

History 342: Stalinism
Monday and Wednesday, 2:15-4:05
Mears 202

Edward Cohn
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Office hours: W 4:15-5:00,
Th. 2:15-4:05,
F 11:00-11:50 (or by
appointment)

Course Description

From roughly 1928 to 1953, the Soviet Union was ruled by one of the most brutal dictators in all of world history—Joseph Stalin; this era was noteworthy not merely for the repressiveness of its politics, but for a dramatic series of economic and social transformations. This seminar will examine the social, cultural, and political history of the USSR during this period, with a particular focus on the 1930s. Like most seminars, it will begin with a series of common readings on the main themes of the Stalin era; in the second half of the semester, students will complete a 20-30 page research paper on a subject of their choice.

Course Materials

The following texts are available for purchase at the college bookstore and are on reserve at Burling Library:

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times*
Catriona Kelly, *Comrade Pavlik: The Rise and Fall of a Soviet Boy Hero*
Oleg Khlevniuk, *Master of the House: Stalin and His Inner Circle*
Hiroaki Kuromiya, *Stalin (Profiles in Power)*

Grading and Assignments

There are two main requirements for this course:

- a) **The seminar paper** (50% of your final grade.) This paper will most often be a 20-to-30-page research paper based on work with primary sources on Russian history during the Stalin period. (Many such sources have been translated into English, so Russian language skills—while always helpful—are not required.) It will also at times be possible to write a historiographical paper, examining how different historians have investigated a theme from the Stalinist 1930s or 1940s. The final draft of the seminar paper will be due at 5:00 PM on Thursday, December 17.
- b) **Class participation** (50% of your grade). This part of your grade will be based on attendance, the regularity and insightfulness of your participation in discussion, your participation in peer review sessions in the weeks after break, and your timely completion of a series of preliminary assignments connected to the seminar paper (including a 2-3-page proposal,

a 5-page “problem paper,” a 10-page draft, and a full draft.) Your participation grade will also include two short papers (and accompanying 10-minute presentations), one based on the Harvard Interview Project and the other on a diary of the 1930s.

Course Schedule

Monday, August 31: What was Stalinism?

Reading: Hiroaki Kuromiya, *Stalin* (entire)

Assignment: check in with me during the first week of classes to discuss your interests and possible research paper ideas

Wednesday, September 2: Stalin and His Times

Reading: Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar*, pp. 1-125
 [Pioneerweb]

Monday, September 7: The Great Break

Reading: Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalin’s Peasants*, pp. 19-79 [Pioneerweb]
 Chris Ward, *Stalin’s Russia*, pp. 73-105 [Pioneerweb]
 Sarah Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin’s Russia*, pp. 147-182 [Pioneerweb]

Wednesday, September 9: Status and Identity in the Stalinist Everyday

Reading: Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, pp. 1-138

Monday, September 14: Exclusion and Repression in Everyday Life

Reading: Fitzpatrick, pp. 139-228

Wednesday, September 16: Oral History and Everyday Life

Assignment: prepare a 10-minute presentation and a 2-3 page paper on an issue in Soviet everyday life as seen through the oral interviews of the Harvard Project

Monday, September 21: A Soviet Boy Hero

Reading: Catriona Kelly, *Comrade Pavlik*, pp. 1-139

Wednesday, September 23: Pavlik’s Story

Reading: Kelly, 140-266 (skim ch. 7)

Monday, September 28: How much did the Soviet people accept the regime's values?

Readings: Jochen Hellbeck, "Fashioning the Stalinist Soul: The Diary of Stepan Podlubnyi" [Pioneerweb]
Stephen Kotkin, "Speaking Bolshevik" [Pioneerweb]
Golfo Alexopoulos, "Portrait of a Con Artist as a Soviet Man" [Pioneerweb]

Wednesday, September 30: Diaries of the 1930s

Readings: the diary of Stepan Podlubnyi and two others from the volume *Intimacy and Terror*, edited by Véronique Garros, Nataliya Korenevskaya, and Thomas Lahusen
Assignment: prepare a 10-minute presentation and a 2-to-3-page paper on one of the diaries

Monday, October 5: Stalinist High Politics

Reading: Oleg Khlevniuk, *Master of the House*, intro. and ch. 1-3

Wednesday, October 7: Stalin Consolidates Control

Readings: Khlevniuk, ch. 4-6 and conclusion

Monday, October 12: The Purges

Reading: Oleg Khlevniuk, "The Objectives of the Great Terror, 1937-1938" [Pioneerweb]
Sarah Davies, "'Us Against Them': Social Identity in Soviet Russia, 1934-41" [Pioneerweb]
James Harris, "The Purging of Local Cliques in the Urals Region, 1936-7" [Pioneerweb]

Wednesday, October 14: Was Stalinism Revolutionary?

Readings: David Hoffmann, "European Modernity and Soviet Socialism" [Pioneerweb]
Nicholas Timasheff, *The Great Retreat*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]

Assignment: 2-to-3-page proposal for the research paper is due

FALL BREAK: October 19-23

During the second half of the class, we will meet roughly weekly; some of these sessions will be meetings of the entire seminar, and others will be one-on-one appointments with the professor.

Week 8: Individual meetings with me to discuss progress; 5-page "problem paper" due to me by email by Friday, October 30, at 5:00

Week 9: We'll meet as a class to check in on progress

Week 10: By Friday, November 13, at 5:00 PM, send me (and the other members of your discussion group) a 10-page draft, a one-page statement of your thesis, and a short description of how this draft fits into your larger paper (a couple sentences should suffice)

Week 11: We'll meet as a class on Wednesday, November 18, for peer review of 10-page drafts

Week 12: Individual meetings with me, as needed; Thanksgiving break

Week 13: One meeting as a class; full draft of paper due by 5:00 PM on Friday, December 4

Week 14: Peer review of papers (and, if needed, meetings with the professor)

Thursday, December 17: FINAL VERSION OF PAPER IS DUE BY 5:00 PM