

HIS 212: MODERN RUSSIA

Spring Semester 2013

Course Meeting: MWF 12:30-1:20, Beck 321

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Office: Beck 333 (x7435)
Office Hours: MWF 11:30-12:20
and by appointment



Welcome to Modern Russia! This course focuses on the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, created in the aftermath of revolution in 1917, consolidated through civil war and political dictatorship, and ultimately collapsing in 1991. But the history begins before the revolution, with the struggles of industrialization and exploitation of the workers of Europe, the theories of Karl Marx and Frederich Engels, and the inadequacies of the Tsarist Russian government to respond to the growing problems of society and administration of the Empire. This course will consist of three major components. First, we will look at the ideological foundations of the USSR, the revolution, and the sometimes-failed attempt to implement the ideology. Second, we will explore the genesis and experience of the Stalinist dictatorship. And third, we will focus on the attempts to reform the Soviet Union and its ultimate collapse.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 it is easy to have a deterministic outlook, that the communist experiment was doomed from the start because, as some argue, it was based on faulty ideology. It is overly simplistic to view the Soviet Union through the Cold War lens as the “evil empire.” We will avoid such perspectives, and instead focus on trying to understand the Soviet Union from within – the objectives, the lived experiences, the successes, and the failures. While propaganda and rhetoric have their place, we will hope to contextualize those messages.

HIS 212 meets the **HIPHI** requirement – Historical and Philosophical Studies. By completing the requirements for this History course, students will:

- Acquire a perspective on history and an understanding of the factors that shape human activity. This knowledge will furnish students with insights into the origins and nature of contemporary issues and a foundation for future comparative understanding of civilizations.
- Develop critical thinking through the study of diverse interpretations of historical events.
- Apply critical thinking through historical analysis of primary and secondary sources.
- Develop communications skills in essays and class discussions.
- Develop an understanding of the patterns of Russian history, and how they inform present-day Eurasian society, politics, and relations with its neighbors.

Required Reading:

Hosking, Geoffrey. *The First Socialist Society: A History of the Soviet Union from Within*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992. ISBN: 0674304438
 Suny, Ronald Grigor, ed. *The Structure of Soviet History: Essays and Documents*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. ISBN: 0195137043
 Steinbeck, John. *A Russian Journal*. New York: Penguin Classics, 1999. ISBN: 9780141180199
 Solzhenitsyn, Alexander. *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. New York: New American Library, 2009. ISBN: 9780451228147
 Kotkin, Stephen. *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse 1970-2000*. Updated ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. ISBN: 0195368630

Grades:

20% Participation	15% Unit 2 Essay
10% Book Review	10% <i>One Day in the Life</i> Paper
15% Unit 1 Essay	20% Unit 3 Essay/Final
10% Propaganda Assignment	

Grading Scale:

A: 93% and above	B+: 87-89.9%	C+: 77-79.9%	D+: 67-69.9%
A-: 90-92.9%	B: 83-86.9%	C: 73-76.9%	D: 62-66.9%
	B-: 80-82.9%	C-: 70-72.9%	F: below 62%

Important Dates:

Unit 1 Essay: March 11	Book Review: by April 29
Propaganda Assignment: March 22	<i>One Day in the Life</i> Paper: April 29
Unit 2 Essay: April 15	Unit 3 Essay/Final: May 27

Grading Rubric For Writing Assignments:

	Introduction/Thesis	Support for Thesis	Use of sources/citations
A	Well-written, introducing the main themes of the paper, capturing the interest of the reader, with a well-defined thesis statement.	Each paragraph directly relates to the thesis statement, with excellent examples and analysis that articulates the connection.	Well-cited examples that support the argument, with a thorough analysis.
B	Adequate overview of the topics of the paper, a weaker thesis statement.	For the most part, the paragraphs relate to the thesis statement, the connection is not always articulated or clear.	A few (but not sufficient) citations, tends to be a bit light on analysis.
C	Vague statements, largely off-topic, lacking a clear thesis statement.	Paragraphs seem random, with no clear or articulated connection to the thesis statement.	References materials or examples but gives no or few exact citations, lacks adequate analysis.
D	Completely lacking a clear focus with no thesis statement.	Paragraphs and examples are completely irrelevant to the topic at hand, with no clear argument.	Lacks any citations or analysis, or includes an over-usage of quoted material.

Participation, Deadlines, and Assignment Submissions:

It is expected that students regularly attend class having read the assigned material and ready to participate in discussions. “Ready” means you have completed and thought carefully about the readings. Students can also participate by meeting me during office hours or by e-mailing me questions and comments.

Everyone should consistently demonstrate common courtesy to both me as the instructor and your fellow classmates. With that in mind, if there are occasions when you are late to class you should enter as quietly as possible without making a scene. Cell phones should be turned off or silent (yes, vibrations still make noise). And we should all treat each other’s comments and questions with the respect they deserve.

All assignments for this course are to be submitted in **electronic format** through Moodle. Your completed assignment needs to be uploaded prior to the start of class on the day the assignment is due. Papers turned in late without requesting an extension ahead of time will be reduced in grade for each day it is late; requests for an extension must be made at least 24 hours before the assignment is due.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:

As a student at Gustavus, you are expected to know and abide by the College’s Academic Honesty Policy as printed in the academic catalog. The policy states, in part, “In all academic exercises, examinations, presentations, speeches, papers, and reports, students shall submit their own work. Footnotes or some other acceptable form of citation must accompany any use of another’s words or ideas. Students are especially cautioned that quoting or paraphrasing from electronic sources without proper citation is as serious a violation as copying from a book or other printed source.”

All instances of academic misconduct (such as plagiarism) will result in a zero for that assignment and be reported to the Office of the Provost. A continuing pattern of academic misconduct could result in academic probation or expulsion.

By turning in any assignments for this course you are agreeing to the **honor pledge**: “On my honor, I pledge that I have not given, received, or tolerated others’ use of unauthorized aid in completing this work.”

Andrea A. Lunsford offers the following suggestions to “Avoid Plagiarism” in *The Everyday Writer*:

- Maintain an accurate and thorough working bibliography.
- Establish a consistent note-taking system, listing sources and page numbers and clearly identifying all quotations, paraphrases, summaries, statistics, and visuals.
- Identify all quotations with quotation marks – both in your notes and in your essay.
- Be sure your summaries and paraphrases use your own words and sentence structures.
- Give a citation or note for each quotation, paraphrase, summary, arguable assertion or opinion, statistic, and visual that is from a source.
- Prepare an accurate and complete list of sources cited according to the required documentation style. (192)

Disability Services:

If you have a physical, psychiatric/emotional, medical, learning or attentional disability that may have an effect on your ability to complete assigned course work, please contact Laurie Bickett, Disability Services Coordinator, in the Advising Center (x6286). She will review your concerns and decide with you what accommodations are necessary. I will be happy to work with you, upon receipt of documentation from her.

Formatting Guidelines for Typed Assignments:

All writing assignments are to be typed, with one-inch margins and page numbers;
Use only 12-point font size, Times or Times New Roman, double-spaced;
Correct spelling and grammar; proofread your paper before turning it in;
Use proper citations in Chicago style;
Read and re-read the question asked to make sure you are answering it fully;
For additional help, please visit the Writing Center or talk to me during office hours.

Essays:

In place of formal exams, you will be expected to three analytical essays, one for each unit. The question for each unit essay will be distributed in class and through Moodle one week ahead of the due date. Your essay should be well thought-out; take your time to write, revise, and proofread your response. Reference the numerous readings from the course and our class discussions. You are not to use any outside sources or websites. **Citations are required!** Keep in mind that since we will not have exams, one of the primary purposes of these essays is to gauge your understanding of the course material, the breadth of the readings (particularly the primary sources), and your ability to present a well-argued and well-supported critical response to the question posed.

Propaganda Assignment: 2-3 pages

The Soviet Union, like many states in the 20th century, created extensive amounts of propaganda covering all range of topics. I have gathered a number of examples of Soviet propaganda and will hand out one to each of you (while war-time propaganda is prevalent, we will specifically avoid those for the purposes of this assignment). In a 2-3 page essay, describe the poster and how it represents Soviet ideology. What is the message the government is conveying? Why is this message significant enough to warrant a propaganda campaign? How does this message align with Soviet ideology? While some of the images may have a message that would be applicable to numerous countries, how does it specifically connect to the Soviet message? The 2-3 page essay is to be posted on Moodle by the start of class on **Friday, March 22**, but you should also bring back into class the image for our in-class discussion.



Writing Assignment: Book Review, 3-4 pages

Below is a list of books covering a wide range of topics in Soviet history. Select one of the books and get it from the library (I have double checked to make sure each of these books is in the Folke Bernadotte Library collection). If you wish to find a different scholarly book not included in this list, please see me first. There should be enough books so that each student in the class reviews a separate book.

Skim through the book to get an idea of what the book is about. In skimming, you should read the introduction, the conclusion, and the opening and concluding sections of each chapter. You should also take note of the sources the author used – is the work largely based on primary sources gathered from archival research, or is it more a work of synthesis based largely on secondary sources? Read the preface or acknowledgements section to see if the author thanks any libraries or archives (an indication of primary source research), and look through the bibliography. How did the author use these sources, are the sources appropriate, and are there sufficient citations?

Using the online resources of the library, look for a few scholarly book reviews (typically found in academic journals). I would recommend starting with the J-STOR database. What have reviewers said about the book? Do you get a sense on how the book was received, and what the argument adds to the broader Soviet historiography? What are the advantages of the argument and where are the author's weaknesses, according to the reviewer? Be sure to cite these book reviews.

This assignment is meant to demonstrate your ability to read a text critically and analytically. Your book review should succinctly summarize the main arguments of the book, the evidence and sources used to support these arguments, and offer your reactions and assessment of the work. A book review is not simply a summary of the book, nor simply your reaction to the content (avoid stating "I really enjoyed this book" or "I found this book boring"). Rather, the book review should present the strengths and weaknesses of the book, and support your reactions ("This book offers an excellent insight into Soviet history because..."). Is it written well? Is it accessible or uncomfortably demanding? Does the book contribute to your understanding of Soviet history?

Due: This is a rolling deadline, and you are strongly encouraged to turn in the book review earlier in the semester. However, the absolute final date that the review should be submitted by is **April 29**. Take note that another paper is also due on April 29, so I encourage you to plan ahead.

Please select from one of the following books:

Alexopoulos, Golfo. *Stalin's Outcasts: Aliens, Citizens, and the Soviet State, 1926-1936*.

Brandenberger, David. *Propaganda State in Crisis: Soviet Ideology, Indoctrination, and Terror Under Stalin, 1927-1941*

Brooks, Jeffrey. *Thank You Comrade Stalin! Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War*.

Dobson, Miriam. *Khrushchev's Cold Summer: Gulag Returnees, Crime, and the Fate of Reform after Stalin*.

Figes, Orlando. *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia*.

Fitzpatrick, Sheila. *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*.

Fitzpatrick, Sheila. *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village After Collectivization*.

Fitzpatrick, Sheila. *The Russian Revolution*.

Getty, J. Arch. *Yezhov: The Rise of Stalin's "Iron Fist"*.

Goldman, Wendy Z. *Inventing the Enemy: Denunciation and Terror in Stalin's Russia*.

Goldman, Wendy Z. *Women, the State, and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917-1936*.

Hagenloh, Paul. *Stalin's Police: Public Order and Mass Repression in the USSR, 1926-1941*.

Hirsch, Francine. *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union*.

Hoffmann, David L. *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917-1941*.

Johnston, Timothy. *Being Soviet: Identity, Rumour, and Everyday Life Under Stalin, 1939-1953*.

Merridale, Catherine. *Night of Stone: Death and Memory in Twentieth-Century Russia*.

Paul, Allen. *Katyn': Stalin's Massacre and the Triumph of Truth*.

Roberts, Geoffrey. *Stalin's Wars: From World War to Cold War, 1939-1953*.

Sebag Montefiore, Simon. *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar*.

Smith, Mark B. *Property of Communists: The Urban Housing Program from Stalin to Khrushchev*.

Tumarkin, Nina. *Lenin Lives! The Lenin Cult in Soviet Russia*.

Tumarkin, Nina. *The Living and the Dead: The Rise and Fall of the Cult of World War II in Russia*.

Viola, Lynne. *The Unknown Gulag: The Lost World of Stalin's Special Settlements*.

Volkov, Solomon. *Shostakovich and Stalin: The Extraordinary Relationship Between the Great Composer and the Brutal Dictator*.