

The Soviet Union and the Post-Soviet World, 1945-present

History 388, Section 001

Fall 2011

Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:30-2:45 p.m., Fine Arts Building, B108

Prof. Steven A. Barnes

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[Please note that e-mail is the preferred method to reach me.]

Office Hours: Mondays 3:00-4:15 pm and by appointment (or drop by if my office door is open).

Course Description:

From 1945-1991, the Soviet Union was one of two major world superpowers, the U.S. "enemy" in the Cold War. This course explores the history of that adversary--the Soviet Union--from its victory in World War II under Joseph Stalin through its destruction in 1991, and studies the newly-independent states that emerged from the Soviet collapse. Topics covered include Stalinism, the renunciation of mass terror under Khrushchev, the Cold War, Soviet domination of Eastern Europe, the human rights (dissident) movement, late Soviet economy and culture, Gorbachev's glasnost' and perestroika, the reasons for the Soviet collapse, and a look at the diversity of states that have emerged since 1991. The course will focus on the varied geographic areas of the former Soviet Union including the Baltic States, Ukraine, Russia, Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Far East and will explore the continued influence of this gigantic land mass on world politics and culture today.

Course Assignments:

MIDTERM EXAMINATIONS: In class on October 5 and November 21.

PAPER (6-7 pages): Due at the beginning of class on December 7. Details will be given out in class.

FINAL EXAMINATION: December 14, 1:30-4:15pm

Grades:

<u>MIDTERM EXAMS</u> (2 at 150 points each)	300
<u>PAPER</u>	300
<u>FINAL EXAMINATION</u>	300
<u>PARTICIPATION IN CLASS FILM DISCUSSIONS</u>	100

Total 1,000

GRADE SCALE:	980-1,000	A+
	930-979	A
	900-929	A-
	870-899	B+
	830-869	B
	800-829	B-
	770-799	C+
	730-769	C
	700-729	C-
	600-699	D
	0-599	F

Course Policies – READ CAREFULLY:

Policy on Late Work: No extension on assignments will be granted under any conditions. Papers are due at the beginning of class on their due date. Grades on assignments will be reduced by 5 percent for each day of lateness.

Email Addresses: The professor will communicate with students via email. Therefore, all students must activate and check their official GMU email addresses frequently. You may forward it to another account, but you are responsible for the information that is sent via your official account. If class should need to be canceled (other than for university wide cancellations), I will communicate that to you via e-mail and will do everything in my power to send an e-mail by 9:00 a.m. on the day of class.

ADA: Students with any disabilities who need special accommodation must present appropriate documentation to me by the third week of class. Contact the Disability Resource Center (<http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc>) to obtain documentation.

Cheating and Plagiarism: All work in this class must be your own unless otherwise directed by the professor. In addition, all work submitted in this class must be unique to this class (i.e. no “double submission” of the same or substantially the same work to this class and another class whether this semester or prior to this semester). For purposes of this course, cheating and plagiarism are defined as follows:

- Cheating encompasses the following:
 1. The willful giving or receiving of an unauthorized, unfair, dishonest, or unscrupulous advantage in academic work over other students.
 2. The above may be accomplished by any means whatsoever, including but not limited to the following: fraud; duress; deception; theft; trick; talking; signs; gestures; copying from another student; and the unauthorized use of study aids, memoranda, books, data, or other information.
 3. Attempted cheating.

- Plagiarism encompasses the following:
 1. Presenting as one's own the words, the work, or the opinions of someone else without proper acknowledgment.
 2. Borrowing the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgment.

All George Mason University students have agreed to abide by the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code. You can find a copy of the Honor Code at <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu>. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee for review. For first time violations of the Honor Code, I always recommend failure of the course. If you have any questions on what constitutes cheating or plagiarism after reviewing these materials, please talk to me. If you are unsure when completing an assignment, ask me. Do not take a chance of your case winding up before the Honor Board.

Cell phones, e-mail, etc.: No student shall use the internet, e-mail, cell phones, text messaging, computer games or other devices during class. Class is not a place to sleep or eat. (Drinks are permitted.) Lectures are not a time for discussions with fellow classmates. Students engaging in any of these activities will be asked to leave class for the day. If I find that students using laptops are routinely engaging in activities other than note-taking, I will enact a laptop ban on the entire class.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): George Mason University's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) provides a wide range of services to students, faculty, and staff. Services are provided by a staff of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors. The Center provides individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs -- experiences to enhance a student's personal experience and academic performance. If you are in a crisis, please contact them via <http://caps.gmu.edu> or 703-993-2380 or at their new office SUB I, Room 3129.

Required Materials:

The following books are required and available (or soon will be) for purchase at the GMU Bookstore:

Robert Service, *A History of Modern Russia from Nicholas II to Vladimir Putin*
 Vasily Grossman, *Everything Flows*
 Venedikt Erofeev, *Moscow to the End of the Line*
 Victor Pelevin, *Homo Zapiens*

In addition, many readings come from the website <http://soviethistory.org>. You will need to register on that website to access many of the readings, but the site is entirely free. A few other readings are available via the web or Mason Libraries' e-journal collections.

Students are urged to follow news coverage related to the former Soviet Union throughout the course. Feel free to forward articles or topics of interest to me that you might like to discuss in class.

In addition to the readings listed below, the instructor reserves the right to add a few short readings to the assigned readings for the course.

Please complete all readings for each part of the course by the end of that section. Students are responsible for doing all readings. Not everything in the readings will be covered in lecture, and not everything in the lectures will be covered in the readings.

Exams will draw on all course material, and you should expect specific questions covering the required readings.

Schedule of Classes:

The course will operate as a combination of lecture, discussion and film. Students are strongly encouraged to ask questions whenever they arise and to come to class prepared to be active participants in the educational process.

PART 1 (August 29-September 7) Background – The Soviet Union through 1945

Readings: Robert Service, pp. 1-292 (recommended, but not required)
Prepare for Map Quiz

<http://www.soviethistory.org> (all required)

Under 1934 tab: Read “Socialist Realism” **Read before you watch the film below**

Under 1947 tab: Read “Zhdanov” and the texts on the Zhdanov page “The ‘Zvezda’ Affair” and “Zhdanov on the Duty of a Soviet Writer” **Read before you watch the film below**

Under 1954 tab: Under “Succession to Stalin,” read text “Mourners Crushed”

Film: By September 12, Watch *The Fall of Berlin*, dir. Mikhail Chiaureli, 1949 (available on reserve at Johnson Center Library) **NOTE: DO NOT CONFUSE THIS WITH 1945 DOCUMENTARY WITH THE SAME TITLE. IF THE FILM YOU WATCH IS NOT IN RUSSIAN WITH SUBTITLES, YOU HAVE THE WRONG FILM!**

In-Class Film Discussion, September 12

PART 2 (September 14-October 3) From Totalitarianism to Reform – 1945-1964

Readings: Service, Chapters 15-18 (required)
Vasily Grossman, *Everything Flows* (required)

<http://www.soviethistory.org> (all required)
Under 1954 tab: Read 'Stilyaga' and Texts 'In Search of Melancholy Baby'
Under 1956 tab: Read 'Literary Life at a Crossroads'
Under 1961 tab: Read 'Fight against Superstition'
Under 1961 tab: Read 'Khrushchev on the Arts' and text 'Khrushchev on Modern Art'

On Modern History Sourcebook read Nikita S. Khrushchev: The Secret Speech - On the Cult of Personality, 1956.
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/krushchev-secret.html> (required)

Film: Watch *Ballad of a Soldier* dir. Grigorii Chukhrai, 1959 (available on reserve at Johnson Center Library and via Netflix)

**DON'T FORGET FIRST MIDTERM EXAM COVERING PARTS 1 AND 2
(INCLUDING ALL FILMS AND READINGS) IN CLASS ON OCTOBER 5**

PART 3 (October 10-October 31) Stagnation or Stability? – 1964-1985

Readings: Service, Chapters 19-22 (required)
Venedikt Erofeev, *Moscow to the End of the Line* (required)

<http://soviethistory.org> – (required)
Under 1968 tab: Read 'The Double Burden' and Texts 'A Week Like any Other'
Under 1973 tab: Read 'The Pessimistic Citizen'
Under 1973 tab: Read 'The Dissident Movement' and all 3 Texts - Liberal, Conservative and Marxist Dissent
Under 1980 tab: Read 'The Underground Economy' and Contexts "Knights of the Jeans Culture"

Film: By November 2, watch *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears*, dir. Vladimir Menshov, 1980 (available on reserve at Johnson Center Library and via Netflix)

In-Class Film Discussion on November 2

PART 4 (November 7-November 16) Glasnost' and Collapse – 1985-1991

Readings: Service, Chapters 23-25 (required)

<http://soviethistory.org> – (required)

Under 1991 tab: Read ‘The March Referendum’

Under 1991 tab: Read ‘The August Coup’ and Texts ‘The Putsch Addresses the Soviet People’

Film: Watch *Little Vera*, dir. Vasilii Pichul, 1988 (available on reserve at Johnson Center Library and via Netflix)

DON'T FORGET SECOND MIDTERM EXAM COVERING PARTS 3 THROUGH 4 (Including all films and readings) IN CLASS ON NOVEMBER 21

PART 5 (November 28-December 7) Twenty Years of Independence: The “Former” Soviet Union?– 1991-2011

Readings: Service, Chapters 26-27, Afterword (required)
Victor Pelevin, *Homo Zapiens* (required)
Stephen Kotkin, “Now Comes the Tough Part in Russia,” *New York Times*, March 2, 2008 (Required)
http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/02/business/worldbusiness/02shelf.html?_r=1&pagewanted=print
Stephen Kotkin, “Trashcanistan,” in *The New Republic*, 4/15/2002, available via various e-journal databases through the library website. (Required)

Film: Watch *Brother*, dir. Aleksei Balabanov, 1997 (available on reserve at Johnson Center Library and via Netflix streaming or DVD)

FINAL PAPER DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS ON DECEMBER 7

COMPREHENSIVE FINAL EXAMINATION: December 14, 1:30-4:15pm