Stalinism

History 388, Section 003
Fall 2013
Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:30-11:45 a.m., Robinson B 201

Prof. Steven A. Barnes
Robinson B377A
s Barnes3@gmu.edu
703-993-5422 (Strong preference for contact via e-mail only.)
Office Hours: Mondays 12:00-2:00 pm.

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 source;
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:**

*Four Reading Responses: (2-3 pages each): 50 points each* You may write up to a total of five reading responses (one for each assigned book), but only the four best will count toward the final grade. Papers are due in class on September 11, September 25, October 9, October 23, November 6.

**Midterm Exam: 200 points** In class, November 11.

*Participation in class discussions and in Stalin Mock Trial (Pop quizzes and small writing assignments of a paragraph or two may be included in this category): 200 points*

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

*Final paper: (4-5 pages): 200 points* Due by 1:15pm on Wednesday, December 11 to Professor Barnes’s mailbox in Robinson B356.

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**Course Policies – READ CAREFULLY:**

*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 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:* Reading responses and 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:* 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.

*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 at 703.993.2474 or ods.gmu.edu. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

*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](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. Drinks and non-fragrant foods are permitted. Lectures are not a time for discussions with fellow classmates. 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/](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 http://soviethistory.org. You will need to register on that website to access many of the readings, but the site is entirely free. Live links are provided within this e-syllabus. If you have problems accessing them, please let me know.

Please complete all readings and watch films for each part of the course before the last class date for that part. (The readings 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 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 26-September 11) Stalin**

Readings: Kuromiya, *Stalin: Profiles in Power*

- 1924: October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists
- 1924: On the Death of Lenin


Reading response: On Kuromiya - due before class on September 11.

**PART 2 (September 16-September 25) Building a “Socialist” State and Society**

Readings: Scott, *Behind the Urals: An American in Russia’s City of Steel*

- 1924: Industrialization Debate
- 1929: Liquidation of the Kulaks as a Class
- 1929: Problems of Agrarian Policy in the USSR
- 1929: Red Bread
- 1929: Magnetic Mountain: the Magnitogorsk Iron Works
- 1929: Personal letter from Magnitogorsk
- 1929: The Thoughts, Cares and Deeds of Workers
1929: The Shock Worker Movement

Film: *Tractor Drivers*, dir. Ivan Pyr’ev, 1939.  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z7LgI54B3w&](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z7LgI54B3w&)

Reading response: On Scott - due before class on September 25.

PART 3 (September 30-October 9) Surveillance, Terror, and State Violence in Stalinism

Readings: Ginzburg, *Journey into the Whirlwind*  
[http://gulaghistory.org](http://gulaghistory.org) – Click on “Days and Lives” and then travel through the exhibit.

- 1929: Decree on Penal Labor Camps  
- 1934: On the Amendment of the Criminal Procedural Codes of the Union Republics  
  - 1934: Aims and Purposes of the Purge  
  - 1936: Excerpts from Bukharin and his Trial  
  - 1936: Letter to Presidium of Supreme Soviet  
  - 1936: Operational Order

Reading response - On Ginzburg - due before class on October 9.

PART 4 (October 14-23) Stalinist Culture

Readings: Kataev, *Time, Forward!*

- 1934: Physical Culture  
- 1934: The Popular Film Industry  
- 1934: Report on the Work of the Central Committee to the Seventeenth Congress of the CPSU(b)  
  - 1934: Socialist Realism  
  - 1934: Soviet Literature (Speech at The First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers)

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

Choose one Stalin image and write two paragraphs analyzing the image:  
[http://images.library.pitt.edu/s/stalinka/](http://images.library.pitt.edu/s/stalinka/). This must be completed before class on October 23.

Film: *The Bright Way*, dir. Grigori Aleksandrov, 1940.  
[http://youtu.be/t1wM1FSTlm0](http://youtu.be/t1wM1FSTlm0) (October 23)
Reading response: On Kataev - due before class on October 23.

**PART 5 (October 28-November 6) Stalinism at War**


Reading response: On Grossman - due before class on November 6.

***November 11 – Mid-Term Examination (in class)***

**PART 6 (November 13-20) Stalin on Trial**

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

**PART 7 (November 25 – December 4) Wrapping Up**

http://youtu.be/wUnZqtcrOII

***Final paper –Due by 1:15pm on Wednesday, December 11 to Professor Barnes’s mailbox in Robinson B356.***