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 and its use of 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 each student 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.).

Outside of class, check out the History Department website, [www.notevenpast.org](http://www.notevenpast.org), which provides dynamic, accessible, short articles on every field of History

**Writing Tips:**

1. You are encouraged to discuss the topic with classmates but the essays 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 and 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, 2116 Guadalupe St. (inside Austin Textbooks), 472-7986.

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

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

**WEEK ONE: Introduction**  
Monday, January 14  
Film Clip: “Why We Fight: The Battle of Russia”

Wednesday, January 16  
Reading: Merridale, 1-22  
Overy xi-xxi  
#Naimark, *Stalin’s Genocides,* 1-29

**WEEK TWO: The Russian Revolution and the Rise of Stalin**  
Monday, January 21  
*** No Class – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day ***

Wednesday, January 23  
Reading: Father Gapon’s Petition (Class Handout)  
*Brooks & Chernyavskiy, 1-31*  
Overy, 1-16  
Montefiore, 25-43  
#Naimark, *Stalin’s Genocides,* 30-50

**WEEK THREE: Forced Collectivization & Famine**  
Monday, January 28  
Reading: Merridale, 29-33  
Overy, 16-17, 22-23  
*Hindus, “Red Bread”*  
Montefiore, 44-48
Wednesday, January 30  
Reading: Montefiore, 58-70, 82-101  
*Naimark, “Dekulakization” & “The Holodomor”  
Film: “Harvest of Despair”

**WEEK FOUR: Breakneck Industrialization**  
Monday, February 4  
Reading: Scott, ix-92  
Overy, 18-20  
Merridale, 33-43

Wednesday, February 6  
Reading: Scott, 117-170

**WEEK FIVE: The Great Terror**  
Monday, February 11: *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”

Wednesday, February 13  
Reading: Overy, 21-22, 24-33  
Montefiore, 3-22, 159-199  
Merridale, 44-48  
Discussion of Film: “Burnt by the Sun”

**WEEK SIX: Fear and Belief in the Terror**  
Monday, February 18  
Reading: Chukovskaya, 1-120

Wednesday, February 20  
Reading: Montefiore, 197-297  
Scott, 173-266

**WEEK SEVEN: Why Confess?**  
Monday, February 25  
Reading: Koestler, 1-96  
“Bukharin’s Letter to Stalin” (Class Handout)

Wednesday, February 27: *Essay #2 Due*  
Reading: Koestler, 97-272
WEEK EIGHT: How War Came
Monday, March 4
Reading: Overy, 34-44
   Montefiore, 301-315
   Roberts, 20-22
   Bardakh, 1-53
Discussion of Film: “Katyn”

Wednesday, March 6
Reading: Overy, 45-72
   Montefiore, 326-353
   Merridale, 49-81
   Roberts, 17-19, 23-26
   Bardakh, 54-74
Film Clip: “The Hour before Midnight”

*** SPRING BREAK ***

WEEK NINE: Operation Barbarossa & Siege of Leningrad
Monday, March 18
Reading: Overy, 73-98
   Montefiore, 354-379
   Merridale, 82-115
   Bardakh, 75-139
Film Clip: “The Goths Ride East”

Wednesday, March 20
Reading: Overy, 99-112
   Montefiore, 384-393
   *Lincoln, “Nine Hundred Days”
   *Bidlack, “Survival Strategies”

WEEK TEN: The Battle of Moscow & German War of Annihilation
Monday, March 25
Reading: Overy, 113-124
   Montefiore, 394-408
   Merridale, 116-136
   Roberts, 39-45
Film Clip: “Why We Fight: The Battle of Russia”

Wednesday, March 27
Reading: Overy, 125-153
   Merridale, 136-171
   Roberts, 26-32
Film: “She Defends the Fatherland”
WEEK ELEVEN: The Gulag: Soviet Labor Camps
Monday, April 1
Reading: Bardakh, 140-239

Wednesday April 3
Reading: Bardakh, 240-346
Discussion of Film: “The Pianist”

WEEK TWELVE: The Battles of Stalingrad and Kursk
Monday, April 8
Reading: Overy, 154-189
   Roberts, 49-136
   Montefiore, 424-444
   Merridale, 171-179
Discussion of film: “Stalingrad”

Wednesday, April 10
Reading: Overy, 190-222
   Roberts, 139-142
   Merridale, 187-225
   Montefiore, 445-462
Film Clip: “The Citadel”

WEEK THIRTEEN: False Dawn and the Victorious Red Army
Monday, April 15
Reading: Overy, 223-254
   Merridale, 226-280
   Roberts, 142-145
   Montefiore, 463-478
Discussion of film: “Come and See”

Wednesday, April 17
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 and the Legacy of the War
Monday, April 22
Reading: Overy, 290-330
   Merridale, 336-388
   Montefiore, 463-501, 626-657
   Bardach, 347-384
Film clip: “The Fall of Berlin”
Friday, April 24: *Essay #3 Due*

**WEEK FIFTEEN**