History 507 Seminar: Stalinism

Wednesdays, 2:00 - 4:50, McKenzie 475

Course description: This seminar will explore the history and historiography of the Stalin era, a formative period in Russian, Soviet, and contemporary European history. Like other seminars, it has methodological as well as substantive aims; class discussions and assignments will focus on the practice of writing history as well as the specific historical subject matter of assigned texts. At the end of the quarter, students will submit an original research paper of 25-35 pages on an aspect of the Stalin era.

Grading policy: Final grades will be based on the grade you receive on your research paper. You are nonetheless expected to turn in all assignments and to come to class prepared for discussion. Failure to complete assigned reading or to submit a written assignment may lower your grade. Since assignments are closely connected to in-class exercises, I will not accept them late.

Books (you may want to acquire them all through Summit):

- Moshe Lewin, The Soviet Century
- Stephen Kotkin, Magnetic Mountain
- Anne Applebaum, Gulag: A History
- Jan T. Gross, Revolution from Abroad
- Moshe Lewin, The Making of the Soviet System
- Jochen Hellbeck, Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary under Stalin
- Oleg Khlevniuk, A History of the Gulag
- Julie Hessler, A Social History of Soviet Trade

Wednesday, Jan. 7
No class for graduate students. Reschedule for discussion of articles on deportation.


Wednesday, Jan. 14
Who was Stalin? An interpretive overview.

Reading: Moshe Lewin, The Soviet Century, 1-152. Grad students: Read at least three of Lewin’s essays from The Making of the Soviet System. Has his thinking changed much since then?

Wednesday, Jan. 21
What was Stalinism? A look from a new industrial city

Reading: Stephen Kotkin, Magnetic Mountain

Wednesday, Jan. 28
a) Stalin’s prison camps
Reading: Anne Applebaum, Gulag: A History (pp. 1-255)

b) Research workshop: Discuss paper proposals. Assignment (UG & G): Paper proposals due by regular meeting time. Proposals should be roughly three pages long, and they should be accompanied by an annotated bibliography of at least 10 sources (primary and secondary).

Wednesday, Feb. 4
The Gulag, continued.

Reading: Applebaum, Gulag: A History (pp. 256-526). Grads only: also look at a few sections of Oleg V. Khlevniuk, A History of the Gulag. Do you see any significant interpretive or factual differences between the two accounts (besides the obvious fact that Khlevniuk’s is more of an annotated document collection than a history)?

Wednesday, Feb. 11
Two unconnected articles

a) Research workshop: framing and organizing a long paper. Reading (follow the links on

Wednesday, Feb. 18  Stalinism exported
Reading: Jan T. Gross, *Revolution from Abroad*

Wednesday, Feb. 25  Undergraduates: no class (work on papers). Grad students: Discuss Julie Hessler, *A Social History of Soviet Trade*

Wednesday, March 4  No class (UG or G). **Rough drafts due at noon Wednesday.** Bring one hard copy of your paper to my office and post a copy on Blackboard. Download and fill out a checklist for each other’s papers, and also prepare some comments and suggestions to give to each other.

Wednesday, March 11  Research workshop to discuss rough drafts.

**Final papers due at 10:00, Wednesday, March 18.**