

**History 419**  
**History of Soviet Russia**

**Professor F. Hirsch**  
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**Fall 2017**

**Office Hours: Wednesdays 11-12, Fridays 1:30-2:30**  
**4125 Humanities**

This course examines Soviet history from 1917 to 1991—with a focus on revolutionary Russia and the rise and fall of the Soviet Empire. We will explore revolutionary politics, society, and culture; the violent effort to forge a socialist society; Stalinism; Soviet nationality policy; the experiences and consequences of the Second World War; espionage and the arms race; postwar efforts at reform; and the break-up of the USSR into a collection of independent states. We'll read novels and other original sources, watch film clips, listen to Soviet music, and debate key questions of Soviet history.

Format: Lectures and discussion section. Attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to show up prepared and ready to participate.

Readings: Books with an (\*) are available at the University Book Store and are on reserve at College Library. All books should be available used. The course packet is available at Student Print and will also be on reserve at College Library.

Grading: Course grades determined as follows: participation in lecture and discussion section 25%, weekly writing assignments 25%, take-home midterm exam 20%, map quiz 5%, final (or final project) 25%. Exam questions will be based on lectures, readings, and discussions. All students have the option of writing a play (or other short work of historical fiction) based on the course materials in lieu of the final exam. Guidelines will be discussed and distributed in class.

**Week 1: The Russian Empire**

**1/18, 1/20: Introduction, The Russian Empire**

Karl Marx, "The Communist Manifesto," skim online at:

<http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/61/pg61-images.html>

**Week 2: Revolutionary Russia**

**1/23, 1/25, 1/27: 1905, The Road to 1917, The February Revolution**

**Reading for Discussion Section:**

"Programs of Russian Political Parties" (Packet)

V. I. Lenin, The State and Revolution (1917), chapters 1 and 5 (Packet)

**Week 3: 1917**

**1/30, 2/1, 2/3: The Bolsheviks, Red October, Culture and Commemoration**

**\*Map Handed Out in Class on 1/30**

**Reading for Discussion Section:**

\*Eduard M. Dune, Notes of a Red Guard, ed. and trans. Diane P. Koenker and S. A. Smith (1993), pp. 3-114

**Week 4: The Formation of the Soviet Union**

**2/6, 2/8, 2/10: Reds and Whites, And Greens, The Nationality Question**

**\*Map Quiz in Class on 2/10**

**Reading for Discussion Section:**

Dune, Notes of a Red Guard, pp. 117-230

"Lenin on Nationality Policy" (Packet)

J. V. Stalin, "The Question of the Union of the Independent National Republics" (Packet)

J. V. Stalin, "The Formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics" (Packet)

**Week 5: Whither the Revolution?**

**2/13, 2/15, 2/17: The NEP, Bolshevik Dreams, Literature and Culture**

**Reading for Discussion Section:**

\*Mikhail Bulgakov, Heart of a Dog, trans. Mirra Ginsburg (1964)

"The New Economic Policy, Lenin, The Tax in Kind" (Packet)

**Week 6: The Struggle for Power and the Rise of Stalin**

**2/20, 2/22, 2/24: The Struggle for Power I, The Struggle for Power II, Stalin and the Lenin Myth**

**Reading for Section:**

"Lenin on the Prerequisites for Socialism: Our Revolution" (Packet)

"Lenin's 'Testament'" (Packet)

"Stalin on Socialism in One Country" (Packet)

Browse [www.marxists.org](http://www.marxists.org) for information about the different Bolshevik leaders and their competing visions.

**Week 7: The "Great Break"**

**2/27, 3/1, 3/3: Five-Year Plans, Collectivization and Industrialization, Cultural Revolution**

**\*Midterm Questions Handed Out in Class on 2/27**

**Reading for Section:**

\*Lewis Siegelbaum and Andrei Sokolov, ed. Stalinism as a Way of Life, Abridged Edition (2004), pp. 27-121.

**Week 8: Life Under Stalin**

**3/06, 3/08, 3/10: Hopes and Dreams, Insiders and Outsiders, Socialist Realism**

**Reading for Section:**

\*Siegelbaum and Sokolov, ed. Stalinism as a Way of Life, pp. 122-212, 256-304.

**Week 9: The Great Terror**

**3/13, 3/15, 3/17: Show Trials, Terror, Memoirs and Fiction**

**\*Midterm Due in Class on 3/13**

**Reading for Section:**

\*Lydia Chukovskaya, Sofia Petrovna (1965).

**Week 10: Spring Break**

**Week 11: The Great Fatherland War,**

**3/27, 3/29, 3/31: Invasion, At War, Myths and Realities**

**Reading for Section:**

Vasily Grossman, "The Hell of Treblinka" (Packet)

Ilya Ehrenburg, The War: 1941-1945, Memoirs, pp. 26-52. (Packet)

**Week 12: Postwar Stalinism... and its Swansong**

**4/3, 4/5, 4/7: Guest Lecture, Postwar Stalinism, Nikita Khrushchev**

**Reading for Section:**

\*Francis Spufford, Red Plenty (2012), pp. 1-264.

**Week 13: The Harebrained Schemer**

**4/10, 4/12, 4/14: DeStalinization, Life Under Khrushchev, Film: *Cold War Road Show***

**Reading for Section:**

Spufford, Red Plenty, pp. 265-361

Nikita Khrushchev, "The Crimes of the Stalin Era" (Packet)

**Week 14: The Brezhnev Era**

**4/17, 4/19, 4/21: Brezhnev, Springtime for Brezhnev, Cold War Culture**

**Reading for Section:**

\*Vladimir Voinovich, The Fur Hat (1991)

**Week 15: The Road to Perestroika**

**4/24, 4/26, 4/28: System in Crisis, Gorbachev, *Glasnost'* and *Perestroika***

**Reading for Section:**

\*David Remnick, Lenin's Tomb (1994), pp. 3-119

Mikhail Gorbachev, "Perestroika: Origins, Essence, Revolutionary Character" (Packet)

**Week 16: The End of the USSR**

**5/1, 5/3: The Collapse of the USSR, And Beyond**

**Reading for Section:**

Remnick, Lenin's Tomb, pp. 412-549

**The final exam is scheduled for 5/9 from 2:45-4:45. Students opting to do a writing project instead of taking the blue book exam should submit their final work at or before this time.**