Instructor: Dr. Rebecca Mitchell  
Office Hours: M/W 11:00-12:00 or by appointment  
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Course Description:
Few doctrines have more dramatically shaped the political, social and economic landscape of the modern world than communism. However, rather than a single monolithic political and socio-economic structure, the search for “true” communism inspired a wide spectrum of human experience throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This course, which covers both the political philosophy and the historical implementation of communism, explores the development of various strands of intellectual Marxism throughout the long nineteenth century, practical attempts to establish Communist regimes (including the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, China, East Asia, and Cuba) in the twentieth century, and lived experience under Communism. Major themes include the development of national variants of Marxism, the impact of Communist ideology on daily life, the relationship between ideology and power, and the constant tension between political expediency and doctrinal purity. Throughout the course, the complex relationship between the idea and the practice of communism - in various historical manifestations - will be a recurring theme.
Learning Outcomes:
The focus of this course is two-fold: first, gaining a better understanding of the
development of Communist ideology and practice in a global context; second, applying
historical inquiry and research on a topic of your own choosing within the larger context
of global Communism, leading to the preparation of an original work of scholarship.

Required Texts:
Cheek, Timothy, ed., *Mao Zedong and China's Revolutions: A Brief History with
Documents* (Bedford/St.Martin’s, 2002)

Recommended Texts:

Useful Website:
Marxists Internet Archive (www.marxists.org)
    This website provides a vast array of primary source material related to the
development of Marxist thought throughout the world. You are strongly
couraged to browse the subject index and familiarize yourself with some of the
materials that you might wish to use in your research paper. Any document found
on this site is an acceptable primary source for your essay.

Grading Schema:
*Please note that late work loses 1/3 of a letter grade for each day late. Late work will
also affect your ability to participate actively, and your participation grade will therefore
also suffer. No final papers will be accepted after the December 21st deadline.*

Analytical Paper: 15% (3-4 pages) Due October 8, 2014
    Choose a specific theme or concept that played a key role in early Communist
thought (class struggle, alienation, etc). Analyze its significance and development
in the writings of Marx and Engels and later Marxist thinkers covered in class.

Response Papers (4): 10% each (3-4 pages)
    You will select four class sessions from Week Two through Week Ten, and
prepare a brief response paper synthesizing the main themes and arguments of the
readings. At the end of the paper, you should include two discussion questions
based on the reading. This will help you both make sense of the readings and
prepare for class discussion. These papers are due *at the start of the selected class
session*. These papers will be graded on a check, check plus, check minus basis.

Research Paper: 25%
    Research paper on a topic of your choice (approved by the professor), 10-15
pages in length. Final version due December 21, 2014 at 11:00am.

Conference Presentation: 10%
    Being able to present your findings to colleagues is an important skill to develop.
In this class, you will deliver a 10-15 minute presentation in conference format,
highlighting your thesis and most important findings, and you will respond to questions from your colleagues. Presentations will be scheduled in the last two weeks of class.

**Participation, Class Introduction and Attendance: 10%**

You are expected to attend and be active in workshops and in-class discussions. For ONE class in the semester, you will be responsible for giving a few introductory comments (maximum 5 minutes) to frame the discussion: this should include a brief summary of main themes that you believe tie the readings together (or connect the readings to previous weeks) and topics that you want the class to discuss further. Participation in all class sessions is mandatory; any unexcused absence from class will negatively affect your participation grade, particularly as we meet only once per week. Students who miss three scheduled class meetings without authorization will receive a failing grade. For any assignments that are not assigned a separate final grade (listed above), satisfactory completion of the requirements will be factored into your participation grade.

*Late work* will be penalized by a reduction of 1/3 a letter grade per day late. Thus, an “A” paper received two days late will be downgraded to a “B+”. Be sure to look over the schedule and plan accordingly!

All course work must be received by December 21, 2014 at 11:00am. Please note that you must complete all assignments in order to pass the class.

**Attendance Policy:** I expect all students to be present and prepared for each class session. Be sure to inform me if there are extenuating circumstances that force you to miss a class. I reserve the right to fail any student with three (3) or more unexcused absences.

**Class Etiquette:**

1) Be sure to turn off ALL cell phones prior to class – this is a sign of respect for myself, your colleagues, and the atmosphere of learning in the classroom.

2) Please do NOT surf the internet during class time. Laptop computers are useful tools for learning and note-taking, but must be used responsibly. Internet surfing distracts both yourself and your colleagues and hinders classroom discussion. Offenders will be requested not to bring their computers to future classes.

3) When you send me an email, be sure to use proper written etiquette (formal address, correct grammar, clearly stated question or comment). Remember that this is a formal written exchange and part of your scholarly persona!

4) This classroom is a space for respectful discussion of concepts, ideas and events. Everyone has the right to express their ideas, pose questions, and engage in productive conversation. While differences of opinion will certainly arise, it is our collective responsibility to create an open, respectful and cordial atmosphere.

**Plagiarism and the Honor Code:**

“The word plagiarism derives from Latin roots: *plagiarius*, an abductor, and *plagiare*, to steal. The expropriation of another author’s work and the presentation of it as one's own,
constitutes plagiarism and is a serious violation of the ethics of scholarship.” [American Historical Association, Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct]. Presenting the work of others as one’s own goes against everything that a liberal education is about. It is a serious affront to the other students in the course, to me as a member of the course, and to the plagiariser him/herself. The College requires that students sign an “Honor Code” for all assignments. This pledge states: “I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment.” For further information, see the student Honor Code which you can access via Blackboard>Lookup/Directories>Honor Code. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism please see me or raise it in class.

Class Schedule:
*Please Note: I reserve the right to change the syllabus over the course of the semester. Any changes that are introduced will be discussed in class at least one week prior to their implementation.*

Week One (September 8, 2014): The Origins of Communism
Suggested Background Reading: Service, “Communism before Marxism”

Week Two (September 15, 2014): The Basics of Communism
Reading Assignment: *Marx/Engels Reader* (selections)
Suggested Background Reading: Service, “Marx and Engels”

Week Three (September 22, 2014): Communist Thought After Marx: Divisions in Europe
What was Marxism-Leninism? Why was it so successful? What other potential paths were proposed by European Communists in the early twentieth century?
Reading Assignment:
Suggested Background Reading: Service, “Communism in Europe,” “Russian Variations,” “European Revolutions”

Week Four (September 29, 2014): National Variants in Communism [Focus on China/Maoism]
Apart from Marxism-Leninism, what other variants of Communism emerged in the twentieth century? How were they implemented? Are these various movements that claim the label “communist” comparable? Why or why not?

Reading Assignment:
- **Primary Sources**: Mao Zedong and China’s Revolutions: A Brief History with Documents
- **Secondary Analysis**: Hong Yung Lee, “Mao’s Strategy for Revolutionary Change,” China Quarterly no.77 (March 1979): 50-73


**Library Visit (Second Half of Class)**

**Week Five (October 6, 2014): Marxism and Anti-Colonialism**
*(Professor at Conference; Reschedule)*

What was the relationship between Marxism and anti-colonialism movements? What was “guerilla communism” and how did it affect the communist movement globally?

Reading assignment:

Suggested Background Reading: Service, “Revolutionary Cuba”

**Analytical Paper due October 8, 2014: Turn in hard copy to my office**

**Week Six (October 13, 2014): “Becoming” Communist [Focus on USSR]**

Why did people become communists? How did they seek to reshape their identities? What narratives did they employ?

Reading assignment:
- **Primary Sources**: Young, 1-40


**Week Seven (October 27, 2014): Communist Subjectivity [Focus on Europe]**
*What did it mean to be “Communist”? How did communists experience the world?*

**Reading assignment:**
- **Primary Sources:** Young, 80-155

Suggested Background Reading: Service, “Inside the Parties”, “Friends and Foes”

*Individual Meetings with Professor; Research Bibliography due.*

**Week Eight (November 3, 2014): Leader Cults**
*How and why did the cult of the leader become a typical part of many Communist regimes? What function did this serve and why? Was it an inherent part of communism? Why or why not?*

**Reading Assignment:**
- **Primary Sources:** (Visual images posted via Blackboard)

*Communist regimes in the 20th century were often accompanied by state repression of dissent. This week we consider the repercussions of violence for both perpetrators and victims, as well as society as a whole.*

**Reading assignment:**
- **Primary Sources:** Young, 156-190
gendering Remembrance: Memory, Gender and Informers for the Stasi,”
*New German Critique* no.86 (Spring-Summer 2002): 103-134

**Week Ten (November 17, 2014): Communist Culture**

*What is the role of culture in a Communist society? What forms of culture emerged under communist regimes? Who defined acceptable and unacceptable forms of culture?*

**Reading assignment:**

- **Primary Sources:** Young, 191-309

**Week Eleven (November 24, 2014):**

**In-Class Film and Discussion:** (*Goodbye Lenin!*)

- Please note that class will run slightly over due to the length of the film.

**Suggested Background Reading:** Service, “Perestroika,” “The Comrades Depart”

**Research Paper Thesis and Outline Due**

**Week Twelve (December 1, 2014): Memory, Ostalgie, Trauma**

*How are the upheavals associated with communism made sense of in contemporary societies?*

**Reading assignment:**

- **Primary Sources:** Young, 359-390; Tomas van Houtryve, “Maostalgia,” *Foreign Policy* 179 (May/June 2010): 72-79

**Suggested Background Reading:** Service, “Accounting for Communism”

**Conference Presentations (6)**

**Week Thirteen (December 8, 2014): Revising, Editing and Peer Review**

**Research Paper Drafts Due**

**Conference Presentations (6)**

**Research Paper: Due Monday, December 21, 2014 by 11am**