STALIN’S RUSSIA AT WAR

“It was the Russians who tore the guts out of the German Army.”
- Winston Churchill

Course Description: Violence, famine, and epidemic disease took more than fifty million Soviet lives between 1914 and 1953. Over half of these deaths occurred between 1941 and 1945, when the Soviet Union fought the most savage and immense war in history. No other nation ever endured anything like it. The Soviets defeated the invading Axis powers despite the purge of the military leadership in 1937, horrible mistakes at the outset of the war, and widespread hostility within the country to the Stalinist regime. We will focus on the impact of the Stalinist state’s attempt to transform the nation into an industrial power, terror against its own people, the death and destruction during the German occupation, as well as the courage and barbarism in the fight to the death on the Eastern Front, especially during the Battles of Moscow, Leningrad, Stalingrad, Kursk, and Berlin. Evaluating the role of Stalin (or “Uncle Joe” as the American and British public knew him) and his inner circle, as well as what the Stalinist Revolution and “Great Patriotic War” meant for ordinary Soviets, will be of particular concern.
**Grading:** This course contains a substantial writing component. During the course of the semester students will write three critical analyses of assigned reading, five pages in length each. In addition, by 11:30 a.m. on most class days, students will e-mail me three questions dealing with that day’s reading. The final grade is based on both the written assignments (60% essays; 10% questions) and the extent and quality of classroom participation (30%). Late papers/questions will be penalized. While NSP rules permit students three unexcused absences, in this discussion-based seminar any unexcused absences will negatively impact the class participation grade.

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259.

For an explanation of academic dishonesty, students should consult the Office of Student Judicial Services at [http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/).

In keeping with the university’s revision of its grading options, this course will be graded with the use of +/- grades (for example A-, C+, etc.).

**Writing Tips:**
1. You are encouraged to discuss the topic with classmates but the essay you write must be your own work.
2. State your argument in your opening paragraph. Do so quickly and concisely and as forcefully as possible.
3. Support your argument by specific references to evidence from the readings. Also confront the opposing argument and state your reasons for rejecting it.
4. The topic sentence of each of these supporting paragraphs should state the aspect of the topic you wish to discuss.
5. Use the last paragraph to summarize your argument briefly. Let it mirror your first paragraph.
6. Avoid excessive or unnecessary detail. You are writing for an audience (me) who knows what happened and has done the reading.
7. Quote to add punch. Paraphrase otherwise. Do not quote often or use long quotations.
8. Avoid the passive voice. Write about the past in the past tense.
9. Try to write as simply and directly as possible. Omit needless words.
10. Your essay, due at the beginning of class, must be typed, double-spaced, spell-checked, and grammatically correct.
Texts:
Simon Sebag Montefiore, Stalin.
John Scott, Behind the Urals.
Arthur Koestler, Darkness at Noon.
Richard Overy, Russia’s War.
Catherine Merridale, Ivan’s War.
Lydia Chukovskaya, Sofia Petrovna.
Geoffrey Roberts, Victory at Stalingrad.

Course Packet. An asterisk next to a reading in the weekly schedule indicates a selection from the Packet. The Packet is available from Paradigm, 407 W. 24th St., 472-7986.

#Online: Download or Read Online at University of Texas Libraries

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

WEEK ONE: Introduction
Wednesday, January 18
Film Clip: “Why We Fight: The Battle of Russia”

Friday, January 20
Reading: Merridale, 1-22
   Overy xi-xxi
   #Naimark, Stalin’s Genocides, 1-29

WEEK TWO: Revolutionary Russia and the Rise of Stalin
Wednesday, January 25
Reading: *Brooks & Chernyavskiy, 1-31
   Father Gapon’s Petition (Handout)
   Overy, 1-12

Friday, January 27
Reading: Montefiore, 25-43
   Overy, 13-16
   #Naimark, Stalin’s Genocides, 30-50
Film: “The Life and Times of Joseph Stalin”
WEEK THREE: Forced Collectivization & Famine
Wednesday, February 1
Reading: Merridale, 29-33
Overy, 16-17, 22-23
*Hindus, “Red Bread”

Friday, February 3
Reading: Montefiore, 58-70, 82-101
#Naimark, “Dekulakization” & “The Holodomor”
Film: “Harvest of Despair”

WEEK FOUR: Breakneck Industrialization
Wednesday, February 8
Reading: Scott, ix-92
Overy, 18-20
Merridale, 33-43

Friday, February 10
Reading: Scott, 117-170

WEEK FIVE: The Great Terror
Wednesday, February 15: Essay #1 Due
Reading: Montefiore, 126-158
Overy, 24-25
*Conquest, “The Kirov Murder”
*Knight, “1 December: The Murder”
*Getty, “The Politics of Repression Revisited”
*Getty, “Growing Tension in 1935”

Friday, February 17
Reading: Overy, 21-22, 24-33
Montefiore, 3-22, 159-227
Merridale, 44-48
Scott, 173-206
Discussion of Film: “Burnt by the Sun”

WEEK SIX: Fear and Belief in the Terror
Wednesday, February 22
Reading: Chukovskaya, 1-120
Friday, February 24
Reading: Montefiore, 228-297
Scott, 173-206

**WEEK SEVEN: Why Confess?**
Wednesday, February 29
Reading: Montefiore, 184-218
*“Bukharin’s Letter to Stalin”*
Koestler, 1-96

Friday, March 2: *Essay #2 Due*
Reading: Koestler, 97-272

**WEEK EIGHT: How War Came**
Wednesday, March 7
Reading: Overy, 34-55
Montefiore, 301-315
Roberts, 20-22

Friday, March 9
Reading: Overy, 54-72
Montefiore, 326-353
Merridale, 49-81
Roberts, 17-19, 23-26
Film Clip: “The Hour before Midnight”

*** SPRING BREAK ***

**WEEK NINE: Operation Barbarossa & Siege of Leningrad**
Wednesday, March 21
Overy, 73-98
Montefiore, 354-379
Merridale, 82-115
Film Clip: “The Goths Ride East”
Friday, March 23
Reading: Overy, 99-112
  Montefiore, 384-393
  *Lincoln, “Nine Hundred Days”
  *Bidlack, “Survival Strategies”

WEEK TEN: The Battle of Moscow and War of Annihilation
Wednesday, March 28
Reading: Overy, 113-124
  Montefiore, 394-408
  Merridale, 116-124
  Roberts, 39-45
Film Clip: “Why We Fight: The Battle of Russia”

Friday, March 30
Reading: Overy, 125-153
  Merridale, 125-126, 136-146
  Roberts, 26-32
Film: “She Defends the Fatherland”

WEEK ELEVEN: The Battle of Stalingrad
Wednesday, April 4
Reading: Overy, 154-170
  Roberts, 49-104
  Montefiore, 424-432
  Merridale, 171-179

Friday, April 6
NO CLASS – EASTER/PASSOVER WEEKEND

WEEK TWELVE: Soviet Counter-Attack & the Battle of Kursk
Wednesday, April 11
Reading: Overy 171-189
  Merridale, 179-186
  Montefiore, 435-444
  Roberts, 107-136
Discussion of film: “Stalingrad”
Friday, April 13
Reading: Overy, 190-222
    Roberts, 139-142
    Merridale, 187-225
    Montefiore, 445-462
Film Clip: “The Citadel”

WEEK THIRTEEN: False Dawn and the Red Army in German
Wednesday, April 18
Reading: Overy, 223-254
    Merridale, 226-280
    Roberts, 142-145
    Montefiore, 463-478
Discussion of film: “Come and See”

Friday, April 20
Reading: Overy, 255-289
    Montefiore, 479-487
    Merridale, 281-335
    Roberts, 146-161
    *Naimark, “The Problem of Rape”
Discussion of Film: “A Woman in Berlin”

WEEK FOURTEEN: Post-War Russia
Wednesday, April 25
Reading: Overy, 290-330
    Merridale, 336-388
    Montefiore, 463-474, 476-484, 638-657
Film clip: “The Fall of Berlin”

Friday, April 27: Essay #3 Due

WEEK FIFTEEN
Students prepare for the three week extension of the course (May 8-29) in London, Normandy, Paris, and Berlin.