History 100: Making History
Europe under the Great Dictators
Spring 2010: Tuesday/Thursday 12:45-2:05

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Mears 315 (X3107)  Office hours: WF 9:00-11:00,
TTh 2:15-3:00

Course description

This course provides an introduction to issues of historical causation, argumentation, and
evidence by looking at the history of Germany and Russia under the rule of two of the most
repressive dictators in world history: Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin. Like all sections of History
100, this class will begin with an introductory unit on historical methodology before delving into
a particular theme in greater depth—in this case, the political and social history of Nazi Germany
and the Stalinist USSR. Among the topics to be discussed are the functioning of the Stalinist and
Nazi dictatorships, the nature of everyday life under totalitarianism, the personality cults of
Hitler and Stalin, the role of the German and Soviet secret police, the origins of the USSR’s
Great Purges, and the decision-making behind the Holocaust. This class will provide students
not just with an introduction to Soviet and Nazi history, but with an overview of how historians
interpret evidence and analyze the past.

Course readings

The following books are on reserve at Burling Library and are available for purchase at the
Grinnell College Bookstore:

John Arnold, History: A Very Short Introduction
Christopher Browning, Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in
Poland
Jane Caplan, ed., Nazi Germany (Short Oxford History of Germany)
Sheila Fitzpatrick, Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times
Sheila Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution
Primo Levi, Survival in Auschwitz

Assignments and grading

Your grade in this class will be based on the following requirements. Note that you must hand in
every written assignment in order to pass the class, and that if your grades improve steadily over
the course of the semester, I will take that into consideration in deciding your final grade:

Film analysis (5%). A 2-3 page analysis of the film A Midwife’s Tale, due in class on Tuesday,
February 2.

Document analysis (10%). A 3-page analysis of an excerpt from Hitler’s Mein Kampf, due on
Friday, February 19, at 5:00 PM.
Short writing assignment (10%). A 4-5 page writing assignment due on Saturday, March 13.

Oral history analysis (15%). A 4-5 page analysis of the oral history interviews of the Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System (available online), which looks at life under Stalin; this paper will be due at 5:00 PM on Saturday, April 17.

Annotated bibliography and review essay (20%). At the end of the semester, you will hand in a research guide to a topic that interests you from Stalinist or Nazi history, consisting of a 2-3 page overview of your topic and a 6-7 page list of sources pertaining to that topic (presented in correct bibliographic formatting.) You will also need to submit a brief proposal and a draft of your bibliography; you will also have a few short exercises to complete in the weeks ahead of the due date (for instance, I may ask you to email me several sources you’ve found). The final version will be due in class on Thursday, May 13.

Take-home final (20%). You will have a take-home, open-book final exam, due on Wednesday, May 19, at 5:00 PM. This exam will be composed of essay questions based on material from the class, each of which will ask you to compare trends in Stalinist and Nazi history.

Class participation (20%). The final requirement for this course is active and informed participation in classroom discussions. In brief, I’ll be looking for evidence that you’ve done the reading, that you’re thinking about the themes and issues covered by the class, and that you’re prepared to discuss your ideas with your classmates; attendance, the frequency of your participation in class, and the insightfulness of your comments will all help decide your grade. Note that I reserve the right to give a participation grade of F or zero to any student with more than six unexcused absences, and that more than two unexcused absences will lead to a drop in your participation grade.

Extension policy

Each student in the class can have one (and only one) 48-hour extension on a writing assignment over the course of the semester, on any assignment except the final. To claim this extension, send me a brief email asking for extra time before the assignment’s deadline; I will grant this extension automatically, so there is no need for you to explain why you need extra time. (Keep in mind, however, that once you’ve received an extension on one assignment, I will not give you an extension on another except in the case of a documented emergency.) In the absence of an extension, late assignments will be penalized one third of a grade per day.

Important notes

Grinnell College makes reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students need to provide documentation identifying any special needs to the Dean for Student Academic Support and Advising, Joyce Stern, whose office is located on the third floor of the Rosenfield Center. Students should then notify me within the first few days of class.

Students should also be aware of Grinnell’s policy on academic honesty. Plagiarism, it goes without saying, will not be tolerated in this course.
Course schedule

Tuesday, January 26: Course Introduction


Thursday, January 28: Was the Past a Foreign Country?

Reading: Arnold, ch. 4-6
Robert Darnton, “Workers Revolt: The Great Cat Massacre of the Rue St. Severin” [Pioneerweb]

FILM SHOWING: *A Midwife’s Tale* at 7:30 PM on Thursday, January 28 in ARH 224

Tuesday, February 2: A Midwife’s Tale

Reading: Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife’s Tale*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]
Arnold, ch. 7

Assignment: FILM REVIEW IS DUE IN CLASS

Thursday, February 4: Hitler’s Story

Reading: Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]
Richard J. Evans, “The Emergence of Nazi Ideology” [in Caplan]

Tuesday, February 9: The Rise of Nazism

Reading: Peter Fritzsche, “The NSDAP 1919-1934” [in Caplan]

Thursday, February 11: Revolution!


Tuesday, February 16: The Great Break

Reading: Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, pp. 68-147
Lev Kopelev, “The Last Grain Collections” [Pioneerweb]
Stalin, “Dizzy with Success” [Pioneerweb]

Thursday, February 18: Ending the Revolution

Ronald Grigor Suny, “Building Socialism” [Pioneerweb]
Friday, February 19: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS IS DUE AT 5:00 BY EMAIL

Tuesday, February 23: The Stalin Dictatorship

Reading: Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Stalin: In the Court of the Red Tsar*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]
Oleg Khlevniuk, “Stalin as Dictator” [Pioneerweb]

Thursday, February 25: The Hitler Dictatorship

Reading: Ian Kershaw, “Working Toward the Führer” [Pioneerweb]
Jeremy Noakes, “Hitler and the Nazi state: leadership, hierarchy, and power” [in Caplan]

Tuesday, March 2: Stalin’s Personality Cult

Reading: Sarah Davies, “Stalin and the making of the leader cult in the 1930s” [Pioneerweb]
Sarah Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin’s Russia*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]

Thursday, March 4: Hitler’s Personality Cult

Reading: Ian Kershaw, *The Hitler Myth*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]

Tuesday, March 9: Life under Stalin

Reading: Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, pp. 1-66

Thursday, March 11: The Transformation of Everyday Society in the 1930s

Reading: Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, pp. 67-114

Saturday, March 13: 4–PAGE PAPER IS DUE AT 5:00 PM

Tuesday, March 16: Political Disputes and Family Problems in Stalin’s USSR

Reading: Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, pp. 115-163
interview from Harvard Project [Pioneerweb]

Thursday, March 18: Stalinist Politics and Everyday Life

Reading: Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, pp. 164-190, 218-229
look around the Harvard Project

Assignment: SEND ME A BRIEF PROPOSAL FOR YOUR BIBLIOGRAPHY TOPIC
SPRING BREAK: MARCH 20 – APRIL 4

Tuesday, April 6:  Everyday Life in Nazi Germany

Reading:  Jill Stephenson, “Inclusion: building the national community in propaganda and practice” [in Caplan]
           Adam Tooze, “The economic history of the Nazi regime” [in Caplan]

Thursday, April 8:  No class: work on your papers!

Tuesday, April 13:  The German Secret Police and the German People

Reading:  Robert Gellately, “The Gestapo and German Society: Political Denunciation in the Gestapo Case Files” [Pioneerweb]
           Eric Johnson, Nazi Terror: The Gestapo, Jews, and Ordinary Germans, excerpts [Pioneerweb]

Thursday, April 15:  War and Holocaust: An Overview

Reading:  Gerhard Weinberg, “Foreign Policy in Peace and War” [in Caplan]

Friday, April 16:  ORAL HISTORY ANALYSIS IS DUE AT 5:00 PM

Tuesday, April 20:  The Order Police in Poland

Reading:  Christopher Browning, Ordinary Men, pp. 1-77

Thursday, April 22:  Police Officers and the Holocaust

Reading:  Browning, pp. 78-158

Tuesday, April 27:  Ordinary Men?

Reading:  Browning, pp. 159-224
           Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, “The Evil of Banality” [Pioneerweb]

Thursday, April 29:  The Purges

Reading:  Fitzpatrick, Everyday Stalinism, pp. 190-217
           one of the three following articles [all on Pioneerweb]:
           Oleg Khlevniuk, “The Objectives of the Great Terror”
           Sarah Davies, “‘Us Against Them’: Social Identity in Soviet Russia,
1934-41”
James Harris, “The Purging of Local Cliques in the Urals Region, 1936-7”

Friday, April 30:  DRAFT OF ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE AT 5:00 PM

Tuesday, May 4:  A Woman in the GULAG

Reading:  Olga Adamova-Sliozberg, “My Journey” [Pioneerweb]

Thursday, May 6:  If This Is a Man…

Reading:  Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, pp. 9-86

Tuesday, May 11:  The Holocaust and Western Civilization

Reading:  Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, 87-174

Thursday, May 13:  Conclusions

Assignment:  FINAL VERSION OF ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY IS DUE IN CLASS