

Spring 2021: History 740
W 5:30-8:20 Online (via Zoom)

Selected Topics in European History: Readings in Soviet History

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Office Hours: M 9:00-10:00; W 11:00-12:30; 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 Soviet and post-Soviet films and 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 situations.

Course Activities

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| • Participation | 25% |
| • 4 Book Reviews (2-3 pages; 12-point font; double-spaced) | 10% each |
| • Historiographical/Research Essay (18-22 pages) | 35% |

Participation

In a small, discussion-based seminar of this nature class participation is crucial. The 25% 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).

Book Reviews

Each student will write four book reviews worth 10% each of the course grade. Everyone will write a review for Week 10 (March 31) 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.

Course Schedule

REVOLUTION, CIVIL WAR, & STALINISM

- Wednesday, January 20. Introduction to the Course
- Wednesday, January 27. Peter Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution: Russia's Continuum of Crisis, 1914-1921* (Harvard University Press, 2002; ISBN: 978-0674009073); [available as an eBook](#) via the UNCG Library
- Wednesday, February 3. Stephen Kotkin, *Stalin. Volume I: Paradoxes of Power, 1878-1928*, Parts I-II (Penguin Books, Reprint edition, 2015; ISBN: 978-0143127864)
- Wednesday, February 10. Kotkin, *Stalin. Volume I: Paradoxes of Power, 1878-1928* (cont'd), Part III

- Wednesday, February 17. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford University Press, 2000; ISBN: 0-19505001-0); [available as an eBook](#) via the UNCG Library
- Wednesday, February 24. Lynne Viola, *Stalinist Perpetrators on Trial: Scenes from the Great Terror in Soviet Ukraine* (Oxford University Press, 2019; ISBN: 978-0190053857)

THE GREAT FATHERLAND WAR & AFTER

- Wednesday, March 10. Catherine Merridale, *Ivan's War: Life and Death in the Red Army, 1939-1945* (New York: Picador, 2006; ISBN: 978-0312426521)
- Wednesday, March 17. Alexis Peri, *The War Within: Diaries From the Siege of Leningrad* (Harvard University Press, 2017; ISBN: 978-0674971554); [available as an eBook](#) via the UNCG Library
- Wednesday, March 24. Elena Zubkova, *Russia After the War: Hopes, Illusions and Disappointments*. Translated by Hugh Ragsdale (New York: Routledge, 1998; ISBN: 978-0765602275); [available as an eBook](#) via the UNCG Library
- Wednesday, March 31. Choose one of these titles on the postwar era, write a book review on the chosen title, and present a brief (3-5 minute) oral report to the class:
 - Blackwell, Martin. *Kyiv as Regime City: The Return of Soviet Power After Nazi Occupation* (University of Rochester Press, 2016); [available as an eBook](#) via the UNCG Library;
 - Duskin, Eric. *Stalinist Reconstruction and the Confirmation of a New Elite* (New York: Palgrave, 2001); [available as an eBook](#) via the UNCG Library;
 - Filtzer, Donald. *Soviet Workers and Late Stalinism: Labour and the Restoration of the Stalinist System after World War II* (Cambridge University Press, 2002); [available as an eBook](#) via the UNCG Library;
 - Fürst, Juliane. *Stalin's Last Generation: Soviet Post-War Youth and the Emergence of Mature Socialism* (Oxford University Press, 2010); [available as an eBook](#) via the UNCG Library;
 - Fürst, Juliane, ed. *Late Stalinist Russia: Society Between Reconstruction and Reinvention* (New York: Routledge, 2006);
 - Ganson, Nicholas. *The Soviet Famine of 1946-47 in Global and Historical Perspective* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2009); [available as an eBook](#) via the UNCG Library;
 - Heinzen, James. *The Art of the Bribe: Corruption Under Stalin, 1943-1953* (Yale University Press, 2016); [available as an eBook](#) via the UNCG Library;
 - 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); [available as an eBook](#) via the UNCG Library

THE POST-STALIN PERIOD

- Wednesday, April 7. Jeffrey S. Hardy, *The Gulag After Stalin: Redefining Punishment in Khrushchev's Soviet Union, 1953-1964* (Cornell University Press, 2016; ISBN: 978-1501702792); [available as an eBook](#) via the UNCG Library
- Wednesday, April 14. Donald J. Raleigh, *Soviet Baby Boomers: An Oral History of Russia's Cold War Generation* (Oxford University Press, 2013; ISBN: 978-0199311231); [available as an eBook](#) via the UNCG Library
- Wednesday, April 21. Eleonory Gilburd, *To See Paris and Die: The Soviet Lives of Western Culture* (Harvard University Press, 2018; ISBN: 978-0674980716)
- Wednesday, April 28. Kate Brown, *Manual for Survival: An Environmental History of the Chernobyl Disaster* (New York: W & W Norton & Co., 2020; ISBN: 978-0393357769)

HISTORIOGRAPHICAL/RESEARCH ESSAY DUE by Monday, May 3 by 5:00