History 327W-000
The Soviet World War, 1939-1945

1:00-1:50
Bowden Hall, TBA

Fall 2016

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119 Bowden
Office Hours: Wednesday, 2:00-3:30
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Overview

This course will examine the Soviet role in World War II. The USSR suffered far more causalities than any other belligerent nation as Soviet troops stopped the Nazi war machine in epic battles such as Barbarossa, Moscow, Stalingrad, the Siege of Leningrad, Kursk, Operation Bagration and the Battle of Berlin. But the story of the Great Patriotic War, as it is known by the Russians, is so much broader than the clash of arms. From the establishment of two violently opposed totalitarian dictatorships to the diplomatic maneuverings of a too crafty Stalin to the shock of invasion and total mobilization of Soviet people, even under a brutal German occupation, this is a story of people. The course will follow the war through the eyes of simple Soviet soldiers ("Ivan the Terrible" to their fascist foes), brilliant writers and brutalized Gulag prisoners, victims of the holocaust and Red partisans, women pilots and the Generalissimo himself, Iosif Stalin. The course will focus on the Soviet experience, but of course the Nazi's motivations and actions will be studied, as will be the suspicious and competitive alliance with the Western allies. The Soviet victory on the Eastern Front was as unexpected as it was earth-shaking and came at an almost incalculable cost in human suffering and a brutally traumatized society. Three generations after the guns fell silent, Russians and other Soviet peoples are still recovering from the demographic catastrophe and the political legitimation of communism that came as a consequence of this, not only Russia's, but the world's largest war every fought.
Requirements and Grading

- **Participation**: Students are expected to attend all class lectures and discussions. Everyone will do all the required readings and assignments each week and students will be expected to discuss the weekly themes and topics cogently. Attendance will be taken and unexcused absences will affect a student’s participation grade. 15%

- **Discussion Responses**: One-to-two page post to Blackboard "safe-assign" to one of several specific questions (listed on syllabus) dealing with assigned readings. Proper grammar and style are required as well as historical analysis—not simply summation. The posted responses should be read by all students prior to discussion class. All responses should be posted by 9:00 pm on the evening prior to discussion (normally Thursday night unless otherwise noted in the syllabus). Failure to post on time will lead to a failing grade on the assignment. A one-to-two page short review of the weekly movie may be substituted up to three times. 20%

- **Final Exam**: A fifteen-minute oral examination on the readings, lectures, and class discussions at a pre-arranged time during finals week (December 8-9th, 12th-14th). Key words and concepts will be written on cards which the student will draw; she will be expected to identify and discuss them readily and coherently. This is the classical Russian examination and is very efficient at determining knowledge in a given subject (i.e., to do well in this test you must have done the work required for this course). 25%

- **Final Research Paper**: A twelve-to-fifteen page term paper on a topic of the student's choice within the chronological and topical limits of this class. Each week I will require students to complete a weekly research assignment—very simple research-oriented tasks that aid the student in discovering an exciting topic. I will give weekly feedback on how the research is progressing. Mid-way into the semester, each student will submit a short paper proposal consisting of a thesis statement and bibliography. I will in turn consult personally with each student on the feasibility of their topic. Draft papers will be read and returned with feedback. Completed papers will be turned by our final exam date (December 13th). 40%
Course Policies

- **Attendance**: Class attendance is mandatory and unexcused absences will be detrimental to the class participation grade (five unexcused absences will lead to automatic failure in the classroom participation grade). The lectures, in particular, represent a synthesis of material from a broad array of historical approaches and treat many issues in a very different manner than the texts.

- **Classroom Participation**: Discussion is also important, and your willingness to contribute to discussion class will be reflected in your participation grade.

- **Extensions**: Students must complete course work on time or arrange, **before the assignment is due**, an extension with the instructor. Late assignments will be marked down.

- **Grading**: The principles of grading in this class are succinct and clear.
  - In those assignments that are brief (discussion responses, research assignments, pop quizzes [should that become necessary due to a lack of reading the texts!]), grades will be a check (√) or a check minus (√-). The final mark on this particular portion of your grade will simply be a cumulating of all checks versus all possible checks (so, if you get a check on 12 of 13 discussion responses, you would receive a 92% on your discussion grade).
  - On more substantial assignments such as exams or the final paper, there are various criteria which are examined. I will pass out a separate grading matrix to detail how I grade on long, written assignments.

- **General Email policy**: Prof. Payne reviews email daily during the work week but not necessarily more than once daily. Please be patient, especially with learn-link communications. I’m not Google!

- **Other Resources**: The Writing Center provides individualized mentoring on exposition provided by a gifted cadre of mentors. Their sessions are rewarding and beneficial even to accomplished writers. For more information and to schedule an appointment see: [http://www.emory.edu/ENGLISH/WC/](http://www.emory.edu/ENGLISH/WC/)

- **Note on College Writing Requirements**: This course does **not** fulfill the College post-freshman writing requirement.

- **Honor Code**: As in all Emory classes, the strictures of the honor code apply. Infractions of the honor code, especially cheating and plagiarism, will be handled with the greatest possible severity.
Books

Text:

Readings:
# Class Schedule

## Week 1: Introduction

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**READINGS:**

**Secondary:**
Week 2: Here Be Monsters: The Rise of the Totalitarian Dictatorships

FILM: *Burnt by the Sun* (Nikita Mikhailkov, 1994)

Mon. 8/29: LECTURE: “Communism and Nazism: Fratricidal Brothers?”

Weds. 8/31: READINGS:
   Secondary:
   Sources:
   Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Structure of Soviet History; Essays and Documents*:
   "For the Fatherland!" Editorial in *Pravda*, June 9, 1934, pp. 229-31

Fri. 9/2: READINGS:
   Secondary:
   Sources:
   Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Structure of Soviet History; Essays and Documents*:
   "Stalin on the Arrests and Executions of Tukhachevskii, Iakir, Uborovich, and others, June 11, 1937," pp. 240;

Discussion Question (Due Thurs., 9/1, 9:00 pm):
   How was the Soviet form of a government built around total mobilization of society, even before the outbreak of war? How was this revolutionary state built around terror, the party and the command economy? How did Stalin, just like Hitler, dominate Soviet politics through a cult of personality? How did this absolute dictatorship and reliance on terror undermine Soviet military preparedness during the purges?

Research Assignment (Due Friday, 9/2, 5:30 pm):
   Please identify three articles in the *Modern Encyclopedia of Russian, Soviet and Eurasian History* [DK14 .M6 ref] that discuss topics of interest to you (Soviet women in war, the Holocaust in the USSR, the Battle of Kursk). Submit a short summary of whether you believe this is a workable topic for you. The form of your submission should be the citation and then one or two sentences on the topics feasibility. In other words, “Battle of Stalingrad: The subject is fascinating to me but seeing the vast amount of scholarly literature on the topic, I think I need to narrow down the topic a bit. I think I would like to focus on the street-by-street fighting in the city itself, rather than Zhukov's counter-offensive.”
Week 3: Collective Security?: Soviet Diplomacy in a "Low, Dishonest Decade"

FILM: If There is War Tomorrow (Efim Dzigan, 1938)

Mon. 9/5: Labor Day—NO CLASS
Weds. 9/7: LECTURE, “Defending the Homeland of Socialism”
Fri. 9/9: READINGS:
   Secondary:
      Merridale, Ivan's War, ch. 2 "A Fire Through All the World," pp. 49-81.
      Sources:
      Sources:

Discussion Question (Due Thurs., 9/8, 9:00 pm):
   Was Soviet diplomacy oriented towards pursuing world revolution or "defending the socialist fatherland?" How did Stalin manipulate Communist parties around the world to serve the interests of the Soviet Union? What were Stalin’s diplomatic goals in the run-up to the world war?

Research Assignment (Due Friday., 9/9, 5:30 pm):
   Using Euclid, identify three historical monographs that represent a good, scholarly resource for studying your topic of interest. A monograph is a scholarly, peer-reviewed book (usually put out by a major university press) that focuses on one subject rather than trying to create a syncretic overview of a subject, such as a textbook. Thus, Chris Bellamy, Soviet Russia in the Second World War would not be appropriate (it’s a textbook) but Roger R. Reese, Why Stalin's Soldiers Fought: The Red Army's Military Effectiveness in World War II would be an excellent choice. Memoirs, letters, etc., as primary sources, would also not apply. Please physically examine the monograph by going to Woodruff stacks and write up you observations of each based on a quick skim. For example, “Anthony Beevor, Stalingrad: The Fateful Siege: 1942-1943: A very detailed account of the Battle of Stalingrad which focuses on high-level decision making and personal experience. A bit popular but far easier to work with than Glantz's Armageddon in Stalingrad, which almost a blow-by-blow military account.” Or, "Mar Mazower, Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe: This is really an interesting book but it is not focused only on the occupation in the East. I need to look into some accounts of the Soviet experience of occupation to supplement his account."
**Week 4: Breathing Space: The Molotov-Ribbentropp Pact and the "Winter War"**

Mon. 9/12  LECTURE, Stalin and Hitler as Allies—Bloodlands

Weds. 9/14: READINGS:
   Secondary:

   Sources:

Fri. 9/16: READINGS:
   Secondary:

   Sources:

**Discussion Question (Due Thurs., 9/15, 9:00 pm):**

The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact is one of the most controversial aspects of the Soviet Union's wartime diplomacy. One argument has been that it gave "breathing space" for the Soviet Union to reform its military and build up a buffer zone against a Nazi aggressor clearly pointed in its direction by Munich. A far less charitable explanation is that this was a bloody and imperial partition of Eastern Europe between two dictators intent on double-crossing each other. What is your interpretation of the pact (you might want to make reference to the Icebreaker controversy and Voinovich's savage satire of the pre-war Red Army)? Why did Hitler go to war and why didn’t Stalin attempt a preemptive attack?

**Research Assignment (Due Friday., 9/16, 5:30 pm):**

Using the database function of Euclid, use three data bases to search for scholarly articles appropriate for your topic. The three should be the American Bibliography of Slavic and East European Studies (ABSEES), JSTOR, and Historical Abstracts. Cull three good articles from each and examine them. For each data base give me a sentence or two on its advantages and disadvantages for your research agenda. A fourth database should be identified by you on your own. (HINT: Google would be a bad choice. On the other hand Google Scholar would be quite appropriate). Example: "I found JSTOR really convenient for my topic on the GULag during the War, but it's coverage was not as good as ABSEES. Google Scholar was a bit hard to use but surprisingly robust."
**Week 5: Drang nach Osten: Barbarossa and the Annihilation of the Soviet Army**

**FILM:** *The Brest Fortress* (Alexander Kott, 2010) or *The Cranes are Flying* (Mikhail Kalatozov, 1957) or *The Living and the Dead* (Stolper, 1963)

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**Mon. 9/19:** LECTURE, “The Catastrophic Invasion of 1941”

**Weds. 9/21:** READINGS:


**Fri. 9/23:** READINGS:


- Sources: Grossman, *A Writer at War*, chs. 1-5, pp. 3-44.

**Discussion Question (Due Thurs., 9/22, 9:00 pm):**

Was Stalin really fooled by Barbarossa and, if not, why was Barbarossa so incredibly successful at destroying the Soviet army? Despite its success, Bellamy argues the operation was fatally flawed. Why? What was the experience of common Soviet soldiers and observers such as Grossman in the face of such utter destruction and demoralizing defeat? How did the first months seem from the perspective of top Politbiuro leaders, such as Khrushchev? The myth is that the Soviet army completely collapsed during Operation Barbarossa, but is this really accurate? The ferocious fighting at Smolensk and on the outskirts of Moscow might indicate another interpretation.

**Research Assignment (Due Fri., 9/23, 5:30 pm):**

Identify three primary sources and/or memoirs. This could be a government order, such as the infamous "Not One Step Back!" order, a work of contemporaneous fiction such as Ilya Ehrenburg's poem, "Kill!" or a memoir such as Kozhina's *Through the Burning Steppe*. 
Week 6: The Barbarization of the War and Fascist Occupation

FILM: *Our Own* (Dmitry Meshkiyev, 2004)


Weds. 9/28: READINGS:
Secondary:

Sources:
- Extract from the [Commissar's Order](#) for "Operation Barbarossa," June 6, 1941.

Fri. 9/30: READINGS:
Secondary:

Sources:

Discussion Question (Due Thurs., 9/29, 9:00 pm):
As part of Operation Barbarossa the Nazis unleashed a brutal occupation regime which involved, among other things, regular army troops as well as the specially-designated *einsatzgruppen* murder squads massacring civilians. How was the occupation regime deeply animated by Nazi racist ideology of anti-Semitism and *untermenschen*? What were the plans for the areas occupied? How did the occupation not simply attract collaborators but evoke violent opposition? What role did the partisan movement play in disrupting the Axis war machine, but also unleashing a civil war behind the lines?

Research Assignment (Due Fri., 9/30, 5:30 pm):
Prepare a working bibliography of primary sources, monographs and scholarly articles (as well as other resources) you have identified as critical for your research project. Please use Turabian’s *Manual of Style* format for this bibliography, NOT social science citation. Please be comprehensive.
## Week 7: The Miracle at Moscow

**FILM:** *Za nami Moskva (Frontline Moscow)* (Mazhit Begalin, 1968)

**Mon. 10/3:** LECTURE, “The Battle of Moscow and The First Soviet Winter Offensive”

**Weds. 10/5:** READINGS:

**Secondary:**

**Sources:**

**Fri. 10/7:** READINGS:

**Secondary:**

**Sources:**
- Grossman, *A Writer at War*, chs. 6-8, pp. 45-78.

### Discussion Question (Due Thurs., 10/6, 9:00 pm):

How was the Wehrmacht stopped at Moscow? How did the people of Moscow, as well as the army, rally to the defense of the capital and deliver an unexpected counter-strike to the Axis? What role do you think natural conditions played versus the military plan of Zhukov? How were the Soviets able to negate the Axis advantages of air power, armored mobility and firepower and deal the first major setback to the German military in the course of the war?

### Research Assignment (No due date):

No assignment this week—work on your proposals.
Week 8: Leningrad Besieged, the GULag at War and the Culture of Hate

FILM: *Ballad of a Soldier* (George Chukrai, 1959)

Mon. 10/10: FALL BREAK—NO CLASS

Weds. 10/12: LECTURE, “The Home Front is Everywhere!”

READINGs:

Secondary:


Sources:


Fri. 10/14: READINGS:

Secondary:


Sources:


Konstantin Simonov, "Wait for Me," (1941) (Song Version).


Discussion Question (Due Thurs., 10/13, 9:00 pm):

The Soviet world war is unique in that the home front was very much a war front. Whether we consider evacuees or GULag prisoners, the total mobilization of Soviet society meant extraordinary hardships for civilians. These methods created a wartime economic miracle, as Barber and Harrison show, that allowed the USSR to outpace the Axis powers in arms production and logistical support remarkably quickly despite losing much of the country's industrial and agricultural bases in 1941. Now city suffered worst than the besieged Leningrad from the war, and yet, despite rampant starvation, its factories still produced arms for the war. What kept Soviet citizens pushing past their last reserves? Was it fear? Was it a desire to be reunited with loved ones, as Simonov's poem indicates? Or was it the cultivation of a culture of hatred towards the enemy, as exemplified by Ehrenberg's work?

Research Assignment (Due Friday, 10/14, 5:30 pm):

Hand in your paper proposals. Each proposal should include a topic, a working thesis and a discussion of the methodology you plan to use and its appropriateness. For instance, a proposal on “Operation Barbarossa” might have a working thesis such as “Hitler's Invasion of the USSR was wildly successful, not only due to Nazi planning but also Stalin's extraordinary incompetence. Even so, it was overly ambitious as the Soviets rallied.” Include a detailed bibliography.
Week 9: Stalingrad—Nemesis on the Volga

FILM: *They Fought for their Country* (Sergei Bondarchuk, 1975) or *Enemy at the Gate* (Ammaud, 2003)

Mon. 10/17: LECTURE, “The Military Turning Point—Stalingrad.”

Weds. 10/19: READINGS:
   Secondary:
   Sources:

Fri. 10/21: READINGS:
   Secondary:
   Sources:

**Discussion Question (Due Thurs., 10/20, 9:00 pm):**

1942 was another year of disaster for the Soviet armed forces. Despite draconian orders such the "Not One Step Backward" order, the Kremlin could not stem the tide of Axis advances in the south—advances which ground to pieces Soviet armies while threatening to cut off the crucial oil fields to the South. And yet in the savage fighting at Stalingrad the Soviets not only stemmed the Wehrmacht's attack but decisively defeated it. Why? What allowed the Soviets to turn the tide of the war and maintain their offensive edge throughout the rest of the war? How, in particular, was the arrival of General Chuikov and a change of tactics to embrace street fighting crucial for victory. What role did Zhukov and *Stavka* play? Grossman provides some of the best unfiltered observations of the battle we have. Who does he credit for the victory?

**Research Assignment (To be scheduled):**

Meet with me one-on-one to discuss your proposal.
**Week 10: Minorities, Ostarbeiter, Collaborators and POWs; Soviet Renegades?**

**FILM:** *Trial on the Road* (Aleksei German, 1971) or *Destiny of a Man* (Sergei Bondarchuk, 1959)

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**Mon. 10/24:** LECTURE, “The Experience of Occupation and the Purging "Collaborators."

**Weds. 10/26:** READINGS:

Secondary:

Sources:
- Elena Kozhina, *Through the Burning Steppe; A Wartime Memoir*, pp. 1-18, 32-44.

**Fri. 10/28:** READINGS:

Secondary:

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**Discussion Question (Due Thurs., 10/27, 9:00 pm):**

Millions upon millions of Soviet citizens found themselves on the wrong side of enemy lines, whether occupied, conscripted for slave labor or captured as POWs. All these people were under suspicion once Soviet forces retook occupied territory, including whole large categories of people such as particular ethnicities (Khrushchev would later quip that Stalin would have deported the Ukrainians but there were too many of them). With special reference to Kozhina's memoir of the agonizing and life-threatening decisions average Soviets faced in occupation, do you think Stalin really needed to fear about the loyalty of these people? What of alleged ethnic collaborators, such as the Chechens? How was the Soviet occupation a sort of "lesser terror" to those who had lived under Nazi terror?

**Research Assignment (To be scheduled):**

Meet with me one-on-one to discuss your proposal.
Week 11: The Soviet Phoenix; The Battle of Kursk and Soviet Amazons

FILM: *The Dawns are Quiet* Here (Stanislav Rostotsky, 1972)

Mon. 10/31: LECTURE, “All for the Front!”

Weds. 11/2: READINGS:

Fri. 11/4: READINGS:

Discussion Question (Due Thurs., 11/3, 9:00 pm):
- The Battle of Kursk was a titanic struggle in which the Soviets laid a trap for the *Wehrmacht* and defeated it head to head in mechanized battle. The resurrection of the Soviet air force and the superiority of Soviet mechanized infantry made a fundamental difference to the battle—but at what cost was this militarization achieved? Why does Harrison called the USSR the "defeated victor"? Part of this mobilization was the extraordinary recruitment of women into the military—including elite positions such as fighter pilot. How did this mobilization create, as Krylova calls it, a partnership in violence?

Research Assignment: (None this week)
- Work on detailed outline of research paper.
**Week 12: The Bones of Berdichev; The Soviet Holocaust**

**FILM:** *The Ascent* (Larissa Shepitko, 1977)

**Mon. 11/7:** LECTURE, “The War of Annihilation—Nazi Genocide and Atrocities.”

**Weds. 11/9:** READINGS:
- Secondary:

**Sources:**
- Ilya Altman and Joshua Rubenstein, *The Unknown Black Book: The Holocaust in German Occupied Soviet Territories*:
  - “Avenge Us!” pp. 154-157

**Fri. 11/11:** READINGS:
- Secondary:

**Sources:**

**Discussion Question (Due Thurs., 11/10, 9:00 pm):**

Some of the most grotesque crimes against humanity ever committed occurred on the Eastern Front during World War II, particularly the destruction of European Jewry in the *Shoah*. The Holocaust is too often associated with the grotesque murder factories such as Treblinka and Birkenau (and it was Soviet war correspondents, such as Grossman, who first alerted the world to these horrors), but vast masses of Jews (and not only Jews) were murdered by roving murder squads and crammed into hellholes now known as ghettos. Explain how this more brutal, less mechanized form of genocide played out during the War in the East. Describe how individuals tried to cope, resist, and ultimately grieve this shocking campaign of racial murder. How did Grossman react to finding the bones of Berdichev?

**Research Assignment (Due Friday, 11/11, 5:30 pm):**

Please hand in a fairly detailed outline of your planned research paper. Remember to include an introduction and conclusion—as well as citations of all quotes and important arguments and data.
Week 13: The Soviet Juggernaut; From the Dniepr to the Oder

FILM: *Come and See* (Elim Klimov, 1985)

Mon. 11/14: LECTURE, “1944 and Stalin’s Ten Crushing Blows.”

Weds. 11/16: READINGS:

Secondary:

Sources:

Discussion Question (Due Tues., 11/15, 9:00 pm):
The Nazi blitzkrieg is infamous as a military tactic, but the Soviet offensives of 1944 have gotten short shrift in the popular imagination due to developments in other theaters. Some of the most smashing victories of the war, however, were dealt by the Soviet army in 1944 (which, not incidentally, knocked a number of Hitler's allies out of the war). How did the Soviets achieve these spectacular military victories (and no, it was not due to a bedraggled Wehrmacht—Army Group Center was a powerful force)? What was the role played by an increasingly brilliant stable of generals, tactical superiority, better weaponry and a highly disciplined military? 1944 was the year that saw the lowest Soviet casualties of the war. Why do you think this was so?

Research Assignment (None due):
Work on draft paper.
Week 14: *Gotterdammerung*: The Battle of Berlin and the Occupation of Eastern Europe

**Fri. 11/18:** LECTURE, “The Soviet Conquest of Eastern and Central Europe—Trouble with Allies.”

**Mon. 11/21:**
Secondary:

Sources:

**Weds. 11/23:** THANKSGIVING RECESS

**Fri. 11/15:** THANKSGIVING RECESS

**Discussion Question (Due Sun., 11/20, 9:00 pm):**

The Soviets long argued that they came to Germany as liberators but the savagery of the German resistance, as well as the establishment of a new Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe has long led historians to be skeptical of this claim. Certainly, the savagery of the Soviet treatment of German civilians ranks as one of the great war crimes of the conflict. That said, do you think Stalin was interested in vengeance in his storming of Berlin or influence? What did the common Soviet soldiers want on reaching Berlin? Was there anything that surprised them about life in the West and should Stalin have been concerned about what they saw in Germany?

**Research Assignment (None due):**

Work on draft paper.

Weds. 11/30: READINGS:
   Secondary:

Fri. 12/2: READINGS:
   Secondary:

   Sources:

**Discussion Question (Due Thurs., 12/1, 9:00 pm):**
   Why did the ghosts of war haunt the Soviet and post-Soviet generations? Tumarkin argues that the Soviets, in particular the Russians, had their grief hijacked by a state interested in legitimation not personal sorrow. Do you agree with her assessment?

**Research Assignment (Due Friday, 12/2, 5:30 pm):**
   Hand in draft paper on Friday, 12/2.
Week 15: Summing Up—Apocalypse Then

Mon. 12/5: READINGS:
Secondary:

Discussion Question (for Class Discussion Only):
What are the myths about World War II that have changed for you in studying the Soviet War? Where does Russian society go in the future with the heavy demographic and historical legacy of the war? Why is the war still one of the only unifying themes in modern Russian politics and society.

Weds. 12/7: Optional Review Session

TUES 12/13: FINAL PAPERS DUE (11:00 a.m.)

12/8-9, 12/12-14: ORAL EXAMS