

From Lenin to Stalin
RUSS 380T/HIST 381Q
T/R 11:40-1:05 LNG335;
Spring 2020
W-- Writing; N – Humanities

Professor: Dr. Chelsea Gibson, cgibson2@binghamton.edu

Office: LT714

Hours: Tuesdays 3:15-4:30PM; Wednesdays 12:15-2PM; and by appointment*

Course Description

This course examines the first four-decades of the USSR from its creation in 1917 until 1953. Using culture as its primary focus, this course will explore the ways that the Soviet government and people imagined the USSR and what it meant to be a Soviet citizen as well as how those meanings changed over time. This necessarily includes discussions of agency and influence. We will therefore at every turn compare the power of the state and the power of the people in creating the Soviet experiment.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

1. Acquire a comprehensive knowledge of the Soviet history between 1917 and 1953
2. Engage with historiographical debates over the nature of Soviet power
3. Be able to think critically about the contested nature of politics, economics, warfare, religion, culture, and society in the Soviet state before 1953
4. Develop improved reading, writing, and analytical skills, particularly skills that help students make a reasoned argument backed by evidence

N -- Social Science Courses will:

- impart a knowledge of major concepts, models and issues of anthropology, economics, geography history, political science, and/or sociology as recognized academic disciplines.
- provide an understanding of the methods used by social scientists to explore social phenomena including, when appropriate to the discipline, observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, and employment of mathematical and interpretive analysis.

W – Writing Courses will:

- Provide considerable experience in and feedback on writing as a tool of college-level teaching and learning
- Typically consist of a minimum of 10 pages of writing

Requirements

Students are required to:

1. Participate in weekly discussions on the reading material
2. Complete all assignments on the day they are due
3. Be attentive in class and leave cell phones **off their desk**
4. Be respectful to their peers

Required Texts

Shelia Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (1999) [online @BU]

Brandon M. Schechter, *The Stuff of Soldiers: A History of the Red Army in World War II Through Objects* (2019)

Recommended

Ronald Suny, *The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States* (2011)

Course Expectations

This course is 4-credit, which means that in addition to our weekly meetings, students are expected to do at least **9.5 hours** of course-related work outside of class every week. **Your daily readings average 60-80pgs.**

Grade Breakdown

Reading Quizzes (6)	10%
Weekly Reading Questions (14)	15%
Primary Source Analyses (3)	15%
Participation & Attendance	20%
Essay on <i>Everyday Stalinism</i>	10%
Digital Oral History Project	30%

Grading Scale

A	100-92.0
A-	91.99-90.0
B+	89.99-87.0
B	86.99-82.0
B-	81.99-80.0
C+	79.99-77.0
C	76.99-72.0
C-	71.99-70.0
D	69.99-60.0
F	59.99-below

Please note—All written assignments should be in 12pt, Times New Roman, double-spaced font, and will be turned in online via Turn-it-in unless otherwise specified.

Reading Quizzes (10%)

I will assign six (6) **random** reading quizzes throughout the semester. They will not be overly difficult, but they will assess your comprehension of the week's assigned texts. I will drop **one** quiz at the end of the semester which means your grade will ultimately be out of five (5). Helpful tip: this is a history class, which means that I may ask you questions about the author (what is their name, what is their background), the historical context (the date or the broader historical moment), the type of source (a poem, secondary analysis, song), as well as any other basic information that is essential to properly analyzing the day's text/source.

Weekly Reading Questions (15%)

In order to succeed in this class, you must keep up with the reading. We have twenty-two (22) days with assigned readings (not counting Week 1). What I will do for each class is post a link to a google form of questions for that day's reading on MyCourses. These questions will help you to understand the readings and practice your historical analysis. I will post them at least one week before the day the reading is due. I do read these, so you need to answer them thoroughly and thoughtfully. I ask that you fill out **14** over the course of the semester, or roughly 60% of the readings. You must complete these *before* the class, I will close the form when class begins.

Participation & Attendance (20%)

Attendance will be taken every day. Students will receive **three (3) "free" absences**, but after that any further absence will harm your grade unless there are circumstances out of your control including mental or physical health issues, family problems, etc. Please let me know if something is happening in your life that is preventing you from coming to class and I will work with you.

Participating in discussions is essential to your success in this course, and your full attention, participation, and regular attendance are all expected. You should arrive for every class with your readings completed (and printed off if appropriate), with **notes**, and ready to have a conversation. Participation means not just coming to class but actively participating, either in group work or in our larger class discussions.

Primary Source Analyses (15%)

In order to increase your skills of historical analysis and deepen your understanding of the course's key concepts, you will complete **three (3)** primary source analyses (PSAs) on documents that I have already identified in the class schedule below. Your PSAs will be due the *following* week after we have discussed it—that is, if we discuss the document on a Thursday, your PSA on that document is due on the following Thursday. Please see the section below on “How to Analyze Primary Sources.” All PSAs will be due on Turn-it-in. I will provide a more detailed guide later in the semester, but I expect you to integrate secondary sources from our class readings into your analysis, thus PSAs are a chance to prove to me you understand and have been paying attention to the assignments.

Essay on *Everyday Stalinism* (10%)

After we complete Sheila Fitzpatrick's *Everyday Stalinism*, you will write a **4-5pg** analytical essay that will explore five major terms from the book. I will explain this and provide a detailed assignment prompt & rubric later in the class. Please note, you will be turning this in towards the end of the semester in the middle of work for your timeline project, please plan accordingly.

Digital Oral History Project (30%)

For your final project in this class, I will be working with you to create a digital history project based on an interview history of your choosing from the Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System. Conducted between 1950-53, these interviews give a unique look at the experience of Soviet life between 1917 and the Second World War – and they're in English (!). You should choose one from the “[Schedule A \(Personal Life Stories\)](#)” section. We will spend a day in class learning the online program – [Timeline JS](#) – and you will develop the project in stages. The final project will be due the last week of class and will function like a final exam. We will discuss this at length in class, but the basic idea of the project is for you to conduct a demonstrate your comprehension of the core learning objectives of this course by analyzing the life of a Soviet citizen.

There are three components of this grade:

1. Rough draft (10%)
2. Completed Digital Project (15%)
3. Reflection (5%)

Rough Draft—you must turn in a typed-draft of your oral history analysis roughly two weeks before the project deadline. I will review it and offer suggestions. You should include any pictures, videos, or other digital media that you plan to include (please ensure you check copyright restrictions). This is a review of your project's content and the intended purpose is to ensure that you are on the right track.

Completed Digital Project—you must complete the project by the final week of class. This means that you will turn your typed-up rough draft into a fully online and interactive project on Timeline JS, which will include pictures and videos when appropriate (that have the appropriate copyright permissions).

Reflection & Peer Review—one week after you have completed your digital project, you will submit one document that combines both a reflection & a peer review to me via MyCourses. I am going to post the completed projects in MyCourses and it will be your responsibility to review at least five (5) of your peer's projects. You will write a **4-5pg** final reflection that both assesses what you learned from the project & class and examines the projects of your peers.

Draft Policy

I will review any assignment up to **24 hours** before its due date. The first time I review a draft **you must physically come to my office** to have a conversation. After that, at my discretion, I am willing to read digital drafts. Please note that I strongly advise you to visit my office hours to discuss a draft of your assignment at least once during the semester.

Student Hours

I cannot tell you how many students I have visit my office for the first time and leave saying, "Wow, that was really useful!" Student hours (AKA office hours) are an opportunity for me to help you one-on-one on literally anything in the class. Are you uncomfortable writing? Come visit. Do you have a question about an assignment? Stop by. Are you confused about a grade? Come ask me about it.

Late Work & Missed Assignments

Students may turn in assignments late for a penalty of 3 points per day. If your choice is between plagiarizing a paper and turning it in three or four days late, *please just turn it in late*. **If you think you will miss a paper deadline or an exam, contact me immediately.**

Plagiarism

You must distinguish clearly between your work and the work of others. To do otherwise may constitute plagiarism. You can avoid plagiarizing by doing the following: When you incorporate another person's words into your work, you must enclose them in quotation marks and provide a citation (footnote, endnote, or parenthetical citation). Even when you *paraphrase* another person's words or use another person's ideas or information, you *must* provide a citation. Only when the ideas, information, and words are yours alone is it permissible to include no citation.

Binghamton University defines plagiarism as:

Presenting the work of another person as one's own work (including papers, words, ideas, information, computer code, data, evidence-organizing principles, or style of presentation of someone else taken from the Internet, books, periodicals or other sources). Plagiarism includes:

- quoting, paraphrasing or summarizing without acknowledgement, even a few phrases;
- failing to acknowledge the source of either a major idea or ordering principle central to one's own paper;
- relying on another person's data, evidence or critical method without credit or permission;
- submitting another person's work as one's own; using unacknowledged research sources gathered by someone else.

You may also consult the following web resources on plagiarism:

Binghamton University Student Academic Honesty Code
<https://www.binghamton.edu/watson/about/academic-honesty.html>

Binghamton University Library's Guide to Citing Sources
<https://libraryguides.binghamton.edu/citation>

If you find yourself struggling with your writing assignments, please contact me and make an office appointment. You can also visit the BU Writing Center:

<http://www2.binghamton.edu/writing/writing-center/>

Plagiarism is a serious issue. If you plagiarize an assignment, you will receive a zero.

Services for Students with Disabilities

Students requesting disability-related accommodations should register with the Services for Students with Disabilities office (SSD). They are the appropriate entity on campus to determine and authorize disability-related accommodations. The office is located in the University Union, room 119. Phone number 607-777-2686. For students already registered with SSD, please provide your academic accommodation letter as soon as possible so that we can discuss the implementation of your accommodations.

Mental Health & Academic Stress

If you are feeling extremely stressed and/or depressed due to your academic workload or personal issues, I encourage you to seek out the resources that Binghamton University provides on campus. You are always welcome to visit me in my office if you are having trouble with my course; for other issues that may be troubling you, you can consult the following:

- * Dean of Students Office: 607-777-2804
- * Decker Student Health Services Center: 607-777-2221
- * University Police: On campus emergency, 911
- * University Counseling Center: 607-777-2772
- * Interpersonal Violence Prevention: 607-777-3062
- * Harpur Advising: 607-777-6305
- * Office of International Student & Scholar Services: 607-777-2510
- * Ombudsman: 607-777-2388
- * Services for Students with Disabilities: 607-777-2686

If something major comes up this semester that you know will impact your academic performance or cause you to miss classes, please contact me!

Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

I am committed to ensuring that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives are well-served by this course, that students' learning needs are addressed in and out of class, and that the diversity that the students bring to this class is used as a resource, strength and benefit. I endeavor to present materials and activities that reflect the vast diversity of human experience which is shaped by: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, level of language proficiency, race, nationality, religion, and culture. I am also committed to creating a welcoming course that does not discriminate against students based on the previously enumerated factors. If you experience discrimination, I encourage you to contact me personally or to reach out to the Binghamton University [Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#).

Please see the [Binghamton University Nondiscrimination Notice](#) and the [Binghamton University Diversity Statement](#).

Technology

Laptops will only be permitted in class at my discretion. If they become distracting, I will ask you to take notes with a pen & paper.

Special Accommodations & Athletes

If you need special accommodations for any reason, please let me know **during the first two weeks of class**. Athletes should similarly let me know if and when you will be missing my course for your scheduled meets. It is the student's responsibility to ensure this happens, and to consult with me to provide arrangements for missed assignments or other issues.

PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS GUIDELINES

Please note: You should write your PSA like I have not read the document before. You are acting like a historian, taking a document and making an interpretive argument. That argument must stand on its own without the reader having any prior knowledge.

Purpose:

1. To improve your reading skills, meaning how in-depth and attentively you read.
2. To improve your analytical skills, meaning how well you can understand the argument of a document and assess what influenced its creation.
3. To improve your writing skills, meaning your ability to articulate a thesis (central argument), use primary examples from the text, and logically organize a paper.

Formatting:

1. 12pt, Times New Roman, double-spaced, with your name written at the top (don't waste space with lots of extra information)
2. **2pgs length**
3. Must submit to Turn-it-in on MyCourses

Structure:

1. Your analysis should provide a **brief summary** of the document explaining its content.
2. You must also include a **thesis** – this is where you articulate **your argument** about the document.
 - a. The thesis normally comes at the end of your introductory paragraph.
3. You must consider the **creation** of the document in your analysis:
 - a. **Who** is the author? (if you do outside research, cite it!)
 - b. What was their **motivation** for creating the document?
 - c. **When** was it created?
4. You must explain its historical significance. That means explaining what the document tells us about the **historical moment** in which it was created. (**very important!**)
5. You must **define all your terms** – never assume the reader knows what you're talking about.
6. You must use **direct quotes/citations** from the text AND from a secondary source we read in class. Use page numbers, if the document has them.
 - a. Do not simply copy an entire sentence from the text and put quotes around it. Try instead to **integrate** the quotes into your own words.
 - i. An example of an integrated quote → When the framers wrote the Constitution, they intended it to “form a more perfect union” and also “promote the general Welfare” of the new citizens of the United States of America.
7. You must include a **conclusion** that reinforces the historical significance of the document and provides a clear conclusion to your analysis.

Suggestions:

1. Have me read a draft of a PSA and/or look over your thesis statement
2. Plan time to make several revisions. This is a short assignment but a difficult task.
3. Read your PSA out loud at least once before turning it in to catch awkward or nonsensical phrases

How to Analyze Primary Sources (adapted from the [Carleton Dept of History](#))

We will be engaging with a number of different sources in this class, but you need to ask yourself the same basic questions of each text, be it primary or secondary. Here is a good break-down of the intellectual steps you should first follow as you approach any source:

1. When and where was the source created?
2. What kind of source is it, physically? Is it a letter, an interview, a paper, etc.?
3. Who created it? What do you know about that person?
 - a. Did their sex, race, class, occupation, religion, age, or political beliefs impact the source? How? Why?
4. What is the source's purpose? I.e., why was it created? For whom? Who was the expected audience?

- a. What kind of methods did the author use to convey his/her purpose?
5. What information does the source convey? Either about the author, the subject, or the historical moment that it was created?

Now that you've thoroughly read the source, it's time to think about how you would analyze it as a historical document:

1. What does this source tell you about the moment of its creation?
 - a. Does it describe political ideology, religious beliefs, cultural ideals, gender expectations, etc?
2. Is it a source from the "top," meaning that it was created by a government or other authority, or from the "bottom," that is, "regular" people?
3. Whose perspective is excluded from the source and how did that influence its creation?
4. What historical questions can we answer from this source? What can we not answer?
5. Did we read something in class that can help you understand the source? How do historians traditionally use this source? Is your analysis the same as theirs, or does it differ? How?

Library and Research Skills

I highly recommend that you complete the [research skills tutorial](#) offered on our library website. I recommend especially the following videos:

- [Thesis Statements](#)
- [Primary and Secondary Research](#) and [Types of Sources](#)
- [Searching as Exploration](#)
- [Evaluating Sources](#)
- [Synthesizing Information](#)
- [Plagiarism](#)
- [Copyright](#)

Class Schedule

Please note that this schedule reflects all your assigned readings and should be consulted each week. This schedule is subject to change at the instructor's discretion.

A Note on Course Structure – Our class will be a mixture of lectures and discussion based on the day's assigned reading. You should **always** come to class prepared to talk, both to me and to your peers. That means you should bring the assigned reading AND bring your notes (if you don't take notes, start taking notes!)

Week 1

Jan 21 – Introduction and Expectations; Studying Soviet History

Historical Question [HQ]: What is expected of this course? What do you know about Soviet history? What are some of the challenges of studying Soviet history?

Jan 23 – Imperial Russia before 1917

*Suny, "The Imperial Legacy" (2011)

*Rael, "[How to Read a Secondary Source](#)," "[Predatory Reading](#)," "[Some Keys to Good Reading](#)"

Please bring your notes to class!

HQ: What was Tsarist Russia like before the revolutions of 1917? How do you take effective notes & read for a reading-intensive course?

Week 2

Jan 28 – 1917 & Lenin's Vision

*Suny, "The Double Revolution" (2011)

*Lenin, "[The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government](#)" (1918) [PSA1]

*Rael, "[How to Read a Primary Source](#)"

HQ: How and why did the revolutions of 1917 occur? What were Lenin's initial plans for the building of socialism after the October Revolution?

Jan 30 – The Divergent Meanings of 1917

*Figes & Kolonitskii, *Interpreting the Russian Revolution* (1999), chs. 4 & 5

*"Leninist Fairy Tales" (ca 1920s)

*Rael, "[Hints on Crafting Historical Prose](#)," (Read in preparation for PSA)

HQ: How did the two largest groups in Russia, the workers and the peasants, understand the meaning of the revolution?

Week 3

Feb 4 – Visualizing 1917

*Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, ch. 1

*Soviet political posters, TBA

HQ: How did political art depict the "worker" as a hero in early Soviet culture? What were the major themes in Soviet iconography of this period?

****PSA1 due @ 11:59PM****

Feb 6 – Utopianism: Man, Machines, & Science Fiction in the Early Soviet Period

*Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams* (1989), chs. 7 & 8

HQ: In what ways was the new Soviet state an exercise in utopianism? How did that influence the way Soviet writers understood themselves, socialism, technology, and modernity?

Add/Drop Deadline Feb 3rd @ 11:59PM

Week 4

Feb 11 – The NEP: Negotiating Socialism

*Cox, “NEP Without Nepmen! Soviet Advertising and the Transition to Socialism” (2006)

*Sunny, “NEP Society” (2011)

HQ: What was the NEP and how did it fit into a socialist economy? How did the NEP transform Soviet culture?

Feb 13 – Reimagining Sex in the USSR

*Gafizova, “Alexandra Kollontai” (2005)

*Farnsworth, “Bolshevism, the Woman Question, and Aleksandra Kollontai” (1976)

*Kollontai, “Make Way for Winged Eros” (1923) [PSA2]

HQ: What was women’s place in the revolution? How did Kollontai’s understanding of socialist policies toward women’s issues differ from that in the Soviet leadership?

Week 5

Feb 18 – Childhood in the USSR, 1917-53

*Kelly, *Children’s World: Growing up in Russia* (2007), chs. 2 & 3

HQ: How did Soviet leaders reimagine childhood under socialism?

Feb 20 – The Cult of the Leader

*Tumarkin, “The Myth of Lenin during the Civil War Years” (1986)

*Bonnell, “The Leader’s Two Bodies: Iconography of the *Vozhd*” (1997)

*Soviet political posters

HQ: How and why did a cult of personality emerge in the Soviet Union? First with Lenin and then with Stalin?

PSA2 due @11:59PM*

Week 6

Feb 25 – The Stalin Revolution

*Sunny, “Stalin’s Industrial Revolution” (2011)

*Stakhanov, “The Stakhanov Movement Explained” (1936)

HQ: How did Stalin’s first Five Year Plan and collectivization drive modernize the USSR? How did it change the lives of everyday Soviets? What was Stakhanovism?

Feb 27 – Collectivization & the Famine

*Hindus, *Red Bread: Collectivization in a Russian Village* (1931), excerpt

*TBA

HQ: Why did collectivization happen and how did it impact Soviet life?

Week 7

Mar 3 – The Creation of Everyday Stalinism

*Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, Intro, Ch.1, & Ch. 2

HQ: How did Stalin's consolidation of power by 1928 shape the direction of the Soviet Union?

Mar 5 – **NO CLASS – WINTER BREAK**

Week 8

Mar 10 – Socialist Realism

[Socialist Realism](#) from The Art Story

*Gorky, "Soviet Literature" (1934)

*Excerpt, *How the Steel Was Tempered* (1932-34)

*[PSA3 – student's choice]

HQ: How can we understand socialist realism as an art form? How did it inject revolution into everyday life via art & literature? How did Soviets differentiate it from other forms of artwork?

Mar 12 – Mastering Soviet *Kulturnost'*

*Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, ch. 3 & 4

HQ: How did Stalinism impact the development of Soviet culture? What was expected of a good Soviet citizen? How did cultural attainment become a type of class status?

Week 9

Mar 17 – Outcasts in the 1930s

*Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, ch. 5

*Peris, "Soviet Atheism?"

HQ: What kind of people were "outcasts" in the USSR? How did Soviet atheism develop in the 1920s and 1930s?

****PSA3 due @ 11:59PM****

Mar 19 – **Guest Lecture – Mariia Koskina (Dr. Gibson away at a conference)**

Week 10

Mar 24 – The Transformation of the Family

*Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, ch. 6

*Chatterjee, *Celebrating Women*, Ch. 6 (2002)

HQ: How did the Soviet family change in the 1930s? How did the Stalin Revolution influence women's roles, careers, and expectations?

Mar 26 – Surveillance and the Soviet Interior

*Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, ch. 7

*Hellbeck, "Fashioning the Stalinist Soul"

HQ: How did the state involve itself in most aspects of daily life? How did Soviet citizens create their own identities apart from the state?

Week 11

Mar 31 – Discussing Final Projects

*HRRI, "A Guide for Interviewing Soviet Escapees" (1953)

HQ: How do you use the Timeline JS system? What were the origins of the Harvard Study we will be using for our final projects? How can we effectively analyze them?

****Please note that this class is absolutely mandatory****

Apr 2 – NO CLASS (Dr. Gibson at a conference)

****March 31 is the last day to withdraw with a W****

Week 12

Apr 4 – NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

Apr 6 – NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

Week 13

Apr 14 – The Great Purges

*Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, ch. 8

*Rael, "[Presenting Primary Sources in Your Paper](#)."

HQ: What was the motivation behind the Great Purges?

Apr 16 – Stalinist Film: Student's Choice – [Circus](#) (1936) or [Chapaev](#) (1934)

****DRAFT of TIMELINE PROJECT due Apr 18 @ 11:59PM****

Week 14

Apr 21 – Discussion of film

*TBA

Apr 23 – Discussion: Schechter, *The Stuff of Soldiers*

*Introduction; Part One: Mortal Envelopes

HQ: How did Red Army soldiers view themselves in WWII? How did their uniform and other state-issued supplies shape that experience?

****PAPER on FITZPATRICK due Apr 25 @ 11:59PM****

Week 15

Apr 28 – Discussion: Schechter, *The Stuff of Soldiers*

*Part Two: Violence

HQ: How did soldiers understand the act of killing in the Red Army?

Apr 30 – Discussion: Schechter, *The Stuff of Soldiers*

*Part Three: Possessions; Conclusion

HQ: What kind of objects were most precious to Red Army soldiers?

Week 16

May 5 – Grappling with Stalin's Legacy

*Smith, "Khrushchev's Thaw: Selective Destalinization" (1996)

*Excerpt, Hochschild, *The Unquiet Ghost*, excerpt

HQ: How did the Soviet Union grapple with the legacy of Stalin after his death in 1953?

****FINAL PROJECT due 9 May @ 11:59PM****

****REFLECTION due 12 May @ 11:59PM****