

History of the Soviet Union:

New trends and subfields in the 1990s – 2010s

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Introduction. The course provides an overview of the newly established or emerging subfields in Soviet historical studies. After an introductory meeting, which familiarizes students with the development of historiography on the USSR and conceptual changes in understanding of its “ideal pattern”, Stalinism, the course draws students’ attention to the most dynamic currents in the field.

The first part focuses on “classical triad”, political, economic and social history, and on changes that became the most significant during the last three decades within them. The second part is reserved for the “cultural turn” and its influence. Certainly, the new cultural history has moved to the center of the historical discipline, presenting a reservoir of new possibilities as well as new challenges. It has stimulated great controversy among researchers about its methods and results. Here the course covers the following subfields: the history of everyday life, gender history, the history of sexuality, urban studies, symbolic geography, oral history, memory studies, visual history, and the history of emotions. The third part is aimed to test the limits of today’s cultural history, and to find a little bit different approaches towards historical writing. In this course, students will learn about three of them: nationalism and empire studies, transnational history, and environmental history. The last meeting is reserved for a general discussion.

Aims and objectives: This course is an advanced option available to MA and PhD students. Those who specialize in Soviet and East European history and want to explore the phenomenon of the USSR in much greater depth are especially welcomed. They will be able to combine theoretical knowledge obtained during the course with their own empirical data while proceeding with their research projects. The course may also be interesting for those who study historiography in general for the purpose to extend their knowledge on political, social and cultural history while exploring the particular historiographical situation in Soviet studies.

Teaching and learning methods:

1). **Attendance and Participation.** Students are expected to attend all class sessions and to participate in discussions actively. This will require them to have completed all reading assignments (section *Essential reading*).

2). **Writing reviews.** Students are asked to write 10 review papers. The length of a review is no more than three pages. In these papers it is expected that students will comment on the week's *Additional readings*. Each student should choose only one book, or an article, or chapter(s) (if specified) from a single block of *Additional readings*. Among chosen literature for reviewing there should be at least 6 books.

There are some tips on how to write a good review:

- a) start with full bibliographic description;
- b) provide a general introduction: What is the book about? What sources are used and how is the book structured?
- c) explain the main argument and how it was made;
- d) state your own assessments: What are the book's strengths and weaknesses?
- e) remember to type your name at the end of the review.

For further information, please, consult the *Slavic Review* website

<http://www.slavicreview.illinois.edu/info/reviews.html>

3). **Discussion Questions.** At the end of the semester students will be asked to prepare discussion questions for the last meeting which is reserved for a round table (see below). There is no fixed or expected number, but at least two questions should be submitted. Please, circulate these questions via email not less than three days before the class. All students are expected to participate in a round table actively.

Grades will be determined as follows:

Attendance and class participation: 40%

10 review papers: 5% each (maximum 50%)

Discussion questions and participation in a round table: 10%

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1. Introduction. Soviet studies through one biography: *Sheila Fitzpatrick*

Changing image of the Soviet Union in historiography: from totalitarianism through social history to “new cultural history”. An individual in history: can one scholar change the whole field? Does Fitzpatrick’s school in Soviet history exist?

Essential reading

Fitzpatrick, Sheila. “Revisionism in Retrospect: A Personal View,” *Slavic Review* 67, no. 3 (2008): 682–704.

Alexopoulos, Golfo, Julie Hessler, and Kiril Tomoff, eds. *Writing the Stalin era: Sheila Fitzpatrick and Soviet Historiography*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. Chapters 1–3, 12.

Engerman, David. *Know Your Enemy: The Rise and Fall of America’s Soviet Experts*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. Chapter 11.

Please, watch the interview with Professor Sheila Fitzpatrick conducted by Dr. James Harris (22 June 2011) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jy8wdOLHHXU>

Additional reading

Brandenberger, David. *A Background Guide to Working with the HPSSS Online* http://hcl.harvard.edu/collections/hpsss/working_with_hpsss.pdf (on the Harvard Interview Project).

David-Fox, Michael. “Multiple Modernities vs. Neo-Traditionalism: On Recent Debates in Russian and Soviet History,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 54, no. 4 (2006): 535–55.

Litvin, Alter, and John Keep. *Stalinism: Russian and Western Views at the Turn of the Millennium*. London, New York: Routledge, 2005.

Solovey, Mark, and Hamilton Cravens, eds. *Cold War Social Science: Knowledge Production, Liberal Democracy, and Human Nature*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Suny, Ronald Grigor. “Reading Russia and the Soviet Union in the Twentieth Century: How the ‘West’ Wrote its History of the USSR,” in *The Cambridge History of Russia*. Vol. 3. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 5–64.

PART 1. Classical subfields and their recent change

Week 2. Political history

What does totalitarian approach mean and how does it coincide with the political history of the USSR? Should we write history with “the state left out”? Stalinism as totalitarianism.

Case study: Soviet terror.

Essential reading

Fitzpatrick, Sheila. “New Perspectives on Stalinism,” *The Russian Review* 45, no. 4 (1986): 357–373.

Getty, John Arch and Roberta Thompson Manning, eds. *Stalinist Terror: New Perspectives*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Halfin, Igal. *Terror in My Soul: Communist Autobiographies on Trial*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003.

Viola, Lynne. “The Question of the Perpetrator in Soviet History,” *Slavic Review* 72, no. 1 (2013): 1–23.

Additional reading

Conquest, Robert. *The Great Terror: A Reassessment*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Courtois, Stéphane and others, eds. *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Ilić, Melanie and Stephen G. Wheatcroft, eds. *Stalin’s Terror Revisited*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

Naimark, Norman. *Stalin’s Genocides*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010.

Week 3. Economic issues

Variations of Soviet economy: *the second economy* (Gregory Grossman), *the economy of shortages* (Janos Kornai), *the economy of favors* (Alena Ledeneva). Industrialization and collectivization at the macro and micro levels. Consumerism in Soviet society (consumerism studies). Networks of distribution and exchange, their influence on social statuses and everyday practices.

Essential reading

Davies, Robert William, Mark Harrison and S. G. Wheatcroft, eds. *The Economic Transformation of the Soviet Union, 1913–1945*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
Skim the book.

Ledeneva, Alena. *Russia's Economy of Favours: Blat, Networking and Informal Exchange*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Read Chapter 1, skim the rest.

Osokina, Elena. *Our Daily Bread: Socialist Distribution and the Art of Survival in Stalin's Russia, 1927–1941*. Armonk, New York, London, England: M.E. Sharpe, 2001. Chapters 5 and 6.

Hessler, Julie. *A Social History of Soviet Trade: Trade Policy, Retail Practices, and Consumption, 1917–1953*. Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004. Introduction, Chapters 5 and 6.

Additional reading

Crowley, David, and Susan E. Reid, eds. *Pleasures in Socialism: Leisure and Luxury in the Eastern Bloc*. Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2010. Esp., Chapters 1, 3, 4, 11.

Gronow, Jukka. *Caviar with Champagne: Common Luxury and the Ideals of the Good Life in Stalin's Russia*. New York: Berg, 2003.

Reid, Susan. "Cold War in the Kitchen: Gender and the De-Stalinization of Consumer Taste in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev," *Slavic Review* 61, no. 2 (2002): 211–52.

Week 4. Social history

Class, status and social groups under Socialism. Construction of social identities in the USSR. Social stratification. Working class and labor history. Marginalization of some social groups. Othering and mental barriers between classes and social groups.

Essential reading

Fitzpatrick, Sheila. "Ascribing Class: The Construction of Social Identity in Soviet Russia" in Fitzpatrick, Sheila, ed. *Stalinism: New directions*. London, New York: Routledge, 2000, pp. 20–46.

Siegelbaum, Lewis Henry and Ronald Grigor Suny, eds. *Making Workers Soviet: Power, Class, and Identity*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994. Preface, Introduction, Chapters 5–13.

Viola, Lynne. *Peasant Rebels under Stalin: Collectivization and the Culture of Peasant Resistance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Additional reading

Alexopoulos, Golfo. *Stalin's Outcasts: Aliens, Citizens, and the Soviet State, 1926–1936*. Ithaca, N.Y., and London: Cornell University Press, 2003.

Filtzer, Donald. *Soviet Workers and Late Stalinism: Labour and the Restoration of the Stalinist System after World War Two*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Esp., pp. 1–40, 245–265.

Reese, Roger. *Red Commanders: A Social History of the Soviet Army Officer Corps, 1918–1991*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005.

PART 2. “Cultural turn” and its influence on emerging subfields

Week 5. Cultural history of the Soviet Union: How did it start?

Cultural history of the Soviet Union in the 1990s and 2000s. Stalinism as a civilization.

Speaking Bolshevik (Stephen Kotkin). Emphasizing identities and individuals. *The Stalinist Self*

(Igal Halfin, Jochen Hellbeck). Ego-documents as basic sources for examining cultural identities?

Essential reading

Part 1. *Speaking Bolshevik*

Kotkin, Stephen. *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995. Introduction, Chapter 5.

Halfin, Igal and Jochen Hellbeck, “Rethinking the Stalinist subject: Stephen Kotkin’s Magnetic Mountain and the State of Soviet Historical Studies” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 44 (1996): 456–63.

Part 2. *The Stalinist Self*

“Diary of Stepan Filippovich Podlubny,” in Veronique Garros, Natalia Korenevskaya, and Thomas Lahusen, eds. *Intimacy and Terror: Soviet Diaries of the 1930s*. New York: New Press, 1997, pp. 293–331.

Hellbeck, Jochen. *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary under Stalin*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006. Prologue, Chapters 1 and 5.

Additional reading

Choi, Chatterjee, and Karen Petrone, “Models of Selfhood and Subjectivity: The Soviet Case in Historical Perspective,” *Slavic Review* 67, no 4 (2008): 967–86.

Fitzpatrick, Sheila. *Tear off the Masks: Identity and Imposture in Twentieth century Russia*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Naiman, Eric. "On Soviet Subjects and the Scholars Who Make Them," *Russian Review* 60, no. 3 (2001): 307–315.

Week 6. The History of Everyday Life

Public and private in Soviet society. Everyday life practices. The commons in the USSR: kolkhoz, communal apartment, convergence of the peoples. Everyday resistance.

Essential reading

Boym, Svetlana. *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia*. Cambridge, MA, London: Harvard University Press, 1994.

Fizpatrick, Sheila. *Everyday Stalinism. Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*. New York, Oxford, 1999.

Kiaer, Christina, and Eric Naiman, eds. *Everyday Life in Early Soviet Russia: Taking the Revolution Inside*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006. Read Introduction, skim the rest.

Additional reading

Attwood, Lynne. *Gender and Housing in Soviet Russia: Private Life in a Public Space*. Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2010.

Brooks, Jeffrey. *Thank You, Comrade Stalin! Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Field, Deborah A. *Private Life and Communist Morality in Khrushchev's Russia*. New York: Peter Lang, 2007.

Roth-Ey, Kristin. "Finding a Home for Television in the USSR, 1950–1970," *Slavic Review* 66, no. 2 (2007): 278–306.

Siegelbaum, Lewis H. *Cars for Comrades: The Life of the Soviet Automobile*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008.

Week 7. Gender History and the History of Sexuality

Soviet emancipation of women or new patriarchy? Soviet femininity and masculinity. Frames of sexuality and sexual perversions. Forging Soviet bodies: sport and hygiene. Biopolitics in the USSR. Concepts of health and beauty.

Case study: Soviet society in the 1920s.

Essential reading

Fitzpatrick, Sheila and Yuri Slezkine, eds. *In the Shadow of Revolution: Life Stories of Russian Women from 1917 to the Second World War*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000. Read pp. 3–29 and any biography from the book, but chronologically it must be up to the late 1920s.

Naiman, Eric. *Sex in Public: The Incarnations of Early Soviet Ideology*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997.

Healey, Dan. *Homosexual Desire in Revolutionary Russia: The Regulation of Sexual and Gender Dissent*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001. Chapters 3–5.

Starks, Tricia. *Body Soviet: Propaganda, Hygiene, and the Revolutionary State*. Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin Press, 2008. Chapters 2 and 6.

Additional reading

Bernstein, Frances L., Christopher Burton, and Dan Healey, eds. *Soviet Medicine: Culture, Practice, and Science*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010.

Goldman, Wendy Z. *Women, the State and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917–1936*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Ilić, Melanie, ed. *Women in the Stalin era*. New York: Palgrave, 2001.

Ilić, Melanie, Susan E. Reid and Lynne Attwood, eds. *Women in the Khrushchev era*. Houndmills, Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

Krylova, Anna. *Soviet Women in Combat: A History of Violence on the Eastern Front*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Week 8. Urban studies. Regional and local history. Symbolic geography.

Forms of Soviet settlements. Urban planning, housing and spatial organization of Soviet cities. Symbolic language of architecture, landscape, and naming. Cultural history of Soviet cities and villages. “Spatial turn”. Center-periphery relations. Travel, tourism, transportation. Mental mapping and Soviet culture.

Case study: Moscow.

Essential reading

Colton, Timothy. *Moscow: Governing the Socialist Metropolis*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995. Introduction, Chapters 1, 3, 4, 6.

Hoffmann, David. *Peasant Metropolis: Social Identities in Moscow, 1929–1941*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994. Introduction, Chapters 1–3, 5, 6.

Bittner, Stephen V. *The Many Lives of Khrushchev's Thaw: Experience and Memory in Moscow's Arbat*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008. Chapters 1, 4.

Clark, Katerina. *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931–1941*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011. Read Introduction, skim the rest.

Additional reading

Baron, Nick. “New Spatial Histories of Twentieth century Russia and the Soviet Union: Surveying the Landscape,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 55, no. 3 (2007): 374–400

Bassin, Mark, Christopher Ely, and Melissa K. Stockdale, eds. *Space, Place, and Power in Modern Russia: Essays in the New Spatial History*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2010.

Dobrenko, Evgeny, and Eric Naiman, eds. *The Landscape of Stalinism: The Art and Ideology of Soviet Space*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003.

Filtzer, Donald. *The Hazards of Urban Life in Late Stalinist Russia: Health, Hygiene, and Living Standards, 1943–1953*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Gorsuch, Anne E. *All This is Your World: Soviet Tourism at Home and Abroad after Stalin*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011

Lovell, Stephen. “Soviet Exurbia: Dachas in Postwar Russia,” in Crowley, David, and Susan Reid, ed. *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc*. Oxford: Berg, 2002, pp. 105–22.

Raleigh, Donald J., ed. *Provincial Landscapes: Local Dimensions of Soviet Power, 1917–1953*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001.

Week 9. Oral history. Memory studies.

How to use oral history and memory studies in examining the Soviet past?

Essential reading

Messana, Paola. *Soviet Communal Living: An Oral History of the Kommunalka*. New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Corney, Frederick C. *Telling October: Memory and the Making of the Bolshevik Revolution*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004. Chapter 4 and Conclusion.

Additional reading

Merridale, Catherine. *Nights of Stone: Death and Memory in Twentieth Century Russia*. New York: Viking, 2001.

Raleigh, Donald J. *Soviet Baby Boomers: An Oral History of Russia's Cold War Generation*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

Week 10. Visual History.

Visual history of the Soviet Union: the problems of methods and interpretations. Visual images and propaganda: producing and consuming.

Case study: Visual representations of political power.

Essential reading

Bonnell, Victoria. *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters under Lenin and Stalin*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1997. Introduction, Chapters 4–6.

Plamper, Jan. *The Stalin Cult: A Study in the Alchemy of Power*. Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution, Stanford University; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012.

Additional reading

Bernstein, Frances L. "Envisioning Health in Revolutionary Russia: The Politics of Gender in Sexual-Enlightenment Posters of the 1920s" *Russian Review* 57, no. 2 (1998): 191–217.

Kivelson, Valerie Ann and Joan Neuberger, eds. *Picturing Russia: Explorations in Visual Culture*. Ann Arbor: Yale University Press, 2008. Esp., Chapters 1, 29–50.

Reid Susan E. "All Stalin's Women: Gender and Power in Soviet Art of the 1930s," *Slavic Review* 57, no. 1 (1998): 133–173.

Week 11. The History of Emotions

“Emotional turn”. Passions and emotions: training and controlling. Individual and collective emotions: framing the borders.

Case study: Happiness.

Essential reading

Fitzpatrick, Sheila. “Happiness and Toska: An Essay in the History of Emotions in Pre-War Soviet Russia” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 50, no. 3 (2004): 357–71.

Balina, Marina, and Evgeny Dobrenko, eds. *Petrified Utopia: Happiness Soviet Style*. London; New York: Anthem Press, 2009.

Additional reading

Plamper, Jan. “Introduction [Emotional Turn? Feelings in Russian History and Culture],” *Slavic Review* 68, no. 2 (2009): 229–37.

Steinberg, Mark D., and Valeria Sobol, eds. *Interpreting Emotions in Russia and Eastern Europe*. DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2011. Esp., Introduction, Chapters 6, 7, 11.

Thurston, Robert W. “Fear and Belief in the USSR’s “Great Terror”: Response to Arrest, 1935–1939,” *Slavic review* 45, no. 2 (1986): 213–34.

Young, Glennys. “Emotions, Contentions Politics and Empire: Some Thoughts about the Soviet Case,” *Ab Imperio* no. 2 (2007): 113–51.

PART 3. Beyond cultural history?

Week 12. Nationalism and empire studies

“Soviet empire”: a handy metaphor or an analytical concept? Nationalism and national question in the USSR. Formation of national identities. Making the Soviet peoples. “The friendship of the peoples” and national conflicts.

Essential reading

Slezkine, Yuri. “The Soviet Union as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism,” *Slavic Review* 53, no. 2 (1994): 414–52.

Slezkine, Yuri. “Imperialism as the Highest Stage of Socialism,” *Russian Review* 59, no. 2 (2000): 227–234

Martin, Terry. *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939*. Ithaca, N.Y., and London: Cornell University Press, 2001. Read Chapter 1, skim the rest.

Hirsch, Francine. *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union*. Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 2005. Introduction, Chapters 3–5.

Additional reading

Beissinger, Mark R. “Soviet Empire as ‘Family Resemblance’,” *Slavic Review*, 65, no. 2 (2006): 294–303.

Blitstein, Peter A. “Nation and Empire in Soviet History, 1917–1953,” *Ab Imperio* no. 1 (2006): 197–219.

Brandenberger, David. *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931–1956*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.

Edgar, Adrienne. *Tribal Nation: The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.

Northrop, Douglas Taylor. *Veiled Empire: Gender and Power in Stalinist Central Asia*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004.

Slezkine, Yuri. *The Jewish Century*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004.

Yekelchik, Serhy. *Stalin’s Empire of Memory: Russian-Ukrainian Relations in the Soviet Historical Imagination*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004.

Week 13. Transnational history

Transnational history of/and the Soviet Union: comparative history, cultural transfers or cross-national studies?

Essential reading

Péteri, György, ed. *Imagining the West in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010.

Additional reading

David-Fox, Michael and György Péteri, eds. *Academia in Upheaval: Origins, Transfers, and Transformations of the Communist Academic Regime in Russia and East Central Europe*. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, 2000.

David-Fox, Michael. *Showcasing the Great Experiment: Cultural Diplomacy and Western Visitors to Soviet Union, 1921–1941*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Week 14. Environmental history

Natural world in Soviet history: Conservation movements, conceptions of nature, the influence of industrial and agricultural development on the natural world and society. Frontier environmental history. Russian animal studies.

Essential reading

Bruno, Andy. “Russian Environmental History: Directions and Potentials,” *Kritika* 6, no. 3 (2007): 635–650.

Weiner, Douglas R. *A Little Corner of Freedom: Russian Nature Protection from Stalin to Gorbachev*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

Additional reading

Bruno, Andy. “Making Reindeer Soviet: The Appropriation of an Animal on the Kola Peninsula,” in Jane Costlow and Amy Nelson, eds., *Other Animals: Beyond the Human in Russian Culture and History*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010, pp. 117–137.

Josephson, Paul, Nicolai Dronin, Ruben Mnatsakanian, Aleh Cherp, Dmitry Efremenko, Vladislav Larin. *An Environmental History of Russia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Week 15. General discussion

The round table: *New trends and subfields in Soviet history: enduring research agenda or glimpsing fashions?*

Questions for the round table are to be prepared by students.