

THE SOVIET CENTURY

(draft syllabus)

Stiteler Hall B26

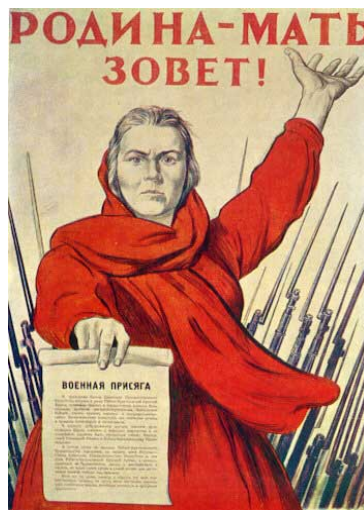
MW 11-12

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Comrade Lenin Cleanses the World of Scum (1920)



The Motherland Calls (1941)



The People and the Party are One (1978)

The Russian Revolution marked the opening of the “short twentieth century” (1917-1991), and its demise signaled that turbulent century’s end. During its lifetime, much of the world viewed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) as the defining political experiment, the great modern challenge to liberalism, capitalism, and imperialism. This course is about the Soviet century.

We will trace the emergence of the Soviet Union from the ruins of a backward empire and its transformation into the showcase of the future. Lectures, readings and recitations will explore the building of the world’s first socialist society and its attempts to recast human relations and human nature itself. Topics include the origins of the Revolutions of 1917, the role of ideology in state policy and everyday life, the Soviet Union as the center of world communism, the challenge of forging a new society from an ethnically diverse population, the Soviet Union’s epic defeat of Nazi Germany, its rise to the status of superpower, its various attempts to reform itself, and its sudden implosion in 1991. We will follow the rulers (from Nicholas II to

Lenin, from Stalin to Gorbachev) as well as the ruled (peasants, workers, intellectuals; Russians, Ukrainians, Jews, Latvians, Armenians, Georgians, Azeris, and many others).

Curiosity about Soviet history and a willingness to explore its drama and complexity are the only prerequisites for this course. No prior knowledge of the subject is assumed.

REQUIREMENTS:

Each week students will attend two lectures and one recitation. If you cannot attend a lecture or recitation, it is your responsibility to find out what you have missed. Please come to each lecture having completed the readings for that day. This means allowing yourself sufficient time to read through the assigned materials and to think about them. Bear in mind that active participation means asking good questions as well as proposing good answers. I am happy to take questions during lectures. Recitations will explore the assigned readings—including primary source material in translation—as well as the lectures. Students will write a short paper (due **Feb. 13**), take an in-class exam (**Mar. 13**), and a take-home final (handed out **May 1**, due **May 9**).

GRADING:

Participation in discussion:	25%	Five-page paper:	25%
In-class exam:	25%	Take-home final exam:	25%

Students in this course are expected to abide by Penn's Code of Academic Integrity, which can be found at: http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity/ai_codeofacademicintegrity.html

READING:

Reading assignments will be ca. 120 pp. per week, plus occasional films. Please note that in some weeks the reading load will be heavier, in others - lighter.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Geoffrey Hosking, *The First Socialist Society: A History of the Soviet Union from Within*
Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*
John Scott, *Behind the Ural: An American Worker in Russia's City of Steel*
Abram Tertz [Andrei Sinyavsky], *The Trial Begins*
Vladislav Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev*
Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970-2000*
Dmitri Trenin, *Getting Russia Right*

Course documents, including memoirs, letters, and secret decrees in translation, are available on Canvas. Students are required to print and bring the relevant documents to recitation.

WEEK ONE

Jan. 16: **Why Study Soviet History?**

- Hosking, *The First Socialist Society*, 15-34 (19 pp.)
- CANVAS
- Alexander Herzen, “The Russian People and Socialism” (2 pp.)

Try this very challenging on-line Soviet geography quiz:
<http://www.realussr.com/how-well-do-you-know-ussr>
(don't worry – you'll do better by the end of the course)

WEEK TWO

Jan. 21: **No class: MLK Day**

Jan. 23: **The Russian Empire under the Tsars**

CANVAS

- Semyon Ivanovich Kanatchikov, *A Radical Worker in Tsarist Russia* (21 pp.)

WEEK THREE

Jan. 28: **Revolutionary Movements and Marxism in Russia**

- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (78 pp.)
Introduction by Martin Malia (pp. vii-xxviii)
Marx's preface to the Russian Edition of 1882 (pp. 33-34)
The Manifesto (pp. 49-76)

CANVAS

- Karl Marx, “Letter to the Editorial Board of *Fatherland Notes*” (4 pp.)
- Leon Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, vol. 1, pp. 3-15 (12 pp.)

Jan. 30: **Why Did the Old Regime Collapse?**

- Hosking, 35-56 (21 pp.) [read von Hagen first]

CANVAS

- Mark von Hagen, “The First World War, 1914-1918,” in Ronald G. Suny, ed., *The Cambridge History of Russia* vol. 3, pp. 94-113 (19 pp.)

WEEK FOUR

Feb. 4: **The Russian Revolutions (I)**

CANVAS

- Leon Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, vol. 1, pp. 136-179 (43 pp.)

- Sergei Mstislavskii, “The February Rising” from *idem, Five Days Which Transformed Russia* (see glossary at conclusion of this section; use this for other sections of Mstislavskii below) (37 pp.)
- Vladimir Lenin, “April Theses” (3 pp.)
- Vladimir Lenin, *State and Revolution* (5 pp.)
- Documents on war aims and new diplomacy (19 pp.)
 1. Soviet Appeal to the Peoples of the World (March 27, 1917)
 2. Provisional Government on War Aims (April 10, 1917)
 3. Manifesto of the Ukrainian Rada (June 24, 1917)
 4. The Soviet Decree on Peace (November 8, 1917)
 5. Third Universal of the Ukrainian Rada (November 20, 1917)
 6. Soviet Appeal to the Toilers of the East (December 7, 1917)
 7. The Fourteen Points of Woodrow Wilson (January 8, 1918)

Feb. 6: **The Russian Revolutions (II)**

CANVAS

- Sergei Mstislavskii, “The October Revolution,” from *idem, Five Days*, 111-31 (20 pp.)
- Leon Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, vol. 3, pp. 276-301, 344-349 (30 pp.)
- “To the Citizens of Russia!,” “Decree on the Formation of a Workers’ and Peasants’ Government,” and assorted Bolshevik revolutionary legislation (6 pp.)
- Sergei Mstislavskii, “The Day of the Constituent Assembly,” from *idem, Five Days*, 135-55 (20 pp.)
- “Dissolution of the Constituent Assembly” (2 pp.)

WEEK FIVE

Feb. 11: **Spreading the Revolution: Civil War and Comintern**

- Hosking, 57-92 (35 pp.)

CANVAS

- The Brest-Litovsk Treaty: Lenin’s Defense (3 pp.)
- Map: Civil War and Foreign Intervention, 1918-21 (1 p.)
- Lenin, “All out for the fight against Denikin!” (2 pp.)
- Letter from Lenin on Dealing with Peasant Revolts (SECRET) (1 p.)
- Cheka Response to Attempt on Lenin’s Life and the Murder of Uritskii (2 pp.)
 - Invitation to the 1st Congress of the Communist International (Comintern) (3 pp.)
- Manifesto of the Communist International to the Proletariat of the Entire World (2 pp.)
- Theses on the Conditions for Admission to the Communist International (3 pp.)

FILM: *The End of St. Petersburg* (Vsevolod Pudovkin, 1927; 89 minutes)

Feb. 13: **Soviet Union—A Reconstituted Empire?**

- Hosking, 93-118 (25 pp.)

CANVAS

- Ronald Grigor Suny, “State-Building and Nation-Making: The Soviet Experience,” in idem, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union*, 84-126 (42 pp.)
- The Union Constitution of 1924 (2 pp.)
- Lists of Ethnic/National Categories in the Soviet Censuses of 1926 and 1939 (4 pp.)

***** FIVE-PAGE PAPER DUE IN CLASS *****

WEEK SIX

Feb. 18: **The Communist Party as Ruling Institution**

- Hosking, 119-148 (29 pp.)

CANVAS

- Instructions for Carrying out Verification of Party members, 1921 (4 pp.)
- Chart: The Party Hierarchy (1 p.)
- Lenin, “The Tax in Kind” (2 pp.)
- Correspondence of Bukharin and Dzerzhinsky (SECRET) (2 pp.)
- Kamenev to Ordzhonikidze, Dec. 10, 1927 (1 p.)
- Peasant letters to Stalin (2 pp.)
- “Bublichki” (1 p.)

Feb. 20: **Socialist culture**

- John Scott, *Behind the Urals*, 3-51, 55-67, 82-92, 117-139 (91 pp.)
Interested in John Scott’s father, who was fired from the Wharton School in 1915 for being too radical? Go to <http://www.upenn.edu/gazette/0302/hughes.html>

CANVAS

- Richard Stites, “Iconoclastic Currents in the Russian Revolution” (19 pp.)
- Mikhail Gerasimov, “We” (1 p.)
- LEF (Left Front in Art), “Manifesto” (2 pp.)
- Central Committee, “On the Policy of the Party in the Field of Literature” (2 pp.)
- Alexandra Kollontai, Excerpts from “The Family and the Communist State” (2 pp.)
- Lev Trotsky, “Vodka, the Church, and Cinema” (4 pp.)
- Check Google Images for works by **Kazimir Malevich** and **Marc Chagall**

WEEK SEVEN

Feb. 25 **Building Socialism, I: Collectivization and Industrialization**

- Hosking, 149-204 (55 pp.)

- Scott, *Behind the Urals*, 173-206 (33 pp.)

CANVAS

- Stalin, “The Right Deviation in the CPSU(B)” (4 pp.)
- Discussion of the Law on Abolition of Legal Abortion, June 9, 1936 (2 pp.)
- Maxim Gorky, “Soviet Literature” (3 pp.)

Feb. 27: **Building Socialism, II: Terror and Retrenchment**

- Hosking, 205-260 (55 pp.)
- Scott, *Behind the Urals*, 209-249 (40 pp.)

CANVAS

- Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary Under Stalin*, 1-14, 115-164 (63 pp.)
- Letter from Bukharin to the Politburo, February 20, 1937 (1 p.)
- Letter from Bukharin to the Supreme Soviet, March 13, 1938 (2 pp.)

WEEK EIGHT S P R I N G B R E A K

WEEK NINE

Mar. 11: **The Soviet Union and “Total War”**

- Hosking, 261-295 (34 pp.)
- Scott, *Behind the Urals*, pp. 253-266, 280-306 (39 pp.)

CANVAS

- Order by Marshall Voroshilov Concerning a Counterrevolutionary Fascist Organization in the Red Army, June 7, 1937 (SECRET) (3 pp.)
- German Documents on Operation “Barbarossa” (1940-41) (8 pp.)
- Mobilization Against the German Invasion (2 pp.)

Mar. 13: ***** IN-CLASS EXAM *****

WEEK TEN

Mar. 18: **Red Triumph**

CANVAS

- Konstantin Simonov, “Wait For Me” (July 1941) and “Smolensk Roads” (November 1941) (3 pp.)
- Lev Kopelev, *To Be Preserved Forever*, pp. 1-3, 35-58 (26 pp.)
- Stalin on the Great Russians (1 pp.)
- Stalin’s speech on Nov. 7, 1941: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8IGbjPqFFvA>

- Stalin and the Orthodox Church (2 pp.)
 - Stalin's Analysis of Victory (4 pp.)
 - The *Internationale* and Soviet State Anthem (1944) (2 pp.)
- For background on Russian/Soviet anthems, with downloadable audio versions, go to:
http://www.stanford.edu/class/slavgen194a/hymn/anthem_history.htm

Mar. 20: **Victory and Devastation: Stalinism Triumphant**

- Hosking, 296-325 (29 pp.)
- CANVAS**
- Varlam Shalamov, *Kolyma Tales*: Translator's forward, "Through the Snow," "A Day Off" and "Lend-Lease," pp. ix-xvii, 3-4, 103-6, 275-83 (21 pp.)
- Russian-language websites about Shalamov:
<http://www.cultinfo.ru/shalamov/index.htm> (virtual museum; abridged version in English)
<http://www.shalamov.ru/aboutsite/> (virtual library with texts by and about Shalamov)
- The Zhdanov Movement (4 pp.)
 - Party Control of Science – Genetics (2 pp.)
 - The Campaign against "Cosmopolitanism" (4 pp.)

WEEK ELEVEN

Mar. 25: **From War to Cold War**

- Vladislav Zubok, *A Failed Empire*, 1-93 (93 pp.)
- CANVAS**
- The following texts are from Martin McCauley, ed., *The Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1949*, pp. 131-41 (10 pp.):
 - George Kennan, The Long Telegram
 - Churchill's "Iron Curtain" Speech
 - Stalin's Reply to Churchill's Speech
 - Byrnes's Speech at Stuttgart
 - Henry Wallace, "The Tougher We Get..."
 - Molotov on "Equal Opportunity"
 - The Truman Doctrine, The Marshall Plan
 - The "Mr. X." Article
 - Vyshinsky on the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan
 - The Cominform (4 pp.)
 - Comments to Stalin from Zhukov and Litvinov on American Proposals for Disarming and Demilitarization of Germany and Japan (SECRET) (4 pp.)

Mar. 27: **The "Thaw"**

- Hosking, 326-362 (36 pp.)
 - Tertz/Sinyavsky, *The Trial Begins*, 3-57 (54 pp.) [for discussion in Week 12]
- CANVAS**

- Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" (De-Stalinization) (4 pp.)
- Stalin's Coffin (4 pp.)

Film: *Ballad of a Soldier*, (Grigorii Chukhrai, 1959; 88 minutes)

WEEK TWELVE

Apr. 1: **The Soviet Union as Superpower**

- Zubok, *A Failed Empire*, pp. 94-153 (59 pp.)

CANVAS

- The following texts are from Alvin Z. Rubinstein, ed., *The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union*, pp. 266-80 (15 pp.):
 - Khrushchev, "Speech to the Higher Party School of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the CPSU"
 - Andrei Gromyko, "Some International Implications of the Cuban Missile Crisis"
 - Open Letter from CPSU Central Committee to Party Organizations and All Communists of the Soviet Union [re: China]"
- Khrushchev and Nixon: The Kitchen Debate
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-CvQOunecy4>

Apr. 3: **Refrigerators and Apartments**

- Hosking, 363-401 (38 pp.)
- Tertz/Sinyavsky, *The Trial Begins*, 58-126 (68 pp.)
- Videos of communal apartments: <http://kommunalka.colgate.edu/cfm/about.cfm>
 Click on "Video tours" (upper left), then choose your tours.

WEEK THIRTEEN

Apr. 8: **Cracks in the Monolith**

- Hosking, 402-445 (43 pp.)

CANVAS

- Excerpts from Andrei Sinyavsky's Trial (34 pp.)
- Andrei Sinyavsky, "Dissent as a Personal Experience" (6 pp.)
- Andrei Sakharov, *Memoirs*, pp. 190-95, 281-94 (19 pp.)
- Currents of Dissent - Andrei Sakharov, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Roy Medvedev (10 pp.)
- Andropov [head of the KGB] to the Central Committee [of the Communist Party] on the spread of samizdat, Dec. 21, 1970 (SECRET) (3 pp.)
- Letter from Andropov to Brezhnev re: Solzhenitsyn, Feb. 7, 1974 (SECRET) (4 pp.)
- KGB and Central Committee report on Sakharov, Feb. 8, 1980 (SECRET) (4 pp.)

- Iurii Andropov on dissent, *Izvestiia* [News], September 10, 1977
- Vladimir Vysotskii, "They're Hunting Wolves" (1 p.)
- Vladimir Vysotskii, Letter to the Central Committee Secretary (3 pp.)
- Vladimir Vysotskii Website (texts and songs in Real Audio):
<http://www.kulichki.com/vv/> (to the right of the photograph, click on "25+")

Apr. 10: **Stagnation or Stability?**

- Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted*, 1-57 (57 pp.)
 - Zubok, *A Failed Empire*, 192-264 (72 pp.)
- CANVAS**
- The Brezhnev Doctrine (3 pp.)
 - The Helsinki Accords (4 pp.)
 - Report from the KGB on the "Group for Implementation of the Helsinki Accords in the USSR" (SECRET) (2 pp.)
 - Tatiana Zaslavskaia, "Novosibirsk Report" (4 pp.)

FILM: *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* (Vladimir Menshov, 1980; 150 minutes)

WEEK FOURTEEN

Apr. 15: **The Golden Era of "Developed Socialism"** (lecture by Alex Hazanov)

- Sergei Dovlatov, "Finnish Crepe Socks" and "Good Nomenklatura Shoes," in idem, *The Suitcase: a Novel*, tr. Antonina W. Dubois (New York, 1990)
- James R. Millar, "The Little Deal: Brezhnev's Contribution to Acquisitive Socialism," *Slavic Review* vol. 44, no.4 (1985): 694-706

Apr. 17: **"Restructuring"**

- Kotkin, 58-112 (55 pp.)
- CANVAS**
- The Gorbachev Years: A Timeline
 - Gorbachev's Speech on the 70th Anniversary of the October Revolution ("Reopening the Past") (5 pp.)
 - Nina Andreyeva, "I Cannot Forego Principles" (3 pp.)
 - Gorbachev, "The New Thinking" (4 pp.)
 - Eduard Shevardnaze, Excerpts from *The Future Belongs to Freedom* (3 pp.)

WEEK FIFTEEN

Apr. 22: **End of Empire?**

- Kotkin, 113-141 (28 pp.)
- Trenin, *Getting Russia Right*, 1-38, 51-76 (63 pp.)

CANVAS

- The following texts are from Victoria Bonnell et al., eds., *Russia at the Barricades: Eyewitness Accounts of the August 1991 Coup*:
 - “Appeal to the Soviet People” from the State Committee for the State of Emergency (August 19, 1991), pp. 33-38 (6 pp.)
 - Interrogation of Defense Minister Dmitrii Yazov (Aug. 22, 1991), pp. 55-63 (9 pp.)
 - Moscow’s M. V. Khrunichev Machine-Building Factory Reacts to the August Coup, pp. 111-19 (9 pp.)
- The Rejection of Imperial Ambition: *Izvestiia*’s Comment, Jan. 28, 1992 (3 pp.)
- DDT – “Born in the USSR” (lyrics)

Apr. 24: **Rubble and Rubles: The New Russia**

- Kotkin, 142-196 (54 pp.)
- Trenin, *Getting Russia Right*, 79-98, 101-112 (30 pp.)

WEEK SIXTEEN

Apr. 29: **Concluding Thoughts and Q&A**

May 1:

***** TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM HANDED OUT IN CLASS -
DUE BY NOON ON THURSDAY MAY 9 (VICTORY DAY!) *****