

Sociology 431
 Fall 2010
 The Making and Unmaking of Communist Ideals
 Tuesday, 7-9 p.m.
 King 339

Professor VujaNiW
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 Office Hours:
 Tues., 10-12, Thur., 12-1.30
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The Making and Unmaking of Communist Ideals
 (Learning About Society Through Historiography, Literature, and Film)

In this seminar we will explore the development of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe through historiography, literature, and film. In the first few weeks of the course we will cover the fundamentals of Marxist theory and look at its Leninist application in the Russian historical context. Next, we will explore the background and course of the two Russian revolutions of 1917 through the eyes of one of its main architects and Marxist historians--Leon Trotsky. The main part of the course is devoted to early revolutionary dilemmas, the relationship of intellectuals to the revolution both in Soviet Russia and the West, and the rise of Stalinism. Finally, we will document the process of the gradual disillusionment with Communism in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Throughout the course we will use historiography, literature and film for conveying *sociological* ideas and realities. The students are advised to remember that this is a sociology course and that the emphasis, both in their presentations and their research papers, *must be* on the sociological, not the literary or aesthetic content of the works analyzed. The topic of the research papers will be determined in consultation with the professor. Normally, the topic can be based on the works covered in the seminar but students will be expected to go beyond what was covered in class.

Course prerequisites. Two courses in sociology or consent of instructor.

Course requirements.

Attendance, class participation, and Blackboard discussion postings;
Attendance at all films, absolutely no exceptions;
 One in-class presentation during the semester;
 One short paper analyzing a feature film or documentary (5 pages)
 One 15-page research paper based on the class readings.

Grading.

Class and film attendance, participation, and Blackboard discussion postings:	25%
Oral presentation in class:	20%
Short paper (5 pages):	20%
Research paper:	35%

Honor Code

This course and all its assignments are covered by the Oberlin College honor code. This means, most importantly, that—unless otherwise indicated—you are to produce your own work and honor the rules and conventions of scholarly quotation, attribution, and citation. While you are allowed to ask advice and help from librarians and official writing tutors, you are, in the end, to submit work produced by *you*. Any case of (suspected) plagiarism will be reported to the Honors Committee. For more details, see <http://new.oberlin.edu/students/policies/10-Policies-Honor.pdf>

For further clarification of the potential consequences see J.V.Stalin, *Problems of Leninism* (any edition).

Required Books (All books are in the bookstore and on hard copy reserve; additional copies are available through Ohiolink. All other readings can be found on the Blackboard course site under “Course documents.”)

Tucker, Robert, *Stalin in Power: the Revolution from Above, 1929-1941*. (ISBN 9780393308693) - Norton

Gladkov Fedor, *Cement* (ISBN 9780810111608) - Northwestern University Press

Ignazio Silone, *Bread and Wine*
Bread and Wine (ISBN 9780451529787) - Penguin

Koestler, Arthur, *Darkness at Noon** (9780553265958) - Random House

Czeslaw Milosz, *The Captive Mind*
Captive Mind (ISBN 9780679728566) - Random House

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (ISBN 9780553247770) - Random House

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week One. Marxism and Communism

Tues. 9/7

Review. Karl Marx, “Marx on the History of His Opinions,” “Wage Labor and Capital” and “The Communist Manifesto” in Robert Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, pp.3-7, 203-218, 469-501.

Week Two. The Imperial Russian Historical Context

Documentary Film: *Red Empire*, part one.

Tues.9/14

Robert Tucker, *Stalin in Power*, pp.14-24.

Boris Brutzkus, "The Historical Peculiarities of the Social and Economic Development of Russia," in Reinhard Bendix and Seymour Lipset, eds., *Class, Status, Party*, pp.121-135.

Martin Malia, "What is the Intelligentsia?" in Richard Pipes, *The Russian Intelligentsia*, pp.1-19.

Richard Pipes, "Communism and Russian History," pp.3-23.

Week Three. Marxism, Modernization, and the Leninist party.

Red Empire, part two.

First Blackboard posting due by midnight Monday 9/20

Tues.9/21

Robert Tucker, "Marxism and Modernization," in *The Marxian Revolutionary Idea*, pp.92-129.

Philip Selznick, *The Organizational Weapon*, pp.1-73.

Joseph Stalin, "The Party," in *Problems of Leninism*, pp. 96-113.

Week Four. The February Revolution of 1917.

Feature Film: *Reds*, part one.

Second Blackboard posting due by midnight Monday 9/27

Tues. 9/28

Isaac Deutscher, "Leon Trotsky as a historian and sociologist of revolution," in Alex Simirenko, ed., *Soviet Sociology*, pp.150-167.

Leon Trotsky, *The Russian Revolution, Vol. I*, pp. 3-15; 33-63; 101-152; 206-215; 285-331; 458-461.

Week Five. The October Revolution of 1917.

Feature Film: *Reds*, part two.

Third Blackboard posting due by midnight

Tues.10/5

Leon Trotsky, *The Russian Revolution, Vol. II*, pp. 136-159; 304-322; *Vol.III*, pp. 3-35, 124-200; 276-302; 344-349.

Arthur L. Stinchcombe, "Analogy and Generality in Trotsky and de Tocqueville," in *idem.*, *Theoretical Methods in Social History*, pp.31-77.

Week Six. Early Revolutionary Dilemmas.

Feature Film: Bernardo Bertolucci, *1900* (part one).

Fourth Blackboard posting due by midnight Monday, 10/4

Tues.10/12

Fyodor Gladkov, *Cement*.

Week Seven. Communism and Western Intellectuals

Feature Film: Bernardo Bertolucci, *1900* (part two).

Fifth Blackboard posting due by midnight, Monday 10/11

Tues.10/19

Ignazio Silone, *Bread and Wine*.

Fall break (10/23-10/31).

Week Eight. From the Rise of Stalin to Collectivization

Short film response paper due on Monday, November 1, by 4 p.m. in King 305a.

Film: *Red Empire*, part three.

Tuesday, 11/2

Tucker, *Stalin in Power*, pp.25-118, 172-222.

Week Nine. The Terror and the Great Purge Trials

Film: *Red Empire*, part four.

Sixth Blackboard posting due by midnight, 11/8

Tuesday 11/9

Tucker, *Stalin in Power*, pp.238-337, 366-440.

Transcript of Nikolai Bukharin's trial in Robert Tucker, *The Great Purge Trial*, pp.656-668.

Week Ten. The End of the Old Bolsheviks

Film: Nikita Mikhalkov, *Burnt by the Sun*

Seventh Blackboard posting due by midnight, Monday 11/15

Tuesday 11/16

Arthur Koestler, *Darkness at Noon*.

Week Eleven. Stalinism and Intellectuals in Eastern Europe

Eighth Blackboard posting due by midnight, Monday 11/22

Tuesday, 11/23

Charles Simic, "A World Gone up in Smoke," *The New York Review of Books*, December 20, 2001.

Czeslaw Milosz, *The Captive Mind*.

Week Twelve. Unmasking Stalinism in the Khrushchev era

Red Empire, part six.

Ninth Blackboard posting due by midnight, Monday 11/29

Tuesday 11/30

Excerpts from Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" (1956) in Robert V. Daniels, *A Documentary History of Communism in Russia*, pp.254-258.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*

Week Thirteen. Utopia and Its Discontents

Film: Dušan Makavejev, *Mysteries of the Organism*

Tuesday 12/7

William Weaver, "The Mystery of Ignazio Silone," *New York Review of Books*, March 14, 2002.

Louis Menand, "Road Warrior" (on Koestler), *The New Yorker*, December 21&28, 2009.

Statements by Silone and Koestler in Richard Crossman, ed. *The God That Failed*, pp.25-119.

Week Fourteen. Concluding Discussion. Student Presentations on Research Papers.

Tuesday 12/14

Victor Zaslavsky, "Mystery in a Soviet Library," in Geoffrey Wolff, ed., *The Best American Essays of 1989*, pp.278-288.

Ian Frazier, "On the Prison Highway," *The New Yorker*, August 30, 2010.

Final paper due on Wednesday December 22, by 11 a.m.