

Stalin's Russia, History 43-374

Professor: W. Scott Hoerle (Ph.D. earned at Georgetown University, 2001, Major: Modern German history (with a specialization in cultural and artistic issues surrounding the Third Reich), Minor: Russian and Soviet History)

Email: Please use the email address within the course site itself for all course-related correspondence. In rare circumstances and after the course is over, please use my personal email address: wshoerle5@hotmail.com.

Required Readings:

- 1) David Hoffmann, ed., *Stalinism* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003).
- 2) McCauley, *Stalin and Stalinism*. 3rd edition (New York: Longman, 2008). There are various recent editions of this book. In order to avoid confusion related to page-number differences, for the reading assignments noted for each week (see below) I have noted the headings for each section in the book that I would like you to read.
- 3) Robert Service, *Stalin: A Biography* (Belknap Press, 2006).

Graded Evaluations:

- 1) Four 2-Page Critiques: 14% each (for a total of 56% of the course grade)
- 2) One ca. 7-Page Final Paper: 28%
- 3) Discussion Postings: 16%

ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS:

Guidelines for Submitting Your Work: In this course, all work should be submitted via Blackboard Vista's "assignment drop box." Instructions on how to use the drop box will appear the first time the tool is accessed.

Due Dates: Weekly assignments are due on time, at the temporal juncture specified for each assignment. In an online setting, punctuality is especially important. One point will be removed from each assignment for every day (24 hrs) that it is late.

Papers:

The online setting offers great possibilities for learning. However, it also offers the opportunity for students to feel disengaged from the course. In order to combat the latter, I have decided to assign quite a bit of writing: four brief papers/critiques and one lengthier ca. seven-page research paper. You naturally want to complete these, because it is in your interest to get the most for your money in this course! The more work you do, the more you will learn! As you spend significant time on your essay prose, you will improve your writing skills. Indeed, a central purpose of this course is to improve each student's writing. I will provide significant feedback, including corrections, on the papers and will strive to return them promptly.

As opposed to the discussion postings, the critiques/short papers will generally ask you to deal with a specific reading that I have specified for a given week. For example, I might ask you to 1) outline an author's main argument, 2) consider his or her evidence, and 3) weigh whether you

agree with the author's argument or not. In your papers, you should provide direct quotations from the readings and use proper citation style (see my style sheet on our course website). In other instances, I will ask you to critique a historical source.

In addition to your writing and organization, I will grade these papers according to your attention to and grasp of our readings and other related course material. Along with the first assignment topic, I will include a thorough discussion of my expectations and the appropriate formatting.

Final Paper:

Rare is the history course that does not include some sort of research paper, and this course underscores that rule. At the end of the semester, each student must submit a research paper on a topic related to the course material. By the end of week eight, each student must submit a topic. I will review the topics and then provide each of you with my thoughts and approval (or a recommendation that you choose another topic). I will also provide detailed instructions regarding the final paper as the semester progresses.

ON-LINE COMMUNICATION RULES AND GRADING:

A – Scheduling, Discussion Postings, and Email

- **Release of Topical Content:** Course materials such as the weekly lecture and assignment questions will be released by 2:00 PM every Monday, near the start of the work week. They will not be released before hand, so that the boundary between different topics and themes is not blurred.
- **Release of Discussion Questions:** At the same time (by 2:00 PM every Monday morning) discussion questions will also be released. It is required that students post responses and/or thoughts related to these questions at least twice by the following Monday. The first posting should be posted no later than 10 PM on Thursday of the applicable week and the second posting no later than 9 AM the following Monday.
- **Quality of Discussion Postings.** These discussion postings will be graded according to a recognized rubric (see below) and will constitute 25% of each student's final mark. Postings should reflect: 1) Specific knowledge of the course readings, including direct references to authors and, if appropriate, even page numbers (so that other students can turn to the pages, if they so choose); 2) Evidence that students have thought about the material and taken the time to construct carefully worded responses; 3) Proper English grammar and usage. Writing style is just as important in a history class as in an English class. **"I agree" is not a sufficient posting. Postings must contain complete sentences with substantive information reflecting a grasp of the issues and material involved.**
- **My Responses to Postings:** I will respond to many, but not all postings. My aim will be to enhance the discussion by adding information where relevant and needed. I will also strive to keep the conversation on track by re-aligning the topic when students' comments go astray.
- **Email:** The Blackboard Vista system that we are using for this course has its own internal email system. I would like to keep our correspondence in the course within the

Blackboard system. Therefore, except in exceptional cases, students should use the course email and login every day to check for class correspondence.

- **Chat:** Each Sunday evening, from 7:30-8:30 PM, we will have an on-line chat session. Here, we will discuss the topic of the week and current assignments. I will also answer questions of anyone who has them. Although chat is not mandatory (due to the fact that some students may not be able to attend due to work, family, etc.), it is highly recommended that each student make an appearance in the chat forum each week.

B – Grading Rubric for Discussion Postings

On-line postings will be graded according to the following criteria:

1 point: Student is careless with language/style/grammar/punctuation

2 points: Student makes only minor mistakes with language/style/grammar/punctuation

3 points: Student makes hardly any or no mistakes with language/style/grammar/punctuation

1 point: Student shows little grasp of material/little or no knowledge of readings with no references to our books/articles

2 points: Student shows basic grasp of material/basic knowledge of readings with only occasional references to our books/articles

3 points: Student shows very solid grasp of material/very solid knowledge of readings with frequent and direct references to our books/articles

A discussion-posting score of 6 is, therefore, an A or 100%. A score of 2 equals a C- or 70%. Failure to post anything at all will result in a 0 for the assignment.

Class Schedule:

Week 1: Foundations and Long-Term Causes: Russian History before 1917

Reading Assignment: I did not want to request that everyone buy a textbook on Russian history, for they can be quite expensive. My recommendation is that you get a hold of any history of Russia during the modern period (18th, 19th, and 20th centuries) and study it up until the period before World War I (1914). Most public libraries should have something on Russian history. You might study materials on the internet, too. In addition, please read David Hoffmann, *Stalinism* (chapter 3).

Week 2: The Russian Revolution of 1917

Reading Assignment: Martin McCauley, Chapter 1, sections entitled “The October Revolution” and “State Capitalism and War Communism.”

Week 3: Who was Joseph Stalin? His youth and early career

Reading Assignment: Robert Service (pp. 3-124)

Week 4: The 1920s and the Bolshevik Circles of Power

Reading Assignment: Martin McCauley, Chapter 1, section entitled “NEP”; Robert Service (pp. 127-207)

Week 5: Stalin's Seizure of Power

Reading Assignment: Robert Service (pp. 208-264)

Week 6: The "Second October" Revolution--Forced Industrialization

Reading Assignment: Martin McCauley, chapter 2, section entitled "Politics and the Economy"; Robert Service (pp. 265-298); David Hoffmann (chapter 5)

Week 7: The "Second October Revolution": Collectivization

Reading Assignment: David Hoffmann (chapter 7)

Week 8: The Terror Famines

Reading Assignment: Robert Service (pp. 299-309); David Hoffmann (chapter 6)

Week 9: How to Write a Research Paper

Reading Assignment: David Hoffmann (chapter 1)

Week 10: Instrument of Terror: The NKVD and the Machinations of a Police State

Reading Assignment: Robert Service (pp. 310-345)

Week 11: Destroying the "Fifth Column": The Great Purges

Reading Assignment: Martin McCauley, chapter 2, sections entitled "The Purges" and "Stalinism Triumphant"; Robert Service (pp. 346-375); David Hoffman (chapter 4)

Week 12: Stalin's Foreign Policy and the "Winter War" against Finland

Reading Assignment: Martin McCauley, chapter 2, section entitled "Foreign Policy"; Robert Service (pp. 379-409); David Hoffmann (chapter 9)

Week 13: From Disaster to Victory: World War II

Reading Assignment: Martin McCauley, chapter 3 (in entirety); Robert Service (pp.410-487)

Week 14: Stalin's Last Years and the "Doctor's Plot"

Reading Assignment: Martin McCauley, chapter 4 (in entirety); Robert Service (pp. 491-604); David Hoffmann (chapter 11)