

Fall 2008
Office Hours: Mon. 11:00-12:00
Wed., 4:00-5:00, and by appt.
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H. Hogan
Rice 313

History #379 Stalinism

This course explores the very different ways historians have thought about and argued over the nature of Stalinism. As such, we will mostly be reading secondary literature and critically analyzing the contending points of view. We will be primarily concerned with the domestic aspects of Stalinism and focused on the 1930s and 1940s. The course assumes a basic knowledge of the rise of Stalin to power and the key events of his rule.

Course Objectives and Requirements:

The fundamental project of the seminar will be the development of an intellectual community in which we all work together to reach an understanding of a deeply contentious set of historical issues. We will each be responsible to complete the assigned readings for every session and to bring our ideas and perspectives to the metaphorical table. Attendance is mandatory and active participation in discussion is expected.

A key objective is to enhance the student's interpretive skills by a close reading of a variety of materials. To this end, each student will prepare a short "working paper" (1-2 typed pages) for each class session. These papers should explicate the author's argument, draw out points of comparison between the week's readings, and include questions to be discussed in class that will help us probe the author's point of view. The papers will constitute an essential part of the written work for the course and will also help to structure the weekly discussions. The papers will be due by noon each Friday; I will read them briefly prior to the session. They will be returned in class so that students may draw on their questions for the discussion. I will then read the papers carefully and return them the following week, graded with a $\checkmark+$, \checkmark , $\checkmark-$. After completing the first three working papers, students are encouraged to meet with me to discuss their progress on this assignment. [Class participation and working papers will constitute 60% of the grade.]

Each student will write two more formal papers (each approx. 5-6 typed pages). The first essay will be due no later than noon Oct. 17 and the second will be due no later than Dec. 15 (the end of reading period). These essays will ask you to reflect on an aspect of the course readings and discussions; they will not require additional reading or research. [Each paper will constitute 20% of the grade.]

Students are encouraged to meet with me during office hours or by appointment to discuss any aspect of the semester's work. I hope to facilitate intellectual inquiry within and outside the classroom setting and welcome student input and criticism.

Readings:

The following books have been ordered at the Bookstore; they have also been placed on Reserve. Most of the articles we will be reading will be available on Eres or Blackboard.

Hoffmann, ed. Stalinism, The Essential Readings

Fitzpatrick, Stalin's Peasants

Viola, The Unknown Gulag

A final note: Please turn off cell phones, pagers, beeping watches and the like for the entire class period; once class has begun, please refrain from taking breaks and leaving the room until the designated break for everyone half way through the session.

Sept. 5 – Introduction

Sept. 12 The Great Change

Malia, “The Soviet Tragedy: A History of Socialism in Russia” in Hoffmann, ed. Stalinism, The Essential Readings, pp. 65-79

Lewin, “Society, State, and Ideology During the First Five-Year Plan,” in Lewin, The Making of the Soviet System, pp. 209-240. [Eres]

Sept. 19 Collectivization and the Question of Resistance

Fitzpatrick, Stalin's Peasants, pp.3-79, 174-203, 282-312

Viola, The Unknown Gulag, Intro., Ch 1-3 (pp. 1-72)

Sept. 26 Industrialization and the Question of Resistance

Siegelbaum “The Socialist Offensive,” in Stalinism As a Way of Life p. 27-39. [This reading knits together a number of primary documents with Siegelbaum's analysis of them.] [Bb]

“A Day in Magnitogorsk” Excerpts from Behind the Urals in Riha, pp 568-585 [Bb]

Rossmann, “Weaver of Rebellion and Poet of Resistance: Kapiton Klepikov (1880-1933) and Shop-Floor Opposition to Bolshevik Rule” Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas 44 (1996) pp. 374-407 [Eres]

Oct. 3 Consumption and Civilization

Section “Consumption and Civilization” in Fitzpatrick, ed., Stalinism, New Directions pp. 177-230. Essays by:

Hessler, “Cultured Trade”

Volkov, “The Concept of Kul’turnost”

[NB: Stalinism, New Directions [Eres; One copy on Reserve; also available online—look it up in OBIS and then connect to eBrary]

Oct. 10 Gender and Stalinist Family Values

Hoffman, “Stalinist Family Values” in his Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity 1917-1941 p. 88-117. [Eres]

Frida Troib et. al., “Engineers’ Wives” in In the shadow of Revolution pp. 419-423 [Bb]

Rebecca Balmas Neary, “Domestic Life and the Activist Wife in the 1930s Soviet Union” in Siegelbaum, Lewis H.(Editor). Borders of Socialism : Private Spheres of Soviet Russia. [chapter 5]

[One hard copy on reserve; another available on line: at eBrary: go first to OBIS and from there to eBrary]

Review your notes on Volkov, “Kul’turnost”

Oct. 17 Socialist realism

“Life has become better, comrades, life has become more cheerful”

[17 moments in Soviet History](#)

Go to this site and log in; then go to the year 1934 and from the pop down menu select “Socialist Realism” and read the 3- paragraph essay. Next from the pop down menu select “The Writers Congress” and after reading the 3-paragraph essay look to the right under “Texts” – and read “Zhdanov: Soviet Literature- the Richest in Ideas.” Finally, go to the pop down menu and select “The Popular Film Industry.” Read the 3-paragraph essay and then read from the menu to the right: Texts – “Cinema for the Millions”

Movie: Circus (1936) [90 minutes]

BREAK Oct 18-26

Oct. 31 The Transformative state

Kotkin, “Coercion and Identity: Workers’ Lives in Stalin’s Showcase City” in Siegelbaum and Suny, eds. Making Workers Soviet: Power Class and Identity, pp. 274-310. [Eres; one copy on regular reserve]

Holquist “State Violence as Technique: The Logic of Violence in Soviet Totalitarianism” in Hoffmann, ed. Stalinism, The Essential Readings pp.129-156

Nov. 7 Stalinist Self

Hellbeck, “Working, Struggling, Becoming: Stalin-Era Autobiographical Texts” in Hoffmann, ed. Stalinism, The Essential Readings, pp. 181-209.

Hellbeck "Speaking Out: Languages of Affirmation and Dissent in Stalinist Russia" Kritika, Vol. 1, no. 1 (Winter 2000): 71-96 [Eres]

Review your notes on Rossman, “Weavers” and Kotkin, “Coercion”

Nov. 14 Varieties of Terror

Section “Varieties of Terror” in Fitzpatrick, ed., Stalinism, New Directions pp. 257-308
Essays by:

Harris, “Purging of Local Cliques in the Urals region, 1936-1937”
Hagenloh, “‘Socially Harmful Elements’ and the Great Terror”

Khlevnyuk “The Objectives of the Great Terror, 1937-1938” in Hoffmann, ed. Stalinism, The Essential Readings pp.83-104

Viola, The Unknown Gulag pp. 155-166

[NB: Stalinism, New Directions [Eres; One copy on Reserve; also available online—look it up in OBIS and then connect to eBrary]

Nov. 21 The Soviet experience of WWII or Coming to terms with the historiography of the war on the eastern front

-Merridale, “Culture, Ideology and Combat in the Red Army, 1939–45,” Journal of Contemporary History, Vol 41(2), 305–324. [Bb]

-Weiner, "Saving Private Ivan From What, Why and How?" Kritika v. 1, no. 2 (Spring 2000): 305-336 [Eres]

-Schwarz, "Stalin's Gift" Atlantic Monthly (May 2007) vol. 299, Issue, 4
[This is a review of recent books on WWII] [Bb]

Nov. 27-30: Thanksgiving Break

Dec. 5 Wartime Diplomacy and the early years of the Cold War

[J. V. Stalin. Speech at Celebration Meeting of the Moscow Soviet of Working People's Deputies and Moscow Party and Public Organizations November 6, 1942](#)

- Harriman "Stalin at War" in Urban, ed. Stalinism: Its Impact on Russia and the World pp. 31-65. [Eres]

- Read the Novikov and Kennan Telegrams in Jensen, ed. Origins of the Cold War, The Novikov, Kennan, and Roberts 'Long Telegrams' of 1946 [Bb]

[review Weiner's discussion of Realpolitik and ideology]

Dec. 12 - Last Class