

## HSTR 358: Russia since 1881 (History of the Soviet Union)

**Robert H. Greene**  
**No Classroom (Remote Instruction)**  
**MWF, 10:00-10:50am**

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### Course Description:

In the spring of 1917, after three hundred years of rule in Russia, the Romanov dynasty came crashing down amidst war, social unrest, and popular revolutionary demands for political and economic change. In a matter of months, the Bolshevik Party came to power under the leadership of Lenin and announced the formation of the world's first socialist state. The next 75 years would witness unprecedented efforts to refashion the very foundations of Russian society, politics, and culture. This course will make use of various media to introduce students to the tumultuous history of twentieth-century Russia.

Particular topics to be examined include: the development of radical opposition in imperial Russia and the formulation of a socialist alternative to the autocratic system; the Revolutions of 1917 and the formation of the Soviet state; Bolshevik efforts to forge a new revolutionary culture; the Stalin Revolution: collectivization and industrialization; the terror and purges of the 1930s; the role of women in Soviet society; the Soviet experience in World War II and the origins of the Cold War; Soviet culture and society after Stalin; attempts at socialist reform and perestroika under Gorbachev; and the collapse of the Soviet experiment.

We encounter a series of tantalizing paradoxes when studying the history of the Soviet Union. How did a revolution that promised emancipation and equality for the toiling masses develop into a one-party regime whose leaders deployed coercion and violence against their own citizens? How did a system that sought to eliminate the pernicious problem of inequality produce instead a bifurcated society in which the elites wielded all political and economic power? How did an ideology that anticipated the full blossom of human creative potential under ideal conditions of equality seek instead to silence its critics and stifle dissent? To answer these questions, we will consider evidence from a wide variety of sources: party records, government reports, archival records, newspaper articles, the speeches and writings of Communist leaders, memoirs and autobiographies, works of literary fiction, visual sources, music, propaganda posters, and oral histories. We will pay particular attention to the patterns and rhythms of everyday life and to the memories and experiences of ordinary men and women who lived through the opportunities and trials of an extraordinary century.

### Learning Outcomes:

Students in this course will gain an understanding of the course of modern Russian history and its global significance. Students will analyze a variety of primary and secondary sources (textual and visual), further developing their ability to read, write, speak, and think critically, analytically, and historically.

## Required texts:

The following texts are available for purchase at the Bookstore, though you can likely find better prices online; act fast.

- Mikhail Bulgakov, *Heart of a Dog*, trans. Mirra Ginsburg (New York: Grove Press, 1994)
- Lydia Chukovskaia, *Sofia Petrovna*, trans. Aline Werth (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1994)
- Donald J. Raleigh, *Russia's Sputnik Generation: Soviet Baby Boomers Talk about their Lives* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006)
- Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970-2000*. Updated edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

NOTE: Additional texts will be available as PDFs or online readings through the course Moodle page; these readings are marked by an asterisk (\*) in the syllabus below.

I have also ordered copies of a recommended, optional textbook: Abraham Ascher, *Russia: A Short History*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Oneworld, 2017). This will provide additional information to supplement the lectures. Ascher has the advantage of being concise and affordably priced. I'd be happy to recommend a more thorough text, if you're in the market for one.

## Grading and procedure:

Grading will be assessed as follows. Late work will not be accepted; plan accordingly

- **Active, engaged attendance and participation via Zoom** on Wednesdays and Fridays: (25%). (See more on my expectations for in-class participation below).
- **Weekly journal reflections:** (25%) In order to help structure our course discussions, I've listed several questions for your consideration in the syllabus below. There are anywhere between 3-5 questions for each of our Zoom discussion days (Wednesdays and Fridays). You will write a 5-6 sentence response to *each* question and save these as a single Word or PDF document. This is your journal. I don't expect your journal entries to be the last, definitive word on some very complex historical questions. But your journal should demonstrate to me that you've made a good faith effort throughout the semester to read through and think about the course themes and readings in real time. Please date your entries, use complete sentences, and observe the conventions of English grammar and style. **Post your journal to Moodle on or before 11:59 pm on Wednesday, November 18.**
- **Visual source analysis:** (25%) Choose one of the early Soviet posters on the course Moodle page. In a paper of 2-3 pages, analyze the image you've chosen and consider the following:
  - What is the intended message? How does the message connect with official Communist Party ideology?
  - Who is the intended audience? How might the audience have seen and responded to this particular work?
  - What technique(s) and style(s) has the artist chosen? Why and to what effect?
  - What symbols, signifiers, references, and themes does the artist deploy? Why and to what effect?

The best analyses will (1) connect the image under consideration with relevant course reading(s); (2) situate the image in its historical context; (3) and observe all norms and conventions of English grammar and style. **Post your analysis to Moodle on or before 11:59 pm on Friday, October 2.**

- **Final paper** (25%) You will select and write on **one** of the paper options below. This is not a book report. Do not simply summarize the content of the documents or rehash the plot of the novel. This is an analytical paper, not an exercise in stream of consciousness. You will present an argument (thesis) and support it amply with textual evidence from the assigned readings (you do not need to do outside reading or additional research; the questions below are eminently answerable using only the assigned readings). See the grading rubric at the end of this document.
  - The Bolshevik Revolution was about more than reconfiguring the economic and political landscape of Russia. Lenin’s party sought also to remake social relations and forge “New Soviet Men” and “New Soviet Women.” What values and characteristics would these new people espouse and embody, and by what means would they be created? To what extent did the Soviet state and party succeed in this project?
  - To what extent can we view the enormous social, economic, political, and cultural changes of the late 1920s and 1930s as a “second revolution” or a “Stalin Revolution”? Or, as Trotsky lamented, did the Stalinist regime represent the revolution betrayed?
  - What role did violence and coercion play in the Soviet project to construct the communist utopia? Did this change over time? How and why? On what grounds did the Bolshevik leadership justify the use of coercive means to serve their end goals?
  - How does Rittersporn’s notion of an “omnipresent conspiracy” fit with the picture of the purges we see in Chukovskaya’s novella?
  - How does the life and work of Baranskaya’s protagonist in “A Week Like Any Other” reflect (or fail to reflect) the kinds of roles that Alexandra Kollontai foresaw for women under communism?
  - Why did the Soviet Union fall when it did, and why did it fall in the manner in which it did?

Final papers will be between 5-7 pages long with standard margins in 12-point Times New Roman font. Do not attempt to artificially lengthen (or shorten) your paper by manipulating the settings in Word. Successful papers will be organized around a thesis statement supported by textual evidence. You may use *either* Chicago Style footnotes *or* in-text parenthetical method when citing your sources (not both, obviously). Do not include a cover page, but do give your paper an original and clever title. **Post your final paper to Moodle on or before 1:00 pm on Thursday, November 19.**

## On discussion days and class participation:

In order to participate in class discussion you must be present in the Zoom meeting space and have your camera on and a microphone at the ready (your computer’s built-in mic should work just fine). I’m certain there will be some technical bugs to work out in the early days, but I’m sure we’ll get through it. We’re reading a variety of texts, some more complex than others, and grappling with some big historical questions. I expect that you will have questions of your own, and we will devote some time at the beginning of class to addressing these. I do want, however, to make sure that we have enough time to go through the day’s journal questions.

Since you’ll have already written up your journal entries by the time we meet for discussion, I expect that you’ll come ready and primed to participate. Should discussions falter, we will resort to what the Bolsheviks euphemistically referred to as “corrective measures” (in our case, quizzes).

Participation is not the same thing as talking. In the best of all possible worlds, the perfect discussion would be an informed back-and-forth exchange in which no single voice dominates, each of us listens attentively and respectfully to the contributions of everyone else, and each of us is eager to take part. I'll settle for something just shy of that Platonic ideal, but each of you should come to discussion ready to share your thoughts, ideas, questions, and concerns about the readings and the daily questions; to this end, draw up notes (don't rely on fuzzy recall or a purportedly "photographic memory") and have the relevant readings in hand/on screen as we begin our discussion. I have no qualms about calling on students, so be prepared.

All that said, this should be fun. This may be the one time in your life when you have the liberty and leisure to devote a good part of your waking week to thinking and talking about books and big ideas and things that matter. I hope that gets you excited. If not, ask yourself why not.

### Mandatory things:

- All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. Plagiarism is defined as misrepresenting another's work, words, or ideas as one's own. *Be aware that submitting plagiarized work will result in automatic failure of the course.*
- Students with documented disabilities will receive reasonable modifications in this course. Your responsibilities are to request them from me with sufficient advance notice, and to be prepared to provide verification of disability and its impact from Disability Services for Students. Please make time to speak with me to discuss the details of your reasonable accommodation. For more information, visit the [Disability Services for Students website](#).

### Schedule of Lectures and Readings (\* = on Moodle)

Wednesdays and Fridays are Zoom meetings, from 10:00-10:50am Mountain time. There is no physical classroom for the course, so you may join the class meeting from anywhere you like. Please make sure your camera is turned on and be prepared to participate in the discussion.

#### WEEK 1: The Russian Empire at the Turn of the Century

Wednesday, August 19: Introduction to the Course

- Before next class, skim Ascher, *Russia*, pp 119-166 (recommended) and watch the following videos on Moodle
- Lecture 1: Russia at the Turn of the Last Century. Social and Economic Change
- Lecture 2: Autocracy and "Dual Polarization"

Friday, August 21: Discussion: Russia under the Old Regime

- \* Alfred Rambaud on the transformation of Russia (1900)
- \* Nicholas II imposes Russian autocracy in Finland (1903)
- \* Russian liberal Pavel Milyukov on the need for reform (1905)
- \* Trotsky on why the Revolution of 1905 failed (1930)
- Discussion Questions to Consider (\*\*answer each in your journal in a paragraph of 5-6 sentences): (1) What does Rambaud mean when he describes tsarist Russia as an "archaic state"? (2) According to Milyukov, what is the nature of Russia's "sickness" and what is the cure? (3) According to Trotsky, what were the principal outcomes and lessons from the Revolution of 1905?

## WEEK 2: Autocracy and Its Discontents

Monday, August 24: Video Lectures

- Watch video lectures for the week. Be sure to have finished watching them before our discussion on Wednesday.
- Lecture 3: Political Alternatives in Late Imperial Russia
- Lecture 4: A Brief (?) Introduction to Marxism
- Lecture 5: Russian Marxism – Lenin and the Bolsheviks
- Skim Ascher, *Russia*, pp 143-173 (recommended)

Wednesday, August 26: Discussion: Lenin's Theory of the Party

- Tariq Ali, "How Lenin's Love of Literature Shaped the Russian Revolution," *The Guardian* (March 25, 2017)
- \* V. I. Lenin, "What is to Be Done?" (1902; excerpts)
- Discussion Questions to Consider (\*\*again, here and throughout the remaining weeks, answer each question in your journal in a paragraph of 5-6 sentences): (1) How did Lenin's reading influence his political thought and development? (2) What does Lenin mean by "trade-union" consciousness and "Social-Democratic" (that is, "revolutionary") consciousness? (3) By what means, according to Lenin, will workers arrive at a state of revolutionary consciousness? (4) According to Lenin, what qualities ought a party member possess, and why? What types of people does Lenin seek to exclude from membership?

Friday, August 28: Discussion: Imagining the Communist Utopia

- N. I. Bukharin and E. A. Preobrazhensky, *The ABC of Communism* (1920; excerpts)
- Discussion Questions to Consider (\*\*you know the drill; answer each question in your journal in a paragraph of 5-6 sentences) (1) According to Bukharin and Preobrazhensky, what will society and the economy be like under communism? (2) Why will there be no need for a state under communism? (3) What do the authors mean when they posit that under communism "Men and women will for the first time be able to lead a life worthy of thinking beings instead of a life worthy of brute beasts"? (4) What is the dictatorship of the proletariat and what purpose will it serve?

## WEEK 3: Eight Months That Shook the World

Monday, August 31: Video Lectures

Watch the week's lecture on Moodle in time for Wednesday's discussion

- Lecture 6: The Revolutions of 1917
- Ascher, *Russia*, 166-185 (recommended)

Wednesday, September 2: Discussion: Remembering the Revolution

- \* Lenin's April Theses (April 1917)
- \* Reports of unrest in the Russian Army (October 1917)
- \* Bolshevik demands on the eve of the October Revolution
- \* The "Soviet Version" of the February Revolution (pub. in 1938)
- \* Declassified CIA briefing on the February Revolution from 1966
- \* Ekaterina Olitskaya, a provincial woman, describes the Revolutions of 1917
- \* Take the Who Are You in 1917 Quiz (optional; just for fun)
- Discussion Questions to Consider: (1) How did the ideas expressed in Lenin's April Theses accelerate the tempo of the revolution over the spring, summer, and into the fall of 1917? (2) Based on the army intelligence reports, why were Russian soldiers becoming increasingly radicalized over the course of 1917? Consider Lenin's April Theses and the party's demands

on the eve of October. What did soldiers (and other key Bolshevik constituencies – sailors, factory workers, radical intellectuals) find appealing in the Bolshevik message? (3) How does the official Soviet textbook account of February 1917 differ from the Cold War-era summary authored by the CIA? How do we account for these different perspectives? (4) According to Olitskaia, how did February differ from October?

Friday, September 4: Discussion: Reenacting the Revolution

- Film clip: [Reenactment of the storming of the Winter Palace](#) (1920) (YouTube link is on the Week 3 Moodle page; watch before today's discussion)
- Film: [The End of St. Petersburg](#) (dir. Vsevolod Pudovkin, 1927) (YouTube link is on the Week 3 Moodle page; watch before today's discussion)
- \* James von Geldern, "Putting the Masses in Mass Culture: Bolshevik Festivals, 1918-1920," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 31:4 (Spring 1998): 123-144.
- Discussion Questions to Consider: (1) According to von Geldern, what purposes (political, social, pedagogical?) were the reenactments of October meant to serve? (2) The protagonist undergoes a change in his political consciousness over the course of Pudovkin's film. How does his personal journey reflect the Bolshevik Party's own narrative/story of the events of 1917? (3) Why do you think the film was given this title?

WEEK 4: Building the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

Monday, September 7: LABOR DAY; NO CLASS

Either use the weekend before the holiday or the day after to keep up with the week's lectures and readings. Watch this week's lectures in time for Wednesday's discussion.

- Lecture 6: The Bolsheviks in Power
- Lecture 7: Violence as State Strategy
- Lecture 8: The Civil War
- Listen to "The Internationale" and "White Army, Black Baron" (links on Moodle)

Wednesday, September 9: Discussion: Red Terror: The Function of Violence in the Soviet State

- \* People's Commissar of Internal Affairs G. Petrovskii on expanding the Red Terror (1918)
- \* Lenin's "Hanging Order" against the kulaks (1918)
- \* V. I. Lenin, "An Appeal to the Red Army" (1919)
- \* V. I. Lenin, "All Out for the Fight Against Denikin!" (1919), in *A Documentary History of Communism in Russia: From Lenin to Gorbachev*, ed. Robert V. Daniels (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1993), 116-17.
- \* The Oath of the Red Warrior (1918)
- \* L. D. Trotsky, Special Order No. 30 (for defecting Red Army officers, 1918)
- \* L. D. Trotsky, "To the Foreign Soldiers in North Russia" (1919)
- \* L. D. Trotsky on terror and militarization, from *Terrorism and Communism* (1920), in *A Documentary History of Communism in Russia: From Lenin to Gorbachev*, ed. Robert V. Daniels (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1993), 121-123
- \* A family saga from the Siberian archives
- Journal Questions to Consider: (1) What did the Bolsheviks mean when they spoke of terror? What purpose(s) was it meant to serve? (2) What moral justifications did the Bolshevik leadership put forward for the coercive and repressive policies they pursued during the Civil War? (3) How did the Bolshevik leadership represent the significance of the Civil War to Red Army soldiers through speeches, song, visual propaganda, etc.?

Friday, September 11: Discussion: Lenin and His Critics on the Left

- \* Rosa Luxemburg on the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly (1918)

- \* Rosa Luxemburg on dictatorship in Soviet Russia (1918)
- \* V. I. Lenin, “Democracy and Dictatorship” (1918, excerpts)
- \* V. I. Lenin, “What is Soviet Power?” (1919)
- \* Isaac Babel, “A Letter” and “My First Goose,” in Isaac Babel, *Lyubka the Cossack and Other Stories*, trans. Andrew R. MacAndrew (New York: Signet, 1963), 137-145.
- Journal Question to Consider: (1) What is Luxemburg’s critique of the Bolshevik regime? (2) How does Lenin respond to Luxemburg’s argument? (3) Imagine that you are a Menshevik, a White propagandist, or a European Social Democrat like Luxemburg. Compose a brief, 5-6 sentence rebuttal of Lenin’s presentation of Soviet power. (4) How do Babel’s stories reflect the culture of violence engendered by the civil war?

### WEEK 5: War Communism, the New Economic Policy, and Bolshevik Culture

Monday, September 14: Video Lectures

- Lecture 9: War Communism
- Lecture 10: The New Economic Policy
- Lecture 11: Culture Building in the 1920s
- Ascher, *Russia*, 186-193 (recommended)

Wednesday, September 16: Discussion: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back

- \* Yevgeny Zamyatin, “The Cave” (1920), in Yevgeny Zamyatin, *The Dragon: Fifteen Stories*, ed. and trans. Mirra Ginsburg (New York: Random House, 1967), 135-415
- \* Decree on Food Procurement (1918)
- \* Decree on the Nationalization of Industry (1918)
- \* Alexander Berkman, “Kronstadt,” in Berkman, *The Bolshevik Myth* (1925)
- Journal Questions to Consider: (1) What was the aim of war communism? What were its unintended consequences? (2) What grievances did the Kronstadt sailors have with Soviet power and why? (3) Why do you think the Bolshevik regime responded with force to the demands of the Kronstadt sailors? (4) Imagine that you are a Bolshevik propagandist aboard an agit-train heading to the provinces to address audiences of demobilized soldiers, local party members, and peasants from the surrounding villages. Compose for your listeners a short paragraph-length explanation and justification for the Party’s adoption of the New Economic Policy.

Friday, September 18: Discussion: Building the New Byt

- \* V. I. Lenin, “The Tasks of the Youth Leagues” (1920), in William G. Rosenberg, ed., *Bolshevik Visions: First Phase of the Cultural Revolution in Soviet Russia*, vol. 1 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 21-25
- \* Communist Party Membership Rules (Party Statutes of the Ninth Party Congress, 1919)
- \* N. K. Krupskaya, “What a Communist Ought to be Like” (1922), in William G. Rosenberg, ed., *Bolshevik Visions: First Phase of the Cultural Revolution in Soviet Russia*, vol. 1 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 38-41
- \* A. A. Solts, “Communist Ethics” (1922), in William G. Rosenberg, ed., *Bolshevik Visions: First Phase of the Cultural Revolution in Soviet Russia*, vol. 1 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 42-54
- Journal Questions to Consider: (1) Beset by material privation, near-total collapse of industry and infrastructure (*razrukha*), and hostile powers on its borders, why did the Bolshevik regime set such a high priority on “culture-building” (*kul’turnoe stroitel’s tvo*). Why did they take this self-appointed mission so seriously? What does this tell us about the scope and aspiration of Soviet power? (2) To what standards did the Party hold its members, and why

were these expectations so high? What sorts of specific behaviors, practices, and mindsets were encouraged and discouraged, and why? (3) What methods and mechanisms did the Party use to make sure its members adhered to such standards? (4) Imagine that you are an official in the party's Control Commission. Write a paragraph of criticism addressed to a comrade accused of the lapses laid out in the Solts article; prescribe a corrective penance and a suitable penalty.

#### WEEK 6: Forging New People

Monday, September 21: Video Lecture & Film

- Lecture 12: Gender Roles and Family Policy
- Watch the film *Bed and Sofa* in advance of Friday's discussion (see below)

Wednesday, September 23: Discussion: The New Soviet Woman

- \* Bolshevik Family Law (1918)
- \* Aleksandra Kollontai, *The Family and the Communist State* (1918), in *Documents of Soviet History*, ed. Rex A. Wade, vol. 1 (Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 1991), 270-277
- \* N. I. Bukharin on the development of Soviet women (1920)
- \* Maria Fedotovna Filipenko, *My Life* (1924)
- \* *Vavila the Terrible and Auntie Arina* (animated short, 1928)
- Journal Questions to Consider: (1) How did the revolution seek to redefine gender roles and the relationship between the sexes? To what extent were these efforts successful? (2) How does Filipenko characterize her life before and after the Revolution? (3) What challenges and obstacles (material and cultural) did proponents of the new culture face?

Friday, September 25: Discussion: Old Men and New Women

- *Bed and Sofa* (aka, *Third Meshchanskaia Street*) (dir. Abram Room, 1927) (YouTube link on Moodle page)
- \* L. D. Trotsky, "Vodka, the Church, and the Cinema" (1923)
- \* Denise J. Youngblood, "The Fiction Film as a Source for Soviet Social History: The *Third Meshchanskaia* Affair," *Film and History* 19:3 (September 1989): 50-60
- \* Mikhail Zoshchenko, "Nervous People" (1925), "The Bathhouse" (1925), "The Crisis" (1925), "Poverty" (1925), "A Summer Breather" (1929), in Mikhail Zoshchenko, *Nervous People and Other Satires*, ed. Hugh McLean, trans. Maria Gordon and Hugh McLean (London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd., 1963), 124-126, 131-133, 137-143, 162-164
- Journal Questions to Consider: (1) The film generated controversy among Soviet audiences and cultural officials. Why? (2) Does the film satisfy Trotsky's idea of a useful and successful Soviet picture? Why or why not? (3) What do you make of the film ending? Is it a happy/positive one? For whom? (4) Based on the film and on Zoshchenko's stories, what elements of the old *byt* still need to be overcome some ten years after the revolution? Why do you think these particular elements proved such a challenge to eradicate?

#### WEEK 7: The Stalin Revolution

Monday, September 28: Video Lectures

- Lecture 13: The Faction Struggles and the Rise of Stalin
- Lecture 14: The Five-Year Plan and the Stalin Revolution
- Ascher, *Russia*, pp 193-207 (recommended)

Wednesday, September 30: Discussion: The New Soviet Dog

- Bulgakov, *Heart of a Dog* (read the entire book)
- You can watch a very good film adaptation (NOT a substitute for reading the book!) on [YouTube](#) (in Russian, with optional English subtitles)
- Journal Questions to Consider: (1) How does Bulgakov's book reflect the tension between old ways and new ways in the 1920s? (2) Do you think that Bulgakov sympathized with the Soviet regime's efforts to create new types of people? (3) Though written in 1925, Bulgakov's book was pronounced unpublishable and an unexpurgated version would not appear in print in the Soviet Union until 1987. Imagine that you are a party censor. Write a 1-2 paragraph justification for your decision to suppress Bulgakov's book.

Friday, October 2: Discussion: The Stalinist Leap Forward

- \* I. V. Stalin, "A Year of Great Change. On the Occasion of the Twelfth Anniversary of the October Revolution" (1929)
- \* Stalin on the Liquidation of the Kulaks (1929)
- \* Lev Kopelev, "The Last Grain Collections," in *The Education of a True Believer* (NY: Harper Collins, 1980), 224-86
- Journal Questions to Consider: (1) What do we mean by "Stalinism"? (2) Does the Stalin period mark a continuation of or departure from the policies undertaken by Lenin? In other words, does the Stalin era represent a break from the revolutionary spirit of 1917 (as critics like Trotsky charged), or an intensification or amplification of the sorts of policies we see in the period 1917-29? (3) Why did Kopelev participate in the collectivization campaign? What did he think he was accomplishing?
- \*\* Visual analysis paper due by 11:55pm tonight. Post to Moodle.

WEEK 8: The Stalinist Purges

Monday, October 5: Video Lecture

- Video Lecture 15: The Purges
- Short filmreel clips from the 1938 show trial (Verdict of the Court, Verdict of the People) (you may have to turn the subtitles on using the button in the far right of the video screen)
- Ascher, *Russia*, pp 207-212 (recommended)

Wednesday, October 7: Discussion: Purity and Contagion

- I. V. Stalin, "On Inadequacies of Party Work and Measures for Liquidating Trotskyists and Other Double-Dealers" (1937), in Robert V. Daniels, ed., *A Documentary History of Communism in Russia: From Lenin to Gorbachev* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1993), 258-261
- Gábor Rittersporn, "The Omnipresent Conspiracy: On Soviet Imagery of Politics and Social Relations in the 1930s," in Nick Lampert and Gábor Rittersporn, eds., *Stalinism and Its Aftermath: Essays in Honour of Moshe Lewin* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1992), 101-120
- Journal Questions to Consider: (1) What made the purges happen? Who made the purges happen? What concerns, forces, and fears drove the arrests, interrogations, trials, and executions? (2) Summarize and evaluate Rittersporn's argument. Do you find it compelling? Why or why not?

Friday, October 9: Discussion: The Purges Come Home

- Chukovskaya, *Sofia Petrovna* (read the entire novella)
- Journal Questions to Consider: (1) According to Chukovskaya's novella, how did the purges affect Soviet society? Consider, for example, family dynamics, friendships, and/or the

workplace. (2) To what extent does Chukovskaya's novella corroborate Rittersporn's argument in "The Omnipresent Conspiracy"? (3) What do you make of Sofia Petrovna's final act in the book? How has her intimate experience of the purges changed her?

### WEEK 9: The Great Patriotic War and Postwar Developments

Monday, October 12: Video Lectures

- Lecture 16: From Barbarossa to Berlin: An Overview of the Campaign in the East
- Lecture 17: (OPTIONAL) Patriotic Rage: Soviet Wartime Propaganda
- Lecture 18: The Origins of the Cold War and the Rise of Khrushchev
- Ascher, *Russia*, pp 212-221 (recommended)

Wednesday, October 14: Discussion: The New Soviet Superpower

- \* I. V. Stalin, "Interview to *Pravda* Correspondent Concerning Mr. Winston Churchill's Speech at Fulton" (March 1946)
- \* Nina Tumarkin, "The Great Patriotic War as Myth and Memory," *European Review* 11:4 (October 2003): 595-611
- Journal Questions to Consider: (1) How did Stalin see the geopolitical situation and the Soviet Union's relations with the West after the Second World War? (2) What does Tumarkin mean by the "cult" of World War II and what purpose(s) did it serve in the postwar Soviet Union?

Friday, October 16: Discussion: Prewar and Postwar Stalinist Culture

- \* James von Geldern on socialist realism
- \* James von Geldern on the First Congress of Soviet Writers (1934)
- \* Andrei Zhdanov, "Soviet Literature – The Richest in Ideas" (Address to the First Congress of Soviet Writers, 1934)
- \* Andrei Zhdanov on the duty of a Soviet writer (1946)
- Journal Questions to Consider: (1) What is socialist realism? (2) What did Stalin mean when he declared that Soviet writers were to serve as "engineers of human souls"? (3) According to Zhdanov, what is the role and function of Soviet literature (and artistic production, more generally)? In what ways (if at all) did that role and function change in the context of the emergent Cold War?

### WEEK 10: The Khrushchev Years

Monday, October 19: Video Lectures

- Lecture 19: Destalinization and the Cultural Thaw
- Lecture 20: "Hare-Brained Schemes": The Fall of Nikita Khrushchev
- Ascher, *Russia*, pp 222-234 (recommended)

Wednesday, October 21: Discussion: The Limits of Destalinization

- \* N. S. Khrushchev, "Secret Speech" (February 25, 1956)
- \* Varlam Shalamov, "Forty-Five Things I Learned in the Gulag" (1961), as published in *The Paris Review* (June 12, 2018)
- \* Evgenii Evtushenko, "Stalin's Heirs" (1962)
- Journal Questions to Consider: (1) What aspects of Stalin's rule and character does Khrushchev criticize? On what basis does Khrushchev distinguish the actions and policies of the "good Stalin" from those of the "bad Stalin"? (2) The lessons Shalamov learned reveal how the gulag system required certain alterations in behavior, values, and outlook in order for prisoners to survive. The gulag thus may be said to have created – even if accidentally – new types of men and women. In what ways did these types differ from the ideal of the New

Soviet Man and Woman? Do you see any similarities? (3) Why is Evtushenko fearful that Stalin/Stalinism is not well and truly buried (i.e., that it may rise again)?

Friday, October 23: Discussion: Peaceful Coexistence?

- \* V. P. Tugarinov, "Socialist Society and the Person" (1960)
- \* Nixon v. Khrushchev: The Kitchen Debate (1959) (YouTube Video – link on Moodle)
- \* CIA transcript of the Kitchen Debate (a more complete record than the video above)
- \* Rósa Magnúsdóttir, "Be Careful in America, Premier Khrushchev!" *Cahiers du Monde russe* 47:1-2 (January-June 2006): 109-130
- Journal Questions to Consider: (1) In what ways is socialist society different from (and superior to) bourgeois capitalist Western society, according to Tugarinov? (2) Squaring off in the so-called "Kitchen Debate," Khrushchev and Nixon extolled the virtues of their system and criticized the failings of the other side. Summarize and evaluate the arguments put forward. To what extent can we see this exchange of viewpoint as characteristic of Khrushchev's idea of "peaceful coexistence" between the two superpowers? (3) What do the letters to Khrushchev tell us about how ordinary Soviet citizens viewed the United States and the Cold War?

#### WEEK 11: Waiting for Communism

Monday, October 26: Video Lecture

- Lecture 21 The Age of Stagnation?
- Ascher, *Russia*, pp 234-241 (recommended)

Wednesday, October 28: Discussion: Dissidence and Pessimism

- \* John Bushnell, "The New Soviet Man Turns Pessimist," in *The Soviet Union Since Stalin*, ed. Stephen Cohen, Alexander Rabinowitch, and Robert Sharlet (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 179-99.
- \* Currents of Dissent (excerpts from the writings of Andrei Sakharov, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and Roy Medvedev)
- \* "The Confinement of Zhores Medvedev in a Psychiatric Hospital," *Chronicle of Current Events*, no. 14, 30 June 1970
- Journal Questions to Consider: (1) What does Bushnell mean when he argues that the New Soviet Man had turned pessimist? What evidence and causes does he cite? How do these findings accord with the view (popularized in the 1980s under Gorbachev) that the Brezhnev era was one of stagnation (*zastoi*)? (2) What did it mean to be a dissident? What range of critiques did Brezhnev-era dissidents launch against the regime? (3) Zhores Medvedev (b. 1925), brother of Roy Medvedev, was a prominent dissident in the 1960s and 70s. The account of his confinement was published in the underground newsletter *Chronicle of Current Events (Khronika tekushchikh sobytii)*, which circulated in *samizdat* form (i.e., as an illegal, underground publication) among dissidents from 1968 to 1982. What does this narrative tell us about how Soviet power perceived the threat that dissidents posed and the tactics that the regime deployed against its most outspoken critics?

Friday, October 30: Discussion: The Dual Burden

- Natalya Baranskaya, "A Week Like Any Other" (1969) in Natalya Baranskaya, *A Week Like Any Other: Novellas and Stories*, trans. Pieta Monks (Seattle: Seal Press, 1990), 1-62
- Journal Questions to Consider: (1) How does Olga's life and work reflect (or fail to reflect) the kinds of roles that figures like Kollontai and Bukharin foresaw for women under the Soviet regime? (2) Given that the novella presents an unflinchingly realistic view of everyday life in the Brezhnev era, how do you think various readers (censors, ordinary citizens) might

have reacted to this work? Would you have allowed publication or not? (note: the censors permitted it, and it was printed in the literary journal *Novyi Mir* in 1969) (3) If we read Baranskaia's novella as social history, what does it tell us about how ordinary men and women accommodated themselves to the material conditions of life in the USSR?

### WEEK 12: Reform from Above

Monday, November 2: Video Lectures

- Lecture 22: From Gerontocracy to Gorbachev
- Brezhnev's New Year's address to Soviet youth (1979) (YouTube link on Moodle)
- Lecture 23: The Gorbachev Factor
- Ascher, *Russia*, pp 241-250 (recommended)

Wednesday, November 4

- \* Gorbachev Challenges the Party (Report to the Plenary Session of the CPSU Central Committee, 27 January 1987)
- \* Iu. N. Afanasev, "The Past and Us" (1985)
- Journal Questions to Consider: (1) Gorbachev paints a bleak picture of the USSR in 1985. What factors have led to this current state of affairs? (2) What does Gorbachev mean by "openness" (*glasnost*) and why is it a necessary part of his reform agenda? (3) What does Gorbachev mean by "democracy" and why is it a necessary part of his reform agenda? (4) How does Afanasev's article mark a change in how Soviet historians and writers were permitted to think and write about their country's past?

Friday, November 6

NO CLASS; use this time to catch up/read ahead and to begin work on the final paper

### WEEK 13: A Revolution of the Mind

Monday, November 9: Video Lecture

- Lecture 24: Glasnost and Perestroika
- Ascher, *Russia*, pp 250-254 (recommended)

Wednesday, November 11: VETERANS' DAY; NO CLASS

Friday, November 13: Discussion: Soviet Nostalgia

- Raleigh, *Russia's Sputnik Generation* (read the entire book, we will concentrate our discussion on the Intro, Ch 2, 6, 7, 8)
- Journal Questions to Consider: (1) What did the "Soviet dream" mean to Raleigh's interviewees? How, when, and why (if at all) did this dream change? (2) How do Raleigh's interviewees talk about Gorbachev's policies of perestroika and glasnost? Why do they think the USSR fell? (3) How has life changed for Raleigh's interviewees since 1991 and how do they imagine the Soviet past?

### WEEK 14: Things Fall Apart

Monday, November 16: Video Lecture

- Lecture 25: The Fall of the USSR

Wednesday, November 18

- Gorbachev's Pizza Hut commercial (1997) (YouTube link on Moodle page)
- Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted* (entire book)
- \* Masha Gessen, "The Dying Russians," *New York Review of Books*, September 2, 2014

- Journal Questions to Consider: (1) What does the title of Kotkin's book mean? (2) Why, according to Kotkin, did the USSR fall? Do you detect any shortcomings in his argument and analysis? (3) How do Gessen's findings match with those of Kotkin and Raleigh?

## Grading Rubric

I will use the following rubric to evaluate your writing and assign grades to your work:

### The Superior Paper (A range)

- **Thesis:** Easily identifiable, plausible, novel, sophisticated, insightful, crystal clear.
- **Structure:** Evident, understandable, appropriate for formal college-level writing. Excellent transitions from point to point. Paragraphs support solid topic sentences and flow logically.
- **Use of evidence:** Textual evidence used to buttress every point with at least one example. Excellent integration of quoted material into sentences (i.e., not simply bleeding chunks of text dropped onto the page, but evidence that is seamlessly integrated into the paper).
- **Analysis:** Author clearly relates evidence to thesis/argument; analysis is fresh and exciting, posing new ways to think of the material.
- **Logic and argumentation:** All ideas in the paper flow logically; the argument is identifiable, reasonable, and sound. Author anticipates and successfully defuses counter-arguments; makes insightful connections that illuminate thesis.
- **Mechanics:** Sentence structure, grammar, and diction excellent; correct use of punctuation and citation style; minimal to no spelling errors; absolutely no run-on sentences or comma splices.

### The Good Paper (B range)

- **Thesis:** Promising, but may be slightly unclear, or lacking in insight or originality.
- **Structure:** Generally clear and appropriate, though may wander occasionally. May have a few unclear transitions, or a few paragraphs without strong topic sentences.
- **Use of evidence:** Examples used to support most points. Some evidence does not support point, or may appear where inappropriate. Quotes well integrated into sentences.
- **Analysis:** Evidence often related to argument/thesis, though links perhaps not always clear.
- **Logic and argumentation:** Argument of paper is clear, usually flows logically and makes sense. Some evidence that counter-arguments acknowledged, though perhaps not addressed. Occasional insightful connections to outside material made.
- **Mechanics:** Sentence structure, grammar, and diction strong; punctuation and citation style used correctly. Some (very minor) mechanical errors.

### The Borderline Paper (C range)

- **Thesis:** May be unclear (contain many vague terms), appear unoriginal, or offer relatively little that is new; provides little around which to structure the paper.
- **Structure:** Generally unclear, often wanders or jumps around. Few or weak transitions, many paragraphs without topic sentences.
- **Use of evidence:** Examples used to support some points. Points often lack supporting evidence, or evidence used where inappropriate (often because there may be no clear point). Quotes may be poorly integrated into sentences.
- **Analysis:** Quotes appear often without analysis relating them to argument; or analysis offers nothing beyond the quote without any commentary.
- **Logic and argumentation:** Logic may often fail, or argument may often be unclear. May not address counter-arguments or make any outside connections.

- **Mechanics:** Problems in sentence structure, grammar, and diction, but not major ones. Errors in punctuation, citation style, and spelling. May have multiple run-on sentences or comma splices.

The Deficient Paper (D range)

- **Thesis:** Difficult to identify at all, may be bland restatement of obvious point.
- **Structure:** Unclear, often because thesis is weak or non-existent. Paragraph transitions confusing and unclear. Few topic sentences.
- **Use of evidence:** Very few or very weak examples. General failure to support statements, or evidence seems to support no statement. Quotes not integrated into sentences; "plopped in" in improper manner.
- **Analysis:** Very little or very weak attempt to relate evidence to argument; argument may be unidentifiable and/or unsupported by evidence
- **Logic and argumentation:** Ideas do not flow at all, usually because there is no argument to support. Simplistic view of topic; no effort to grasp possible alternative views.
- **Mechanics:** Major problems in sentence structure, grammar, and diction. Frequent major errors in citation style, punctuation, and spelling. May have many run-on sentences and comma splices.

The Failing Paper (F)

- Shows obviously minimal lack of effort or comprehension of the assignment. Very difficult to understand, owing to major problems with mechanics, structure, and analysis. Has no identifiable, coherent thesis.