

History 342: Stalinism
Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:30-10:50
Fall 2018

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Office hours: WF 10:00-
11:00; Thurs. 2:30-
3:30; or by appt.

Course Description

Iosif Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili—the Georgian revolutionary and politician more commonly known as Joseph Stalin—is best remembered as one of the most brutal dictators in world history, an important leader of the Russian Revolution who went on to preside over the Great Terror of the 1930s and the Soviet victory in World War II. Extending from the end of the post-Lenin succession struggle to the dictator’s death in 1953, the Stalin era was noteworthy not just for the repressiveness of its politics, but for a dramatic series of economic and social transformations that almost completely reshaped Russian society. Over the course of 25 years, the USSR’s government launched a far-reaching program of industrialization, forced the country’s peasants to abandon their individual holdings for larger collective farms, pursued policies of discrimination and persecution against the supporters of Russia’s old regime, and attempted to reforge each of the country’s citizens into the New Soviet Man.

This seminar will examine the social, cultural, and political history of the USSR during this period, with a particular focus on the 1930s. Like most Grinnell history seminars, it will begin with a series of common readings on the main themes of its subject; in the second half of the semester, students will complete a 20-to-30 page research paper on a subject of their choice. In this way, the seminar will function not only as an introduction to Stalinism, but as an opportunity to pursue the craft of historical writing through the production of a major research paper.

Course materials

The following texts are available for purchase at the college bookstore and are on reserve at Burling Library:

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

Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind: Reading a Diary under Stalin*

Other readings (marked “Pioneerweb” below) will be available on the class’s Blackboard site.

Students who want more detail on the Chicago Style of formatting a research paper should consult *The Chicago Manual of Style* or Kate Turabian’s *Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*.

Grading and Assignments

There are three main requirements for this course:

- a) **The seminar paper** (50% of your final grade.) This paper will most often be a 20-to-30-page research paper based on work with primary sources on Russian history during the Stalin period. (Many such sources have been translated into English, so Russian language skills—while always helpful—are not required. Most often, I recommend that you work with the oral histories in the Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System.) Your paper will be due by email on Thursday, December 20, at 5:00 PM.
- b) **Class participation** (35% of your grade). This part of your grade will be based on attendance, the regularity and insightfulness of your participation in discussion, your participation in peer review sessions in the weeks after break, and your timely completion of a series of preliminary assignments connected to the seminar paper.
- c) **Document analysis and paper proposal** (15% of your grade). You will be required to write a five-page analysis of the Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System and to complete a five-page proposal for your seminar paper. The first of these assignments will be due in class on Tuesday, September 25; the second will be due by 5:00 PM on Friday, October 19 (the day before Fall Break.)

Academic accommodations

Grinnell College makes reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students need to provide documentation to the Coordinator for Student Disability Resources, John Hirschman, located on the 3rd floor of the Rosenfield Center and discuss your needs with him. Students should then notify me within the first few days of classes so that we can discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course and coordinate your accommodations.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND READINGS

Thursday, August 30: Introduction to the Course

Reading: Golfo Alexopoulos, “Portrait of a Con Artist as a Soviet Man” [Pioneerweb]

Tuesday, September 4: Stalinism: The Big Picture

Reading: Hiroaki Kuromiya, *Stalin: Profiles in Power*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]

Thursday, September 6: Stalin and His Circle

Reading: Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar*, pp. 1-105 [Pioneerweb]

Tuesday, September 11: Everyday Life under Stalin

Reading: Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, pp. 1-114
David Brandenberger, “A Background Guide to Working with the HPSSS Online” (Pioneerweb)

Thursday, September 13: Intro to the Harvard Project

Reading: 1-2 interviews from <http://hcl.harvard.edu/collections/hpsss/index.html> (see P-web for details)

Tuesday, September 18: Stalinist Social History

Reading: Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, pp. 115-229

Thursday, September 20: Theories of Stalinism

Reading: Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]
Igal Halfin and Jochen Hellbeck, “Rethinking the Stalinist Subject” [Pioneerweb]

Tuesday, September 25: Harvard Project papers and presentations

Thursday, September 27: Diaries in the USSR

Reading: Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind*, pp. 1-114

Tuesday, October 2: Hellbeck and Soviet diaries

Reading: Hellbeck, pp. 115-347
(everyone read ch. 5, ch. 8, and 1 other, to be decided in class)

Tuesday, October 2: Peasants under Stalin

Reading: Lynne Viola, *Peasant Rebels under Stalin*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]
Tracy McDonald, *Face to the Village: The Riazan Countryside under Soviet Rule*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]

Thursday, October 4: Popular Opinion under Stalin

Reading: Sarah Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin’s Russia*, 1-72 [Pioneerweb]

Tuesday, October 9: The Stalin Personality Cult

Reading: Jan Plamper, *The Stalin Cult*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]
Sarah Davies and James Harris, *Stalin’s World*, 133-183 [Pioneerweb]

Thursday, October 11: Project updates

Assignment: you will need to submit a written project update (to be described later)

Tuesday, October 16: The Great Terror

Reading: Oleg Khlevniuk, "The Objectives of the Great Terror, 1937-1938" [Pioneerweb]
James Harris, "The Purging of Local Cliques in the Urals Region" [Pioneerweb]
Wendy Goldman, *Inventing the Enemy*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]

Thursday, October 18: The Gulag

Reading: Steve Barnes, *Death and Redemption: The Gulag and the Shaping of Soviet Society*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]
Alan Barenberg, *Gulag Town, Company Town: Forced Labor and its Legacy in Vorkuta*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]

Friday, October 19: **5-PAGE PAPER PROPOSAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHY ARE DUE BY EMAIL AT NOON**

FALL BREAK: October 15-23

[Note: feel free to meet with me at any time; I'll turn our unused class meeting times into extra office hours for members of the seminar]

Week 8

Thursday, October 30: individual meetings with the professor
Thursday, November 1: presentations on proposal to full class (describe what you plan to write about; be ready to explain what your first 10-page section will cover)

Week 9

Tuesday, November 6: individual meetings with the professor
Thursday, November 8: meeting of entire seminar to discuss progress

Week 10

Through the week individual meetings as needed
Friday, November 16: send your peer-review group a 10-page section of your paper and a 1-page outline of the paper (with the thesis for the whole paper, a list of sections, and the thesis for each section)

Week 11

Early in the week meetings of peer review groups (with me, in my office)
Thursday, November 22 Thanksgiving!

Week 12

Tuesday, November 27:
Thursday, November 29:

individual meetings with the professor
meeting of full seminar to talk about introductions (perhaps with a short reading assignment)

Week 13:

Tuesday, December 4:
Friday, December 7:

meeting of full seminar to discuss progress
a full draft of your paper is due by 5:00 PM to the professor and your peer review group

Week 14

Tuesday, December 11:
Thursday, December 13:

meetings of peer review groups
meeting of full seminar (EOC evaluations, discussion of progress)

Exam week

Thursday, December 20:

the final version of your paper is due at 5:00 PM