

HIST 5568
Stalinism: Life and Death in Soviet Russia

Spring 2024
Mon 11.30 am to 12.45 pm
Class Location: Dealy Hall, Room 102

Professor Asif A. Siddiqi
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Office Hours:
Wednesdays 10.00 am - 11.30 am (by appointment on [Zoom](#))
Thursdays 9:30 am - 11.00 am (in person)

Course Description

This graduate course will explore the enormous transformations in life in the Soviet Union under the rule of Stalin, one of the most ruthless dictators of the 20th century *and* the architect of massive social transformation that turned Russia from a predominantly agrarian nation to a powerful industrial state. We will take a broader perspective on this history by looking at the roots of Stalinist rule in the Russian Revolution in 1917 and follow that story to the dismantling of the Stalinist system in the 1950s. During this period, Soviet society was engulfed in a series of massive traumas that included: a brutal civil war, heavy industrialization, collectivization of farmland, widespread upward social mobility, the establishment of a labor camp system known as the Gulag, the Great Terror in the late 1930s, the horrific experience of World War II, and postwar reconstruction during the early Cold War. In the course we will explore each of these phenomena in great detail with a broad interest in underlying social, political, and cultural phenomena. We will make use of both primary source material available since the collapse of the Soviet Union as well as a wealth of new and innovative recent literature on the history of Stalinism. At its core, the students will interrogate the basic ideology of “Stalinism” as a historical phenomenon at the ideological, social, and cultural levels as situated in the broader vista of modern European history.

Website

The most important source of information for this class is the course website at:

<http://historycourses.weebly.com>

Among other things, you will find here: the detailed syllabus, all additional readings (as PDF files), my lecture PowerPoint files (also as PDF files), helpful links on a variety of topics, contact information for me, etc.

Required Texts

The books listed below are required. They will not be available at the Fordham University-Rose Hill Bookstore, so you have to obtain them from other online sources. Also, please pay special attention to the specific editions.

1. Alan Barenberg, *Gulag Town, Company Town: Forced Labor and Its Legacy in Vorkuta* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014). [ISBN: 9780300179446]
2. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). [ISBN: 9780195050011]
3. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance & Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). [ISBN: 9780195104592]
4. James Harris, *The Great Fear: Stalin's Terror of the 1930s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). [ISBN: 9780198797869]
5. David L. Hoffman, *The Stalinist Era* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018). [9780521188371]
6. Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). [ISBN: 9780520208230]
7. Anna Reid, *Leningrad: The Epic Siege of World War II, 1941-1944* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011). [ISBN: 9780802778819]
8. S. A. Smith, *Russia in Revolution: An Empire in Crisis, 1890-1928* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017). [ISBN: 978-0198734833]

Additional Readings

There will be additional readings (typically, articles or chapters from books) for each class period. These are all posted on-line as PDF files at the course website and are listed in the class schedule (see below). Students are required to access these readings, read them in advance, bring them to class (either as printouts or on their laptops), and be ready to discuss them on the assigned class day. Reading the assigned literature is essential to getting a good grade in the class since a large amount of your grade (15%) depends on your in-class performance.

Lectures

I will post PDF versions of each of my PowerPoint lectures at the end of each week on the course website.

Movies/Documentaries

As part of this class, you will have to watch three films. You have to see them on your own *before* coming to class. Be sure to note the dates when we will hold discussions dedicated to each film.

1. [Aelita](#) (1924, directed by Iakov Protazanov, 113 minutes)
2. [Burnt by the Sun](#) (1994, directed by Nikita Mikhalkov, 135 minutes)
3. [Come and See](#) (1985, directed by Elem Klimov, 142 minutes)

Course and Syllabus Rules

Course Syllabus Changes

I reserve the right to change aspects of the course schedule (including assigned dates and readings), especially given the continuing prevalence of Covid. If I make any changes, I will give students sufficient advance warning to make sure everyone is comfortable with the changes.

Late Submission Policy

Assignments are due in class on the stated dates. If you are late by a day, I will accept the assignment but will dock your overall grade by one letter grade, i.e., if you got an A- for the paper, your effective grade will be B-. If you are late by more than one day, I will not accept the assignment and you will get **a zero**, unless there is a legitimate excuse in writing.

Discrimination

Discrimination, harassment, or global generalizations against others on the basis of race, creed, national or ethnic origin, age, religion, disability, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity and expression will not be tolerated.

The classroom is meant to be a safe place. You are encouraged to express your ideas candidly while also keeping in mind that you are expected to show respect for one another and for the diversity of people and ideas in the world around you. Thoughtful critiques and feedback are welcome and encouraged, but negative criticism is not. If there are concerns that any student is not conducting themselves appropriately, this will be discussed with the student on an individual basis. Similarly, if any student feels unsafe as a result of viewpoints expressed by the instructor or fellow students, they are encouraged to speak with me.

Chosen Name and Pronoun Policy

Some members of the Fordham community are known by a name that is different from their legal name. Students who wish to be identified by a chosen name can contact me via email or in person and request their chosen name and pronoun be used during class and other interactions.

Mandatory Reporting

As a course instructor, I am a mandatory reporter and am required to contact and provide information to Public Safety, to the Dean of Students, and/or to the Title IX Coordinator if I learn you have been sexually harassed (verbally or physically), sexually assaulted, stalked, had domestic violence or dating violence occur in a relationship, or been a victim/survivor of any behavior prohibited by the [University's Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures](#). Once reported, the University will promptly seek to properly support any student and make efforts to stop the prohibited behavior, prevent it from recurring, and remedy its effects. There are two confidential places on campus where you can seek support where it will not be "reported": counselors in Psychological & Counseling Services and the Campus Ministry. The [Student CARE Brochure](#) can provide you with on and off-campus resources for support and more information.

Classroom Etiquette

Texting: Absolutely no texting in class. If I see you text during class, I will ask you to leave the classroom immediately.

Being late: Obviously, please try not to be late for class. Once in a while it's OK but if you are late repeatedly, it will seriously affect your class participation grade. I will not count you in attendance if you are more than 5 minutes late.

Covid and Mask Policy

Students are strongly encouraged to use masks in class, especially if the Covid rates are relatively high. If a student feels symptoms that might indicate the presence of Covid, I encourage you to immediately get tested and isolate yourself if positive. I will make every effort to accommodate students' needs and schedules if they test positive for Covid.

On Plagiarism and Cheating

I will not tolerate any form of cheating. Any student caught improperly using online or print sources in a paper will receive **a zero** for the assignment in question, and depending on the particular case, may receive a **failing grade** in the course. As per university rules, I will report plagiarism violations to the Dean of Academic Affairs.

Please familiarize yourself with the [Undergraduate Policy on Academic Integrity](#) at Fordham. The policy notes that: "Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an honest, truthful, and responsible manner. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating on exams, falsification, unapproved collaboration, and destruction of library materials."

Use of online tools to wholly or partially aid in the assistance of completing assignments for this class will be considered a violation of the [University's policies on Academic Integrity](#), and particularly II. A. (Plagiarism) and II. C. (Falsification) and II. D. (Unapproved Collaboration). **In this course, every element of class assignments must be fully prepared by the student. The use of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT for any part of your work will be treated as plagiarism. If you have questions, please contact me.**

Disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability and require academic accommodations, please register with the [Office of Disability Services \(ODS\)](#) in order to request academic accommodations for your courses. Please contact the main ODS number at (718) 817-0655 to arrange services. Accommodations are not retroactive, so you need to register with ODS prior to receiving your accommodations. Please "see" me after class or during office hours if you have questions or would like to submit your academic accommodation letter to me if you have previously registered for accommodations.

Course Requirements and Grade Distribution (out of a total of 100 points)

1. **General in-class participation [15% of the grade]**. This grade will be an evaluation of the students' in-class performance throughout the semester. This is a graduate *seminar* so I expect all of you to read ALL the assigned readings for a particular class day. I also expect you to *engage actively* with me and the other students during the class. Although I will give short lectures in each class session, the majority of the class will be taken up by group discussion. I will carefully note who is participating, who is keeping up with the reading, who is not, etc. throughout the semester. At the semester midpoint, I'll let you know how you're doing so you can make adjustments in terms of your class participation.

I will also take attendance at the beginning of class. No more than one unexcused absence and two excused absences will be allowed. For excused absences, I will need official written documentation. Excessive absences will significantly diminish your class participation grade.

2. **Two Book Analysis Responses [2 X 12.5% = 25% of the grade]**. These will be focused on two books, *Magnetic Mountain* by Kotkin, and *Everyday Stalinism* by Fitzpatrick. I will hand out the prompts about two weeks before they are due. They will be short (c. 3) page papers focused on comparative historical and historiographical questions.
3. **Research Summary [4 X 7.5% = 30% of the grade]**. Each student will be assigned to submit a "Research Summary" four times during the semester. A Research Summary will encompass the following:
 - a full 1 to 1.5-page single-spaced critical summary of the book to be discussed that day;
 - five critical and thematically-oriented questions to generate discussion that day; and
 - a short annotated bibliography of five relevant historiographical sources (books preferred but could be articles) related to the topic of discussion

The idea is that for most class days, we will have students who will each prepare a Research Summary and whose questions will help us organize class discussions for that class day. Research summaries are to be turned as a Word document by e-mail by 10:00 AM on the morning of class day. I will then circulate them to all the students so by the end of the semester, each student has a set of writings and bibliographies on a diverse set of topics on Soviet history.

4. **A Final Paper [25% of the course grade]**: This paper will be a historiographical essay on any thematic aspect of Soviet history between 1917 and 1953. In this paper, students will use secondary sources to explore a particular theme addressed during in-class discussions or a specific topic raised in one of the class readings. Throughout the

semester, students will work through a number of stages before writing the final paper. These include:

- agreeing on a particular topic either by email or via a direct meeting;
- submitting a short proposal for the paper;
- preparing a bibliography of sources; and
- submitting the final paper.

A note about the paper: The final paper must abide by the basic structural and stylistic requirements of the Chicago Manual of Style. Please use footnotes (not endnotes or in-text citations) and have a full bibliography.

In addition, it is imperative that when you use sources for your paper, you use secondary sources that are legitimate from an academic point of view. Such sources, for the purposes of this class, are academic journal articles, academic books, and (sometimes) academic websites. Many of you will be tempted to find a random website with some information on a topic or a journalistic article on a news site and use it as a source (instead of using a book or journal article). Please resist the urge to do this. I will talk more during the course of the semester about what I mean by an academic journal article or academic book. As a final obligatory note, I will not accept Wikipedia as a secondary source.

The paper will be due at the end of the semester during finals week. I will not accept late papers!

The structural requirements for the paper are the following:

1. Length: c. 15 pages long (c. 3,800 words).
 2. Font & spacing: 12-pt Times Roman font, double-spaced; all block quotes need to be single-spaced.
 3. Citations: use footnotes according to the Chicago Manual of Style; footnotes need to be 10-pt font and single-spaced
 4. The paper needs a full bibliography at the end (also as per the Chicago Manual of Style)
5. **Oral Presentation** [5% of the course grade]: Each student will make a presentation (approximately 12 minutes long) to the rest of the seminar based on his or her final paper. There will be a short Q&A session following the presentation. These presentations are scheduled for the final class session of the semester.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	READINGS
1	Jan 22 Mon	Introductions + The Imperial Era	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hoffman, <i>The Stalinist Era</i>, pp. 9-25
2	Jan 29 Mon	The Russian Revolution and Civil War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smith, <i>Russia in Revolution</i>, pp. 1-262
3	Feb 5 Mon	Road to Dictatorship and NEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smith, <i>Russia in Revolution</i>, pp. 263-373 <p>RESEARCH SUMMARY DUE (<i>Russia in Revolution</i>) [everyone except Carolyn]</p>
4	Feb 12 Mon	Experiments in Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suny, <i>The Soviet Experiment</i>, pp. 201-208, 213-231 <p>FILM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Aelita</i> (1924, directed by Iakov Protazanov)
5	Feb 20 Tue	Collectivization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hoffman, <i>The Stalinist Era</i>, pp. 44-52, 74-80 Fitzpatrick, <i>Stalin's Peasants</i> <p>RESEARCH SUMMARY DUE (<i>Stalin's Peasants</i>) [everyone except Maria]</p>
6	Feb 26 Mon	Ukraine and Nationalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hoffman, <i>The Stalinist Era</i>, pp. 66-74 Martin, "An Affirmative-Action Empire: The Emergence of the Soviet Nationalities Policy, 1919-1923," pp. 97-107 Suny, <i>The Soviet Experiment</i>, Chapter 4 ("Nationalism and Revolution")
7	Mar 4 Mon	Industrialization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hoffman, <i>The Stalinist Era</i>, pp. 52-60 Kotkin, <i>Magnetic Mountain</i> <p>BOOK ANALYSIS 1 DUE</p>
8	Mar 11 Mon	The Great Terror	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hoffman, <i>The Stalinist Era</i>, pp. 103-116 Harris, <i>The Great Fear: Stalin's Terror of the 1930s</i> Fitzpatrick, "Revisionism in Soviet History," pp. 77-91 <p>RESEARCH SUMMARY DUE (<i>The Great Fear</i>) [everyone except Ryan]</p>
9	Mar 18 Mon	Stalinist Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hoffman, <i>The Stalinist Era</i>, pp. 81-103 Suny, <i>The Soviet Experiment</i>, pp. 201-205, 300-302 Davies, "'A Mother's Cares': Women Workers and Popular Opinion on Stalin's Russia, 1934-41," pp. 89-109 Davies, <i>Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia</i>, pp. 147-183 <p>SUBMIT TOPIC and ABSTRACT FOR FINAL PAPER</p>

SPRING BREAK: Mar 25-29

10	Apr 8 Mon	Ordinary Stalinism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fitzpatrick, <i>Everyday Stalinism</i> • FILM: <i>Burnt by the Sun</i> (1994, directed by Nikita Mikhalkov) <p>BOOK ANALYSIS 2 DUE</p>
11	Apr 15 Mon	World War II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hoffman, <i>The Stalinist Era</i>, pp. 117-145 • Reid, <i>Leningrad</i> • FILM: <i>Come and See</i> (1985, directed by Elem Klimov) <p>RESEARCH SUMMARY DUE (<i>Leningrad</i>) [everyone except Kyra and Gavin]</p>
12	Apr 22 Mon	The Gulag	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barenberg, <i>Gulag Town, Company Town</i> • Applebaum, <i>Gulag</i>, pp. 183-241 <p>RESEARCH SUMMARY DUE (<i>Gulag Town, Company Town</i>) [everyone except Ethan and Anthony]</p>
13	Apr 29 Mon	Life After War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hoffman, <i>The Stalinist Era</i>, pp. 146-171 • Suny, <i>The Soviet Experiment</i>, Chapter 6 (“The Big Chill: The Cold War Begins”) • Azadovskii and Egorov, “From Anti-Westernism to Anti-Semitism,” pp. 66-80 <p>SUBMIT BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR FINAL PAPER</p>
14	May 6 Mon	Stalinism as the Past	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Khrushchev’s Secret Speech” (pp. 393-403) • Etkind, “Post-Soviet Hauntology: Cultural Memory of the Soviet Terror,” pp. 182-200 • Boym, “Nostalgia and Post-Communist Memory,” pp. 57-71. • Fitzpatrick, “Afterword: The Thaw in Retrospect,” pp. 482-491
15	May 13 Mon	Presentations	