

History 242: The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Union
Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 10:00-10:50
Fall 2024

- x explain the ways in which the country's political leaders both modified and preserved the legacy of the October Revolution in each of the main periods of Soviet history;
- x explain the ways in which the Soviet state made use of terror and ideology to achieve its goals (and the extent to which it was a dictatorship during each period of its history);
- x explain how the Soviet Union was shaped by its Russian historical and geographical context, and the ways in which it was a modern political system shaped by forces that transcended national boundaries.

Critical Reading Goals

By the end of the course, students will have refined their ability to:

- x interpret a primary source (historical document) by analyzing its structure, audience, goals, and biases;
- x identify and critique the argument of a secondary text (a book or article by a present-historian), while situating that text within a larger historical debate or literature.

Analytical Writing Goals

By the end of the semester, students will have improved their ability to:

- x craft a clear, specific, and nuanced thesis statement in response to a historical question;
- x construct a well-organized, evidence-rich, and cohesive paper in defense of a central argument;

Keep these goals in mind throughout the semester. The content goals, for example, will be useful as you prepare for the mid-term and final exams; class discussions will be based on the analysis of primary sources and secondary sources; writing assignments will be graded based on your ability to develop a nuanced thesis and to defend that thesis in a well-organized paper.

Course Readings

The following books are all on sale at the college bookstore and on course reserve at the library:

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* [available in an online copy through Burling]
 Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution* [available in an online copy through Burling]
 Brigid O'Keeffe, *The Multiethnic Soviet Union and its Demise*
 Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*
 Ronald Grigor Suny, ed., *The Structure of Soviet History: Essays and Documents*

Many readings for this course are primary documents or secondary texts from Ron Suny's *The Structure of Soviet History* (listed above). On the schedule of readings below, those texts will be listed with the notation "[Suny]"; page numbers will come from the second (black) edition,

available to meet with students in my office (Maccy House 201) on Thursdays from 1 to 2. I will hold office hours either in the HSSC atrium or just outside (on Kington Plaza) on Wednesdays from 11 to 12.

These are drop-in hours; you are welcome to come by without an appointment (and, in fact, I will leave these hours free for drop-ins.) You are also welcome to email me to arrange a different time to meet. I will most likely cancel my regular office hours a couple weeks each semester (say, during registration week) and instead offer meetings by appointment only. And my schedule will be a little irregular this year, since I'm also running the college's Rosenfield Program in Public Affairs, International Relations, and Human Rights. But I can always find time to meet with you!

Students are welcome to meet with me to discuss any questions they might have about this course, the study of history, or other academic issues at Grinnell. If you're having trouble with a written assignment, I particularly encourage you to come: If you're stuck writing a thesis statement or can't figure out what you want to say in a paper, it's often better to meet with someone about it than to try to just push yourself to get something done. I'm also happy to discuss course readings in more detail, to answer questions, to talk about the history major, or to discuss any a lquequequequequequeis4 (l)-2ent or c(i)-2 h1 (c)4 (our)3 (s)ct- have abo4 (r)geengsnl

a paper copy of the readings.) In particular, I recommend that you make note of quotations and details in the readings that you find especially compelling.

x

Tsereteli's speech on returning from Soviet exile [Suny]
The April Theses [Suny]
Tsereteli and Lenin's exchange [Suny]
report from Kovno Guberniia [Suny]
Lenin's letter to the Central Committee [Suny]

Wednesday, September 11: Civil War!

Reading: Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, ch. 3
"Lenin's Decree on Peace" [Suny]
"Decree on the Land" [Suny]
"Decree on Suppression of Hostile Newspapers" [Suny]
"Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia" [Suny]

Friday, September 13: The Militarization of the Soviet State

Reading: "Iulii Martov's Letter to A.N. Stein" [Suny]
"Lenin's Letter to V. V. Kuraev, E. B. Bosh, and A. E. Minkin" [Suny]
Lev Trotskii, "Report on the Red Army" [Suny]

Assignment: email me a revised version of your Order Number 1 analysis by 5:00 PM

Monday, September 16: Revolution and Civil War in Context

Reading: Peter Holquist, "'Information is the Alpha and Omega of Our Work': Bolshevik Surveillance in its Pan-European Context" [Suny]

Wednesday, September 18: Faction Fighting and the Rise of the Dictatorship

Reading: Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, ch. 4
Aleksandra Kollontai, "The Workers' Opposition" [Suny]
Resolutions of the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party [Suny]

Communist Party of the Soviet Union" [Suny]

Monday, November 11: Reform, Reaction, and Khrushchev's Halted Schemes

Reading: Zubok, chapter 6 [online]; Khrushchev's remarks on modern art [Pioneerweb]; look at the website Seventeen Moments in Soviet History (see Pioneerweb for instructions)

Assignment: send me a proposal for your Harvard Project paper by 10:00 PM

Wednesday, November 13: A Novella of The Thaw

Reading: One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich, by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

Friday, November 15: The Soviet Family under Khrushchev

Reading: Edward Cohn, "Sex and the Married Communist: Marital Infidelity, Family Troubles, and Communist Party Discipline in the War USSR, 1945-1964" [Pioneerweb]
Deborah Field, "Irreconcilable Differences: Divorce and Conceptions of Private Life in the Khrushchev Era" [Suny]

Monday, November 18: Khrushchev's Cold War

Reading: Brigid O'Keeffe, "A Cold War Case: What Huldah Clark Can Teach Us About Teaching Soviet History" [PWeb]
Zubok, chapters 4-5 [online; see PWeb for suggestions]

Wednesday, November 20: The Space Race

Reading: Amy Nelson, "Cold War Celebrity and the Courageous Canine Scout" [Pioneerweb]
Slava Gerovitch, "The Human Inside a Propaganda Machine: The Public Image and Professional Identity of Soviet Cosmonauts" [Pioneerweb]

Friday, November 22: No class (the professor is at a conference)

Assignment: Harvard Project Paper is due by 10:00 PM

Monday, November 25: The Brezhnev Era

Reading: Ronald Grigor Suny, The Soviet Experiment, pp. 447-475 [Pioneerweb]
John Bushnell, "The 'New Soviet Man' Turns Pessimist" [Suny]
James R. Millar, "The Little Deal: Brezhnev's Contribution to Acquisitive Socialism" [Suny]

Wednesday, November 27: Dissent in the 1960s and 1970s

Reading: "Trial of a Young Poet: The Case of Joseph Brodsky" [Pioneerweb]
"The Case of Boris Kochubiyevsky" [Suny]
"Letter from Vladimir Vysotskii to Petr Dimichev" [Suny]

Friday, November 29: NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)

Monday, December 2: Human Rights and the Dissident Movement

Reading: Benjamin Nathans, To the Success of Our Hopeless Causes [Pioneerweb]

Wednesday, December 4 Ethnicity and Economics in the Late USSR

Reading: O'Keeffe, The Multiethnic Soviet Union and its Demise. 7794
James Heinzen, "Soviet Entrepreneurs in the Late Socialist Shadow Economy:
The Case of the Kyrgyz Affair" [Pioneerweb]

Friday, December 6: Life under Brezhnev

Film: The Irony of Fate (Eldar Riazanov, dir.) (available online)

Monday, December 9: The Final Years of the USSR

Reading: Ronald Grigor Suny, The Soviet Experiment. 479514 [Pioneerweb]
Stephen Kotkin, Armageddon Averted, excerpts [Pioneerweb]
excerpt from Mikhail Gorbachev's memoirs [Suny]
O'Keeffe, The Multiethnic Soviet Union and its Demise. 95109

Wednesday, December 11: Reform and its Discontents

Reading: Alexander Dallin, "Causes of the Collapse of the USSR" [Suny]
Nina Andreeva, "I Cannot Give Up My Principles" [Suny]
"The Rehabilitation of Bukharin" [Suny]
"Boris Yeltsin Resigns from the Communist Party" [Suny]

Friday, December 13: The August Coup

Reading: Zubok, epilogue [online]
"The August Coup" [Suny]
Mikhail Gorbachev, "Speech of Resignation" [Suny]

Assignment: if you choose to revise one of your papers, the rewrite is due at 5 PM

FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, December 18, at 9:00 AM