peter's governmental reforms significantly improve the functioning of his state bureaucracy, or did they merely give new names to old problems?
- Did Peter's social and cultural reforms liberate Russian men and women from outdated restrictions, or did they open the door to new problems and anxieties?

Teams and positions:

Tori and Sarah: Yes, Peter was really a great ruler!

Marc and Max: No, Peter was not at all a great ruler!

Good luck!!!