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Wilson, 2-102  
Office Hours: T-Th, 1:30-3, 4:30-5,  
or by appointment

## HSTR 407

### The Soviet Union: Rise, Fall and Aftermath

This class tells the story of the rise, fall, and aftermath of the Soviet Union. Created as a revolutionary experiment in the wake of the destruction of the First World War, the USSR constituted a “great experiment” which changed the shape of the twentieth century. In this class, we will look mostly at political, economic, and cultural developments taking place in the USSR and post-Soviet space from 1917 to the present day.

#### Course Objectives

**Obtain** a general understanding of the major developments and events relating to the USSR and the post-Soviet World from 1917 to the present day

**Develop** an understanding of historical periodization, particularly with respect to “the Cold War” and “post-Cold War” world.

**Develop** comparative skills, particularly with respect to the place of the USSR and post-Soviet World within the global community

**Develop** thematic skills, especially with regard to issues like cross-cultural interaction, the role of institutions, and cultural/civilizational identity.

**Develop** technical skills, especially writing, and skills related to the field of history.

#### Required books and films

##### Books

Ronald Grigor Suny: *The Soviet Experiment*

Steve Kotkin: *Armageddon Averted*

Adeeb Khalid: *Islam after Communism*

##### Films

*My Perestroika*

*Moscow Doesn't Believe in Tears*

#### Evaluation

Map Quiz: 5%

Attendance and Class Participation: 20%

In class-writing, homework: 15%

Quizzes: 10%

Two papers: 30% (15% apiece)

Midterm: 10%

Final: 10%

### **Class Consciousness**

I think it's very important for a class to 'gel' properly. I therefore outlaw various activities which I think help to kill a good vibe: coming late, eating, falling asleep, using any kind of electronic device, or other types of behavior that isn't focused on making the class better.

### **Lectures, Readings**

My lectures are meant to complement the readings, not supplant them. Students are expected to have completed the assigned readings prior to class. The lectures will make more sense if you are at least familiar with the readings due for that day. Usually, I will give you a couple of rather broad questions to keep in mind while doing the next week's reading.

### **Discussions and Groupwork**

There is a lot of class discussion. Sometimes I put students in a circle, sometimes in groups. I like to move people around, and force people to discuss their ideas with one another face-to-face.

### **Plagiarism and Cheating**

Plagiarism or cheating will result in a report to the provost's office and will likely involve both failing the assignment and the class. See MSU code of conduct [here](#).

### **Schedule of Classes: Key dates: Jan 29 (Map); Feb 12 (first paper), Feb 28 (midterm); April 9 (Second papers); April 25 (Final)**

#### **Week 1 (Thursday, Jan. 10): Intro to the class**

#### **Week 2 (Jan. 15-17): Intro to the region**

\*For Jan 15: Read Suny, 3-14; Remnick, "Written on the Water" (digital reserves, please print out and bring to class).

\*For Jan 17: Suny, 47-65

#### **Week 3 (Jan. 22-24): My Perestroika**

#### **Week 4 (Jan. 29-31): Revolutionary Russia & the Civil War**

\*For Jan. 29: Read Suny, 76-94; 107-108; Vishnevskaya, 26-51 (digital reserves)

\*For Jan. 31: Read Suny, 110-119; 121-125; 126-134. Remnick, 86-100.

#### **Map Quiz: Tuesday Jan 29**

#### **Week 5 (Feb. 5-7): Politics and Culture under Lenin**

\*For Feb 5: Suny, 139-162; Vishnevskaya, 101-140.

\*For Feb 7: Suny, 213-231; Terry Martin, "The Affirmative Action Empire" (D2L)

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#### **Week 6 (Feb 12-14): Stalinism; I Wonder as I Wander**

\*For Feb 12: **First papers due in class on Tuesday Feb. 12;** Suny, 185-186.

\*For Feb 14: Suny, 235-250; Langston Hughes, 69-99.

**Week 7 (Feb. 19-21): WWII and late Stalinism**

\*For Feb. 19: Langston Hughes 101-126; Suny: 252-254.

\*For Feb. 21: Suny, 259-266. Remnick, 144-162

**Week 8 (Feb. 26-28): Midterm, Khalid intro**

Tuesday: **Midterm**

\*For Feb. 28: Khalid, 1-18; Remnick, 152-168.

**Week 9: March 5-7; The Cold War and the era of Khrushchev**

For March 5; Suny, 389-409; 413-421; 425-429; 441-444. Khalid, 50-83

For March 7: Suny, 447-474; Kotkin, 1-30.

**Week 10 (March 12-14): Spring Break**

**Week 11 (March 19-21): Film: *Moskva Slezam ne Verit (Moscow Doesn't Believe in Tears)***

**Week 12 (March 26-28): From Brezhnev to the era of Glasnost & Perestroika; *Islam after Communism***

\*For March 26: Read Richard Stites, "The Brezhnev Culture Wars;" Kotkin, 31-56

\*For March 28: Khalid, 84-115; Suny, 479-490.

**Week 13 (April 2-4): Changing World History**

\* For April 2; Remnick, 216-233; Suny, 499-512.

\* For April 4: Kotkin, 58-85; Khalid, 116-139

**Week 14 (April 9-11): A New Era**

\* For April 9: Kotkin, 86-112; Khalid, 140-167; Suny, 518-522.

\* For April 11: Kotkin, 113-141; Khalid, 168-191

**Second papers due in class Tuesday, April 9**

**Week 15 (April 16-18): Post-Soviet Space**

\* For April 16: Kotkin: 142-170; Khalid, 192-204 [end].

\*For April 18: Kotkin, 171-196 [end]

**Week 16 (April 23-25): Wrap-up, Knapp Evals, and Final**

Tuesday: Wrap-up

Knapp Evaluations

Thursday: Final Exam

***GOOD LUCK IN ALL OF YOUR CLASSES AND HAVE A GREAT SEMESTER!***