

San José State University
College of Social Science/ Department of History

HIST 146 - 01
Advanced Topics in European History: Soviet Union

(Spring 2022 – 4 units)

Course and Contact Information

Instructor: Xiaojia Hou
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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 9 AM-10:15 AM
Thursdays, 9AM-10:15 AM
Class Days/Time: TU/TH, 12PM – 13:15PM
Lecture (zoom) <https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/87846946360?pwd=VnhXcG1ib0VFdDhhbmhZZUlvNkpxQT09>
Classroom: DMH 163

Course Catalog Description

An investigation in depth of selected periods or topics in European history.

Instructor Description

In *Age of Extremes*, Eric Hobsbawm writes that “the world that went to pieces at the end of the 1980s was the world shaped by the impact of the Russian Revolution of 1917. We have all been marked by it.” The birth of the Soviet Union punctuated the opening of the “short twentieth century” (1914-1989); its demise signaled its 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 capitalism and liberal democracy. The subject of this course, then, is mainly the Soviet century. We will follow the emergence of the Soviet Union from the ruins of an empire and its transformation to ostensible showcase of the future. Lectures, readings and discussions will explore the building of the world’s first socialist society and its attempts to recast human relations and human nature itself.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

CLO1: Describe and explain the major events and themes in Soviet history. **Assessed by short essay questions on exams.**

CLO2: Describe and explain the concepts such as revolution, socialism, communism and the Soviet impacts on the world. **Assessed by long essay questions on the final exam and response paper.**

CLO3: Summarize and critically analyze historical documents/novels/visual materials. **Assessed by the presentations and essay writings.**

CLO4: Present their findings to the classmates, respond to critiques, and learn to constructively critique the work of other classmates. **Assessed by class discussion and presentations.**

CLO5: Write historical essays with a strong thesis and clear evidence of historical thinking. **Assessed by essay questions on exams, response paper, essay proposal and essay writing.**

Required Texts/Readings

Textbooks

Ronald Suny, *The Soviet Experiment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Other Readings

Additional documents and articles will be posted on the Canvas site, as indicated by * in the syllabus. Doing the reading assigned for each class before coming to class is necessary to benefit from what we do in class. The tentative course schedule indicates details on the readings and the dates by which reading assignments must be completed.

Library Liaison

The History Department Library Liaison is Nyle Monday (nyle.monday@sjsu.edu). Contact him for help with any library assignments in your History classes. His telephone number is (408) 808-2041.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

Examinations or Evaluation

Exams. Two mid-term exams and one final exam.

Response paper. You need to write one response paper on *The Communist Manifesto*, discussing in your understanding and in your words what is Marx's definition of communism, five pages.

Essay Proposal. Write a brief narrative describing your topic and how you find materials relevant to that topic. You are encouraged to consult with the instructor during office hours on your essay proposal.

Final Essay. You need to write an analytic paper on a key topic on the Soviet history. It is *not* a research paper and you should not concern yourselves with identifying and analyzing primary sources. Instead, you should identify a key issue and then analyze the particular topic. Five pages.

Oral Presentation.

All written assignments, with the exception of exams, must be typed, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman font (or an equivalent font), and have one-inch margins. Written assignments will be graded on both content and composition.

Grading Information

Response Paper	100 Points
Two mid-term Exams	280 points
Essay Proposal	50 points
Essay	150 points
Presentation	100 points
Final Exam	220 points
Class Participation	100 points
Total	100 points

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>930 to 1000</i>	<i>93 to 100%</i>
<i>A minus</i>	<i>900 to 929</i>	<i>90 to 92%</i>

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>B plus</i>	<i>860 to 899</i>	<i>86 to 89 %</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>830 to 859</i>	<i>83 to 85%</i>
<i>B minus</i>	<i>800 to 829</i>	<i>80 to 82%</i>
<i>C plus</i>	<i>760 to 799</i>	<i>76 to 79%</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>730 to 759</i>	<i>73 to 75%</i>
<i>C minus</i>	<i>700 to 729</i>	<i>70 to 72%</i>
<i>D plus</i>	<i>660 to 699</i>	<i>66 to 69%</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>630 to 659</i>	<i>63 to 65%</i>
<i>D minus</i>	<i>600 to 629</i>	<i>60 to 62%</i>

Classroom Protocol

All students are expected to attend two lectures each week and complete all assignments. Please come to the class having completed the readings for that day. Bear in mind that active participation means asking good questions as well as proposing good answers. If you cannot attend a lecture, it is your responsibility to find out what you have missed.

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9](#), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on [Syllabus Information web page](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>). Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

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Course Schedule

All dates and assignments in this syllabus are subject to modification. Any changes will be announced during the class.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	Jan 27	Thursday: What about the Soviet History? Readings: Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Revisionism in Soviet History" *
2	Feb 1 & 3	Tuesday: The Layout of the Land Thursday: Russian Society before 1861 Readings: Ronald Grigor Suny, " <i>The Soviet Experiment</i> ," chapter 1.
3	Feb 8 & 10	Tuesday: Industrialization, Politics and Dangers in Modern World Thursday: Reforms Readings: Karl Marx, <i>The Communist Manifesto</i> * Documents on emancipation*
4	Feb 15 & 17	Tuesday: War and Revolution, 1904-05 Thursday: Communism, Lenin and Peasant Problems Readings: Lenin, "The Class Struggle in the Countryside" * Shanin, "Socio-economic Mobility and the Rural History of Russia, 1905-30" * Ronald Grigor Suny, " <i>The Soviet Experiment</i> ," chapter 2. Response Paper due Feb 17 (online submission)
5	Feb 22 & 24	Tuesday: The October Revolution I Thursday: Discussion: the October Revolution Readings: Ronald Grigor Suny, " <i>The Soviet Experiment</i> ," chapter 3.
6	March 1 & 3	Tuesday: Socialism and the Civil Wars Thursday: First mid-term Exam (Online) Readings: Ronald Grigor Suny, " <i>The Soviet Experiment</i> ," chapter 3.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
		Peter Holquist, “ ‘Information Is the Alpha and Omega of Our Work’: Bolshevik Surveillance in Its Pan-European Context” *
7	March 8 & 10	Tuesday: Soviet Union in the 1920s Thursday: Rise of Stalin and Stalinism Readings: Ronald Grigor Suny, “ <i>The Soviet Experiment</i> ,” chapter 5-8. Sheila Fitzpatrick, <i>Everyday Stalinism</i>
8	March 15 & 17	Tuesday: Presentations: Living under Stalin I Thursday: Presentations: Living under Stalin II Readings: Sheila Fitzpatrick, <i>Everyday Stalinism</i>
9	March 22 & 24	Tuesday: The Great Purge Thursday: The Great Patriotic War Readings: “Party and Purge in Smolensk”* Ronald Grigor Suny, “ <i>The Soviet Experiment</i> ,” chapter 9-12. Essay Proposal Due March 24 (online submission)
10	March 29 & 31	Spring Break, No Class
11	April 5 & 7	Tuesday: The Rise of Red Empire Thursday: The Cold War Readings: Ronald Grigor Suny, “ <i>The Soviet Experiment</i> ,” chapter 13-14 Soviet Ambassador’s Long Telegram (1946) *
12	April 12 & 14	Tuesday: Witnessing the Great Purge: <i>Burnt by the Sun</i> Thursday: Second mid-term Exam (Online)
13	April 19 & 21	Tuesday: The Fall of Stalin and Khrushchev’s De-Stalinization Thursday: Khrushchev’s Reform Ronald Grigor Suny, “ <i>The Soviet Experiment</i> ,” chapter 15-17 Khrushchev, “Special Report to the 20 th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union” *
14	April 26 & 28	Tuesday: Brezhnev and Stagnation Thursday: The Soviet Union into the 1980s Readings: Ronald Grigor Suny, “ <i>The Soviet Experiment</i> ,” chapter 17-18

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
		Readings on Brezhnev Era *
15	May 3 & 5	Tuesday: Gorby: Saving socialism -- or burying it? Thursday: 1990s Readings: Ronald Grigor Suny, " <i>The Soviet Experiment</i> ," chapter 19 Readings on Gorbachev Reform *
16	May 10 & 12	Tuesday: Putin Era Thursday: Discussion: Why did socialism fail? Readings: Ronald Grigor Suny, " <i>The Soviet Experiment</i> ," chapter 20 Final Essay Due Dec 10.
Final Exam	May 24	0945 AM -1200 PM