Stalinism

History 326, Section 001
Spring 2018
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:00-4:15 p.m., Nguyen Engineering Building 1103

Prof. Steven A. Barnes
Robinson B377A
sbarnes3@gmu.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:30-12:00
Open Lunches: Johnson Center Food Court, Wednesdays at noon.

Course Description:

Josef Stalin. The name alone strikes fear. This course will examine Joseph Stalin, one of the bloodiest dictators in human history, and Stalinism, the political, economic, social, and cultural system that bears his name. From Vladimir Lenin’s death in 1924 until Stalin’s death in 1953, the Soviet Union underwent a radical and lethal revolutionary transformation, as the backward, defeated Russian Empire turned into the feared superpower victor of the Second World War and the primary U.S. opponent of the Cold War. Through rapid industrialization, forced collectivization of agriculture, famine, terror, war, and Cold War, the Soviet population and the populations of Eastern Europe suffered immensely. Many grew quite expectedly to hate Stalin and Stalinism, yet many others, including many of its victims, were (and many continue to be) enthusiastic supporters of the Stalinist system. The course will explore that seeming paradox and others to understand this man and his system that so dominated the history of the 20th century world.

Learning Outcomes and Assessment:

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

Explain the types of questions historians ask in order to understand the functioning of Stalinism and how they go about answering those questions;

Explain the basic foundations of the Stalinist socialist system in the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres with emphasis upon state terror, the single party dictatorship, and the state-owned and state-planned non-market economy;

Explain the historical roots of Stalinism;

Practice critical reading and proper citation of primary and secondary sources, including texts, images, music, films, and websites;
Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of different types of historical sources;

Display improvement in their critical reading and thinking skills as well as their writing and oral expression skills through in-class discussions, in-class exams, writing assignments, and participation in a mock trial.

**Course Assignments:**

*Three Reading Responses: (2-3 pages each, due February 22, March 8, April 3): 100 points each*

*Five Film Responses: (1-1.5 pages each): 10 points each. [NOTE: You must watch all assigned films, but you are only required to submit written responses for five of them]*

*Research Precis for Stalin Mock Trial (3-4 pages, due April 12): 150 points*

*Participation in class discussions and in Stalin Mock Trial: 150 points* Reading pop quizzes, small writing assignments on readings, participation in Stalin Mock Trial preparation, performance in Stalin Mock Trial, and participation in class discussions all combine in this category.

*Final Paper based on character in Stalin Mock Trial: (4-5 pages) 200 points*

Paper due in class on May 3.

*Final exam: 150 points* In class on Thursday, May 10, 1:30-4:15 p.m.

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**Course Policies – READ CAREFULLY:**

*Attendance:* Our class meetings are the foundation of everything we do during the term. You cannot afford to miss them. I do not assign a textbook that can be read to cover
material from class. Grades in the course strongly correlate with attendance. Although attending class is not mandatory, I will take attendance. If you have two or fewer absences during the term, I will add ten points to your final grade for the semester. Late arrivals will be marked as absent for purposes of this policy.

**Enrollment:** It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that they are officially enrolled in the course. Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadlines published in the Schedule of Classes. (Deadlines each semester are published in the Schedule of Classes available from the Registrar's Website [http://registrar.gmu.edu](http://registrar.gmu.edu).)

Please note that the instructor has no authority to add or drop students after the deadlines. After the last day to drop a class, withdrawing from this class requires the approval of the dean and is only allowed for nonacademic reasons.

Undergraduate students may choose to exercise a selective withdrawal. See the Schedule of Classes for selective withdrawal procedures.

**Policy on Late Work:** 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. **No papers will be accepted more than 10 calendar days after their assigned due date** absent truly exceptional circumstances.

**Late papers should be turned in via email** as soon as they are finished to sbarnes3@gmu.edu AND a hard copy of the late paper should be **brought to the next class.** Grade reductions will be halted at the moment that the email copy of the paper is received.

**Email Addresses:** Mason and the professor use only Mason e-mail accounts to communicate with enrolled students. Students must activate their Mason e-mail account, use it to communicate with their instructor, department and other administrative units, and check it regularly for important university information including messages related to this class. If a class session is canceled, an announcement will be sent to your Mason e-mail account. This will be the only notice that you will receive of a class cancellation.

**Students with Disabilities:** If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the [Office of Disability Services](http://ods.gmu.edu) at 703.993.2474 or ods.gmu.edu. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office and must be communicated to me in writing no later than the third week of classes.

**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.

Laptops, cell phones: Recent research has revealed that students learn and perform better when taking notes long-hand without use of a laptop. Accordingly and because they are invariably a distraction not only to their user but also to those around them, laptops are strongly discouraged. In addition, texting or other activities using phones or other electronic devices are forbidden. (If there is an emergency need to have your phone available during class, please let me know before the particular class session.) Each time you engage in texting or similar activities during class, five points will be deducted from your final class grade.

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 for purchase at the GMU Bookstore or from your favorite online booksellers:


Students are urged to procure any textbook of Russian/Soviet history published within the last 10 years that devotes at least 150 pages to the 1924-1953 period to use as a reference source. My personal favorite is Robert Service, *A History of Modern Russia from Tsarism to the Twenty-first Century*, but any will do. Such a resource can come in handy when writing papers, or if you find something in the class that you do not fully understand.

In addition, many readings come from the website *Seventeen Moments in Soviet History* [http://soviethistory.msu.edu](http://soviethistory.msu.edu). Direct links are provided in this electronic version of the syllabus along with enough information to allow you to find the readings from the website’s home page. If you have problems accessing them, please let me know.

Unless stated otherwise, please complete all readings and watch films for each part of the course before the last class date for that part. That is, unless otherwise noted, readings and film for Part 1 should be completed PRIOR TO class on February 4. (The readings and films will be discussed on that last class session of each part of the course.) Students are responsible for doing all readings. Not everything in the readings will be covered in class discussions and lecture, and vice versa. **Exams and paper assignments will draw on all course material, and you should expect specific questions covering required material beyond just that included in lectures.**

**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 (January 23-February 1) Historical Background and Stalin the Man**

Readings: Karl Marx, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, 1847, (abridged) available on Blackboard. **READ PRIOR TO CLASS ON JANUARY 25**

Readings from *Seventeen Moments in Soviet History*  

1924: Socialism in One Country versus Permanent Revolution  
1924: Stalin on the Death of Lenin  
1934: The Popular Film Industry  
1934: Cinema for the Millions  
1934: The Whole Country is Watching Chapaev

**Film:**  
*Chapaev*, dir. Georgii Vasil’ev and Sergei Vasil’ev, 1934  
https://youtu.be/T6KDKMgALps

**Writing:**  
Write “3 essential questions for understanding Stalinism” based on Gessen article, due at the beginning of class on February 1.

Film response due at the beginning of class on February 1.

**PART 2 (February 6-20) Building a “Socialist” State and Society**

**Readings:**  
Scott, *Behind the Urals: An American in Russia’s City of Steel*  
Readings from *Seventeen Moments in Soviet History*  

1924: Industrialization Debate  
1929: Stalin on the Liquidation of the Kulak  
1929: Stalin on the Grain Crisis  
1929: The Gathering Storm  
1929: The Thoughts, Cares and Deeds of Workers  
1929: Shock Workers

**Film:**  
*Tractor Drivers*, dir. Ivan Pyr’ev, 1939.  
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z7LgLlSy4B3w&

[For those who have taken History 329 and watched *Tractor Drivers*, watch instead *Volga Volga*, dir. Grigorii Aleksandrov, 1938.  
http://youtu.be/wUnZqtcrO1I. ]

**Writing:**  
Write “3 key things to understand the meaning of ‘building socialism’” based on readings from *Seventeen Moments in Soviet History* due at the beginning of class on February 20

Film response due at beginning of class on February 20.
PART 3 (February 22-March 6) Surveillance, Terror, and State Violence in Stalinism

Readings: Ginzburg, Journey into the Whirlwind

Readings from Seventeen Moments in Soviet History

- 1929: Penal Labor Camps
- 1929: Poor Work Declared a Crime
- 1934: The Kirov Affair
- 1934: Decree Following Kirov’s Murder
- 1934: On Party Purges
- 1936: The Great Terror
- 1936: Stalin on Deficiencies in Party Work
- 1936: Bukharin and his Trial


Writing: Write “3 aims of the Gulag and Terror” based on readings from Seventeen Moments in Soviet History due at the beginning of class on March 6.

Film response due at beginning of class on March 6.

Reading response on Journey into the Whirlwind due at the beginning of class on March 8.

March 13, March 15 – No class. Spring Break.

PART 4 (March 8-March 29) Stalinist Culture

NOTE: No class on March 22

Readings: Kataev, Time, Forward!

Read the essay and look at the images:
http://www.darkroastedblend.com/2013/01/totalitarian-architecture-of-soviet.html

Readings from Seventeen Moments in Soviet History

1934: Socialist Realism
1934: Physical Culture
1934: Writers Congress
1934: Gorky on Soviet Literature
1934: Zhdanov: Soviet Literature—The Richest in Ideas

Film: The Bright Way, dir. Grigorii Aleksandrov, 1940.
http://youtu.be/t1wM1FSTIm0

Writing: Write two paragraphs analyzing one image that you choose from Stalinka: Digital Library of Staliniana due at the beginning of class on March 29.

Film response due at the beginning of class on March 29.

Reading response on Time, Forward! due at the beginning of class on April 3.

PART 5 (April 3-April 5) Stalinism and Islam—Religion and National Identity under Stalin

Readings: TBA

Film: Circus, dir. Grigorii Aleksandrov, 1936.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ia4DyErYhAs

Writing: Short writing assignment on readings TBA

Film response due at the beginning of class on April 5.

PART 6 (April 10 – April 12) Stalinism at War

Readings: No additional readings. Work on Stalin Mock Trial Preparation.

Film: Ivan the Terrible, dir. Sergei Eisenstein, 1944.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyGVMXC9yzo (Part I)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XefDe4vfFA (Part II)

Writing: Research Precis for Stalin Mock Trial due at beginning of class on April 12.
Film response due at the beginning of class on April 12.

PART 7 (April 17-April 26) Stalin on Trial

More information will be provided on preparation, attendance, and participation in Stalin Mock Trial.

Film: Fall of Berlin, dir. Mikhail Chiaureli, 1949.
Part I: https://youtu.be/t-hZam8dXHU
Part II: https://youtu.be/1AHUQ1QRVn4

Writing: Film response due at the beginning of class on April 26.

PART 8 (May 1-May 3) Stalinism as History and Memory


Film: Burnt by the Sun, dir. Nikita Mikhalkov, 1994. Available to rent/stream on YouTube, available in the Johnson Center Library. A group showing of the film will be arranged.

Writing: Write “3 key issues in historical memory of Stalin and Stalinism” due at the beginning of class on May 3.

Film response due at the beginning of class on May 3.

Final paper due at the beginning of class on May 3.

Final exam – Thursday, May 10, 1:30-4:15 p.m.