

**History 478: Stalin and After: The Soviet Union and Russia,  
1929-2009**

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Fall 2009



**Instructor:** Professor Donald J. Raleigh, Hamilton Hall 410, 962-8077,  
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**Class Meetings:** T/Th, 11:00-12:15, Mitchell Hall 09

**Office Hours:** Tuesday, 9:00-10:00 AM; Thursday, 3:30-4:30 PM and by appointment

**Course Objectives:** In 1929 the Soviet leadership embarked upon a new course of rapid industrialization and social mobilization, widely known as the Stalin Revolution, which placed the Soviet Union on a new path of historical development. History 478 begins with this tumultuous recasting of politics and society in the USSR, examines Soviet domestic history through the collapse of Communism in 1991, and surveys post-Soviet Russian history up to the present. During the semester you should be able to:

- Evaluate the Stalin Revolution and its importance for the evolution of Soviet society.
- Consider the Great Terror and its consequences for the Soviet experiment.
- Understand the social transformations brought about by economic modernization.
- Appreciate the impact of World War II on Soviet society.
- Explain the rise and fall of N. S. Khrushchev and assess his role in shaping the course of Soviet history.
- Analyze the importance of the cultural "thaw" and the tricky strategy of de-Stalinization.
- Characterize the nature of the L. I. Brezhnev leadership.
- Account for the emergence of a dissident movement and consider its role in the evolution of Soviet society away from Stalinism.
- Consider the Soviet Union as a multinational empire.
- Relate the experience of women to the larger Soviet project.
- Analyze the rise of M. S. Gorbachev and the problems he confronted in implementing his program of perestroika.
- Evaluate the revolution that was perestroika.
- Grasp the role of different generations in the evolution of the Soviet system.
- Explain the reasons for the break up of the Soviet Union in 1991.
- Appraise Boris Yeltsin's efforts to introduce a market economy in Russia and characterize Yeltsin as a political leader.
- Describe Vladimir Putin's major initiatives and place them within the long durée of Russian history.

**Lectures and Discussions:** Although I will lecture on occasion and offer mini-lectures on others, *this course will emphasize discussion and student participation*. Consequently, you need to attend class meetings and are responsible for any material, announcements, homework assignments, or administrative matters that you miss because of absence. In enrolling in this class you agree to turn in all work and to complete reading assignments on time. If you are unable to meet the deadlines posted you may submit your work early.

**Blackboard:** I will post all class materials on Blackboard (i.e., discussion questions, lecture outlines, guidelines for papers and exams, links to reading assignments, etc.).

**Required Readings:** The books listed below can be purchased in the textbook department at Student Stores (or read on Undergraduate Reserve). In addition, about a dozen scholarly articles are available electronically.

Service, Robert. *A History of Modern Russia from Nicholas II to Vladimir Putin*

Zubok, Vladislav. *Zhivago's Children: The Last Russian Intelligentsia*  
 Alexievich, Svetlana. *Voices from Chernobyl: The Oral History of a Nuclear  
 Disaster*

**Course Requirements:** Students will complete a course project; submit an 8-10-page take-home midterm exam; actively participate in class discussions; and write a final 12-15-page paper based on the required readings. The assignments are worth the following percentage of your final grade:

Take-home midterm	25%
Participation	25%*
Class project	15%
Final paper	35%

\*This grade will be based on the quality of your participation in class discussions; homework assignments; grades on any quizzes we might have; and attendance.

**Course project:** You have three options to choose among: you may make a 15-minute presentation on a book to be selected from a list I will provide; you may write a four-page review of a book to be selected from the same list; or you may lead a class discussion. I expect most students to opt to make a class presentation.

**Internet Links.** Students might find it helpful to visit Bucknell University's "Chronology of Russian History" at <http://www.bucknell.edu/x20136.xml> or the Soviet History Internet Archive at <http://www.marxists.org/history/ussr/>. A fine digital library of Staliniana is available at <http://images.library.pitt.edu/cgi-bin/i/image/image-idx?c=stalinka> (.). I likewise recommend "17 Moments in Soviet History," <http://www.soviethistory.org/index.php> (.). For information on Russia today, ranging from tourism to business, see <http://www.russiatoday.com>.

**Films and Outside Lectures:** During the semester the Center for Slavic, Eurasian, and East European Studies as well as various departments will host speakers who will discuss topics related to Soviet history. You are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities whenever appropriate.

**Honor Code:** "It shall be the responsibility of every student at the university of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to: 1. Obey and support the enforcement of the Honor Code; 2. Refrain from lying, cheating, or stealing; 3. Conduct themselves so as not to impair significantly the welfare or the educational opportunities of others in the University community; and 4. Refrain from conduct that impairs or may impair the capacity of University and associated personnel to perform their duties, manage resources, protect the safety and welfare of members of the University community, and maintain the integrity of the University." As per university guidelines, students must sign the Honor Code on all papers and exams in order to have the grade received officially recorded. Please consult with me if you have any questions about the Honor Code or examine <http://honor.unc.edu/>

**Academic Support Services:** The College of Arts and Sciences has developed several support programs to assist students to succeed academically. Learning Disabilities Services provides individual support to students with diagnosed learning disabilities (962-7227). The Learning Skills Center offers free instruction in a variety of academic learning strategies (962-3782, 962-6389). The Writing Center—which fills up quickly—provides free tutorial services (962-7710, 962-4060).

**Lecture and Discussion Topics and Reading Assignments:**

- Aug 25 Introduction  
 Aug 27 **Discussion:** Autocracy and Revolution (Service, xxi-xxxvii, 1-122)  
**Study Questions:** Authors of general histories construct an overarching narrative of their subject. This narrative not only advances an argument, but also reflects the author's implicit assumptions and biases. Keep these considerations in mind as you read Service. What are the most important points that he makes in the introduction? What is the “Soviet compound?” Which interpretations of Soviet history does he discuss? What is the core of his analysis? How does he justify shining the spotlight on Russia? Page 1+: What fissures existed in the Russian empire? What were Russia’s major political parties? Who did they represent? Was Russia heading inexorably toward revolution or evolving into a parliamentary system? Why did the February Revolution take place? What is dual power? What problems faced the Provisional Government? What role did Lenin play in 1917? Why did the Bolshevik (October) Revolution occur? Why did the Bolsheviks win the Civil War?
- Sept 1 **Discussion:** The Soviet Union in the 1920s (Service, 123-65)  
**Study Questions:** Why is the Civil War a formative experience for Bolshevism? What were the dangers inherent in the New Economic Policy? What is the relationship between Leninism and Stalinism? What are the major factors of social stability and crisis during the 1920s? Why did Lenin clash with Stalin? What type of new state was set up and why? What is the significance of Lenin's Testament? Why did Stalin rise to power? Were Bukharin and Trotsky viable alternatives to Stalin? Why did NEP end? What arguments does Service advance?
- Sept 3 The Stalin Revolution: State, Society, Ideology (Service, 169-89; Fitzpatrick article “Stalin and the Making of a New Elite”)
- Sept 8 The Stalin Revolution: Collectivization (Service, 190-253)  
 Sept 10 **Discussion:** Revisionism and Beyond (Fitzpatrick’s, “How the Mice Buried the Cat,” and Hellbeck’s “Working, Struggling, Becoming”)
- Sept 15 Understanding the Great Terror (Goldman’s article “Stalinist Terror”)  
 Sept 17 **Oral Presentations**
- Sept 22 War and Soviet Society (Service, 254-313)  
 Sept 24 **Discussion:** War and Soviet Society (Berkhoff, “Total Annihilation, 1941-45,” and Jones, “Every Family Has Its Freaks”)
- Sept 29 Postwar Stalinism (Service, 314-30; Hessler “A Postwar Perestroika,” or Heinzen, “Informers and the State”)  
 Oct 1 **Oral Presentations**

- Oct 6 **Take-home exam due;** The Interregnum (Service, 331-55; *optional*, Khrushchev's "Secret Speech")  
**Study Questions:** Account for what Khrushchev said and did not say in his speech. What specific crimes did he accuse Stalin of? Be prepared to give your understanding of what the speech says or what "happened" in it. What sort of transaction does the speech create with you?
- Oct 8 Khrushchev Triumphant (Service, 356-75; Zubok 1-87)
- Oct 13 **Discussion** (Zubok, 1-225)
- Oct 15 **Discussion:** Why Was Khrushchev Ousted? (Article by Reid, "The Manege Affair Revisited")
- Oct 20 **Oral Presentations**
- Oct 22 Fall Break
- Oct 27 The Brezhnev Years: An Overview (Service, 376-427)
- Oct 29 The Brezhnev Years: An Overview (Sakharov letter, read Zubok)
- Nov 3 **Discussion:** (Zubok, 226-362)
- Nov 5 **Discussion:** The Economy and Nationalities Question (Millar, "The Little Deal," and Slezkine, "The USSR as Communal Apartment")
- Nov 10 Andropov, Chernenko, and the Rise of Gorbachev (Service, 428-47; start reading Alexievich, *Voices*)
- Nov 12 **Discussion:** *Voices from Chernobyl* (entire book)
- Nov 17 Glasnost and the Economy (Dallin essay, "Causes of the Collapse")
- Nov 19 **Oral Presentations** (Zubok, 335-62; Service, 448-84)
- Nov 24 **Discussion:** The Collapse of the Soviet Union (Rowley, "Interpretations of the End," and Raleigh, "Beyond Moscow and St. Petersburg")
- Nov 26 Thanksgiving
- Dec 1 The Presidency of Boris Yeltsin (Service, 509-55)
- Dec 3 The Putin Alternative (Work on papers)
- Dec 8 Summing Up, Evaluations, Medvedev's Russia; Final papers due