

History 850
Graduate Seminar on the History and Historiography of the Soviet Union
University of Wisconsin, Madison

Prof. Francine Hirsch
Spring 2020, Fridays 11:00-12:50
5255 Humanities
fhirsch@wisc.edu

Office Hours: Wednesdays 12-1 and by appointment
4125 Humanities
263-1783

This course will introduce graduate students to the history and historiography of the USSR, 1917-1991. We will explore different topics in Soviet history, including revolution and civil war, the Soviet 1920s, Stalinism, the formation of the USSR, the Great Patriotic War, and the postwar era. We will discuss the events themselves and how interpretations of those events have changed over time (with the beginning of the Cold War, the collapse of the USSR, the opening of archives, and so on). We will read classics in the field as well as some of the newest works.

All of the books will be on reserve at College Library. Items marked (E) are available through the College Library Reserves website. Some of the books are available for download from the UW-Libraries website as e-books. (I've noted below where this is the case.) You can also order copies of the book from another UW library through ILL. If you'd like to purchase the books you should be able to find discounted or used copies by searching around online.

This is a 3-credit graduate seminar. The credit standard for this course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course's learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit or 9 hours per week), which include regularly scheduled meeting times (group seminar meetings of 115 minutes per week), dedicated online time, reading, writing, library sessions, individual consultations with the instructor, and other student work as described in the syllabus. This course will develop the vital skills of close reading, critical thinking, and analysis. It will also train students to communicate their ideas to academic and non-academic audiences.

Assignments: Students are expected to show up prepared and ready to actively participate in class discussion. Students will write four short papers over the course of the semester and an eight-page paper at the end of the semester. Students will take turns leading our weekly discussions.

Part I: Explorations in Historiography

1/24 Week One: Introduction

1/31 Week Two: The Historiography of 1917

Robert V. Daniels, *Red October*, 1967, pp. 214-227. (E)

Alexander Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks Come to Power: The Revolution of 1917 in Petrograd*, New York, 1976, pp. 273-314. (E)

Ronald Grigor Suny, "Toward a Social History of the October Revolution," *American Historical Review* 88, no. 1 (1983): 31-53. (E)

*Frederick Corney, *Telling October: Memory and the Making of the Bolshevik Revolution*, 2004, pp. 1-148, 201-221. (There are several copies available at different UW campuses that can be ordered through ILL.)

2/7 Week Three: The Revolution Reconsidered

*Laura Engelstein, *Russia in Flames: War, Revolution, Civil War*, 2017, selected chapters.

(There are several copies available at different UW campuses that can be ordered through ILL.)

Assignment One due in class on 2/7: Imagine you are going to interview Laura Engelstein about *Russia in Flames* for a book podcast. Write up a list of interview questions. Use the readings from Week Two to help prepare the interview. The paper should be double-spaced and in 12-point Times font.

2/14 Week Four: The Historiography of the Soviet 1920s

Moshe Lewin, *Lenin's Last Struggle*, 1968, pp. 65-103, 129-141. (E)

Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Cultural Revolution as Class War," in Fitzpatrick, ed., *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928-1931*, 1978, pp. 8-40. (E)

Alan Ball, *Russia's Last Capitalists*, 1987, pp. 1-37, 127-145, 161-172. (E)

*Lynne Viola, *Peasant Rebels Under Stalin*, 1996, pp. 3-99, 181-240. (The book is available through the UW Libraries portal as an ACLS Humanities Ebook.)

2/21 Week Five: Collectivization Reconsidered

Timothy Nunan will join us for the discussion.

*Sarah Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe: Famine, Violence, and the Making of Soviet Kazakhstan*, 2018. (The book is available through the UW Libraries portal as a Project Muse Ebook.)

Assignment Two due in class on 2/21: Write a two-page academic-style (*Slavic Review*, *Kritika*) **book review** of *The Hungry Steppe*. Use the readings from Week Four to contextualize the argument. The paper should be double-spaced and in 12-point Times font.

2/28 Week Six: Stalinism

Leonard Schapiro, "The Concept of Totalitarianism," *Survey*, 1969, pp. 93-115. (E)

Alec Nove, "Was Stalin Necessary?" and exchange in *Problems of Communism* 25, no. 4 (1976): 49-62. (E)

Robert Tucker, "Stalinism as Revolution From Above," in *Stalinism*, 1977, 77-108. (E)

*Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization*, 1995, pp. 1-25, 149-366. (The book is available through the UW Libraries portal as an ACLS Humanities Ebook.)

Igal Halfin and Jochen Hellbeck, "Rethinking the Stalinist Subject: Stephen Kotkin's Magnetic Mountain and the State of Soviet Historical Studies," *Jahrbucher fur Geschichte Osteuropas* 44, no. 3 (1996): 456-463. (E)

3/6 Week Seven: Stalinism Reconsidered

*Karl Schlögel, *Moscow 1937*, 2015, selected chapters.

(There are several copies available at different UW campuses that can be ordered through ILL.)

Assignment Three due in class on 3/6: Write a three-page *New York Review of Books*-style book review of Schlögel's book. Use the readings from Week Six to contextualize your discussion of Stalinism. The paper should be double-spaced and in 12-point Times font.

3/13 Week Eight: World War Two

Alexander Dallin, *German Rule in Russia, 1941-1945*, 1957, pp. 44-103. (E)

Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War*, 2001, pp. 8-190, 298-363. (The book is available through the UW Libraries portal as an ACLS Humanities Ebook.)

*Catherine Merridale, *Ivan's War: Life and Death in the Red Army*, 2005. (There are several copies available at different UW campuses that can be ordered through ILL.)

3/20 Week Nine: World War Two Reconsidered

Brandon Schechter, *The Stuff of Soldiers: A History of the Red Army in World War II through Objects*, 2019. (The book is available through the UW Libraries portal as a Project Muse Ebook.)

Assignment Four due in class on 3/20: Write a two-page thought piece about Schechter's book and its approach to the study of war. The paper should be double-spaced and in 12-point Times font.

Part II: New Books on Postwar Stalinism

3/27 Week Ten: Postwar Stalinism

*Norman Naimark, *Stalin and the Fate of Europe: The Postwar Struggle for Sovereignty*, 2019.

Jan T. Gross, "The Social Consequences of War: Preliminaries to the Study of Imposition of Communist Regimes in East Central Europe," *Eastern European Politics and Societies*, 3, no. 2 (1989): 198-214. (E)

4/3: Archive Visit

4/10: Week Eleven: Khrushchev, DeStalinization, and the Socialist Sixties

*Eleonory Gilburd, *To See Paris and Die: The Soviet Lives of Western Culture*, 2018, selected chapters. (The book is available through the UW Libraries portal as a DeGruyter Ebook.)
Susan Reid “Is This Tomorrow” and Robert Edelman, “Playing Catch-Up: Soviet Media and Soccer Hooliganism,” in Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane P. Koenker ed., *The Socialist Sixties: Crossing Borders in the Second World*, 2013, pp. 25-65, 268-286. (E)

4/17: Week Twelve: Soviet Internationalism

Timothy Nunan will join us for the discussion.

Timothy Nunan, *Humanitarian Invasion: Global Development in Cold War Afghanistan*, 2016. (The book is available through the UW Libraries portal as a ProQuest Ebook.)

Rachel Applebaum, “The Friendship Project: Socialist Internationalism in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia in the 1950s and 1960s,” *Slavic Review* 74, no. 3 (2015): 484-507. (E)

4/24 Week Thirteen: Gorbachev and Environmental Disaster

*Serhii Plokhyy, *Chernobyl: The History of a Nuclear Catastrophe*, 2018. (There are several copies available at different UW campuses that can be ordered through ILL.)

“Bodily Secrets,” in Kate Brown, *Dispatches from Dystopia: Histories of Places Not Yet Forgotten*, 2015, pp. 57-77. (E)

5/1 Week Fourteen: Post-Soviet Nostalgia

*Svetlana Alexievich, *Secondhand Time: The Last of the Soviets*, 2017, selected chapters. (There are several copies available at different UW campuses that can be ordered through ILL.)

Svetlana Boym, “Nostalgia and Post-Communist Memory,” *The Future of Nostalgia*, 2001, 57-71. (E)

Assignment Five due in my mailbox in the Humanities Building by 5 pm on 5/11: Write an 8-10 page **historiographical essay** on one of the themes from the past three weeks (10 through 14). The paper should be double-spaced and in 12-point Times font. Further instructions will follow.