

Spring 2018: History 740
T 6:30-9:20 MHRA 3204

Selected Topics in European History: Readings in Soviet History

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Office Hours: T 1:00-2; W 2:00-3:30; Th. 9:30-10:30 and by appointment	

Course Description

This course is a graduate-level reading seminar on the historiography of the Soviet period from the Revolutionary/Civil War period, through the 1920s, the Stalin period (1928-1953), and the era of Khrushchev's reforms (1956-1964) to the stagnation of the Brezhnev years (late 1970s/early 1980s), the Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989), and the collapse of the USSR in late 1991. Specifically, the course is divided into three sections: Revolution/Civil War/Stalinism; The Great Fatherland War & After; and The Post-Stalin Period. The course mixes some classic titles from the field with recent scholarly research focusing on several different themes with a wide variety of methodologies, theories, and approaches to history.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- Identify and thoughtfully discuss some of the key issues of debate in Soviet history;
- Critically appraise varying historical arguments and formulate their own interpretations;
- Critically read and distinguish between different methodologies and "read between the lines" of differing points of view;
- Participate in a respectful and thoughtful manner in discussions of a variety of topics;
- Apply principles and generalizations learned in this class to other problems and situations.

Course Activities

Participation	20%
4 Book Reviews (2-3 pages; 12-point font; double-spaced)	10% each
Historiographical/Research Essay (18-22 pages; 12-point font; double-spaced)	30%
Oral Presentation	10%

Participation

In a small, discussion-based seminar of this nature class participation is crucial. The 20% participation grade will be based mostly on in-class participation during our weekly meetings (it should be noted that the *quality* of one's participation in the discussion will be more important than the *quantity* thereof). The participation grade will also be based in part on oral reports of titles selected by the students for their reviews.

Book Reviews

Each student will write four book reviews worth 10% each of the course grade. Everyone will write a review for Week 11 (April 3) when we divide up various titles on the postwar period, and we will also divide up the other titles for the course for student reviews as well. Students are encouraged to consult published reviews with the clear understanding that their review shall be their own work. The book reviews should be concise (500-750 words/2-3 pages; 12-point font; double-spaced) and should convey the author's argument and methodology clearly, as well as describe the primary source material on which the work is based. Most importantly, the reviews should assess the strengths and weaknesses of the work under review. In the weeks that students write their reviews they will also give brief in-class oral reports summarizing the main aspects of their reviews as a way of prompting class discussion.

Historiographical/Research Essay

Students will write either a historiographical (recommended) or a research essay (18-22 pages; 12-point font; double-spaced) worth 30% of the overall course grade. Historiographical essays should identify the major works, trends, and issues of any topic relevant to Soviet history and approved by the instructor. As a rule the essay should include 4-5 major monographs/anthologies/articles on the chosen topic and should convey the major themes covered in the works examined as well as differences between varying treatments of the same topic. For each work discussed in the essay students should consider the following questions: What is the author's thesis? What sources/evidence does the author rely on? Where does the book fit with historiographical trends in the field? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the book, i.e. how convincing is the author's interpretation and the book's overall argument? Finally, a strong historiographical essay will relate the works examined to each other in a clear and logical manner. Students who prefer can choose to write a research essay based on primary source material (but placed within a historiographical context) instead of a historiographical essay. This option is particularly recommended for students with a reading knowledge of Russian who can identify a manageable source base to work with, but there are certainly also plenty of options in English-language sources to pursue in a research essay if students prefer to take that route with approval from the instructor.

Oral Presentations

During the designated exam period for our class, **Tuesday, May 1, 6:30-9:20**, students will present the findings of their historiographical or research essays to the class as a whole in 5-7 minute presentations (with 3-5 additional minutes for questions), worth 10% of the overall course grade. The oral presentation for historiographical essays should succinctly summarize the key arguments and debates identified on the topic at hand, including the most important authors and titles, as well as the main contending schools of thought among leading historians. Students choosing to write a Research Essay should be prepared to place their work within a historiographical context as well as to succinctly describe their source base, with 2-3 examples thereof, and share their most salient conclusions. Students are encouraged to consult the University Speaking Center for assistance in this endeavor. Power Point or other forms of visual technological aids are encouraged but not required for the oral presentations.

Course Schedule

REVOLUTION, CIVIL WAR, & STALINISM

- Tuesday, January 9. Introduction to the Course
- Tuesday, January 16. Donald J. Raleigh, *Experiencing Russia's Civil War: Politics, Society, and Revolutionary Culture in Saratov, 1917-1922* (Princeton University Press, 2002; ISBN: 978-0691113203)
- Tuesday, January 23. Stephen Kotkin, *Stalin. Volume I: Paradoxes of Power, 1878-1928*, Parts I-II (Penguin Books, Reprint edition, 2015; ISBN: 978-0143127864)
- Tuesday, January 30. Kotkin, *Stalin. Volume I: Paradoxes of Power, 1878-1928* (cont'd), Part III
- Tuesday, February 6. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford University Press, 2000; ISBN: 978-0195050011)
- Tuesday, February 13. Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary Under Stalin* (Harvard University Press, 2006; ISBN: 978-0674021747)
- Tuesday, February 20. J. Arch Getty, *Origins of the Great Purges: The Soviet Communist Party Reconsidered, 1933-1938* (Cambridge University Press 1987; ISBN: 978-0521335706)

THE GREAT FATHERLAND WAR & AFTER

- Tuesday, February 27. Catherine Merridale, *Ivan's War: Life and Death in the Red Army, 1939-1945* (New York: Picador, 2006; ISBN: 978-0312426521)
- Tuesday, March 13. Alexis Peri, *The War Within: Diaries From the Siege of Leningrad* (Harvard University Press, 2017; ISBN: 978-0674971554)
- Tuesday, March 20. Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland* (Harvard University Press, 2005; ISBN: 978-0674019492)
- **Tuesday, March 27. EVERYONE MUST ATTEND** the Keynote Address for the Harriett Elliott Program by Dr. Lonnie Bunch, Director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture, 6:30, Recital Hall, Music School
- Tuesday, April 3. Students will choose one of these titles on the postwar period, write a book review on their chosen title, and present an oral report to the class:
 - Blackwell, Martin. *Kyiv as Regime City: The Return of Soviet Power After Nazi Occupation* (University of Rochester Press, 2016);
 - Duskin, Eric. *Stalinist Reconstruction and the Confirmation of a New Elite* (New York: Palgrave, 2001);

- Filtzer, Donald. *Soviet Workers and Late Stalinism: Labour and the Restoration of the Stalinist System after World War II* (Cambridge University Press, 2002);
- Fürst, Juliane, ed. *Late Stalinist Russia: Society between reconstruction and reinvention* (New York: Routledge, 2006);
- Jones, Jeffrey. *Everyday Life and the “Reconstruction” of Soviet Russia During and After the Great Patriotic War, 1943-1948* (Bloomington, IN: Slavica Publishers, 2008);
- Qualls, Karl. *From Ruins to Reconstruction: Urban Identity in Soviet Sevastopol after World War II* (Cornell University Press, 2009);
- Zubkova, Elena. *Russia After the War: Hopes, Illusions and Disappointments*. Translated by Hugh Ragsdale (New York: Routledge, 1998)

THE POST-STALIN PERIOD

- Tuesday, April 10. Miriam Dobson, *Khrushchev’s Cold Summer: Gulag Returnees, Crime, and the Fate of Reform After Stalin* (Cornell University Press, 2011; ISBN: 978-0801477485)
- Tuesday, April 17. Artemy Kalinovsky, *A Long Goodbye: The Soviet Withdrawal from Afghanistan* (Harvard University Press, 2011; ISBN: 978-0674058668)
- Tuesday, April 24. Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970-2000* (Oxford University Press, 2008 edition; ISBN: 978-0195368635)

Tuesday, May 1. Conclusion to the Course. Oral Reports on the Historiographical Essays. **Historiographical Essay due Tuesday, May 1.**