

HIST 129c. Twentieth-Century Russia.

Fall 2023 ver. 9-18-23 updated

Part 1: Course information

Time and place: Tuesdays and Thursdays noon-1:15 p.m. in BRH 218.

Instructor information

Instructor: Aaron J. Cohen, PhD.

Office hours: TuWeTh 1:30-2:30 p.m. or by appointment in Tahoe Hall 3092 OR via Zoom @ <https://csus.zoom.us/my/cohenofficehours>.

E-mail: cohenaj@csus.edu.

Catalog description

Revolutionary origins of the Soviet Union, its rise as a global superpower, and its sudden dissolution. Emphasis on the major political, economic, social, and cultural trends that defined Soviet civilization, as well as the Soviet legacy for contemporary Russia and the world.

Registration details

Graded: Graded Student.

Units: 3.0.

Prerequisite: None.

GE area: **None.**

Course description

The Soviet Union was at once the most reviled and revered country in the twentieth century. Its people witnessed some of the darkest days in human history and times of great utopian optimism. In this term we will study Russian and Soviet political, cultural, social, and economic developments from 1917 to the present. Readings and discussions will help us explore various interpretations of the Soviet Union, its links to the Russian past and its radical innovations, and its admirable and abominable contributions to the shape of the modern world.

Textbooks and course materials

Required texts:

1. *The Structure of Soviet History*, **2nd Edition** (Suny). ISBN 9780195340549.
2. *Intimacy & Terror* (Garros). ISBN 9781565843981.
3. *Secondhand Time* (Alexievich). ISBN 9780399588822.
4. Documents and videos posted on Canvas (including excerpts from Lenin, *State and Revolution*, 1917).

Course technology requirements

Handouts and assignments are distributed only via Canvas. **Students have a responsibility to access course materials and assignments in a timely manner.** The instructor will not be held responsible for any circumstances, technical or personal, that prevent access to course material.

The use of artificial intelligence to complete assignments without instructor permission is considered by the university to be academic dishonesty. Any work determined to be AI generated in this class will be treated as the equivalent of plagiarism according to the policies in this syllabus.

All required technology is available at low or no cost through student support services at Sac State. The CSUS library and Instructional Resource Technology office provide **free laptops** and Microsoft Word for students to use on a short- or long-term [basis](#). Students may use personal computers, but they must meet the following requirements:

- High-speed internet connection.
- Access to Canvas throughout the semester.
- Ability to use Zoom, Microsoft Word, and Adobe software.

Do NOT use Google Docs OR portable devices as word processors in this course. Use a computer and the desktop version of MS Word. To obtain your free desktop version of MS Word (and Microsoft 365), go to office365.csus.edu and login with your Sac State login and password. Click on "Install Apps."

Videos are hosted within the university's Panopto system. Panopto sometime has difficulty interacting with various devices and technologies. **To ensure that you receive proper credit for viewing videos and films:**

- **Make sure to use a laptop computer** and web browser. **Do not use** an iPhone or iPad or the Canvas app (on Apple or Android) as privacy settings can interfere with Panopto.
- **Only view through the link provided in the course Canvas site** (i.e., do not use streaming video services or the library website). To watch on a large screen tv, connect and stream via your computer.
- **Disable ad blockers (e.g., Adblock) and browser extensions/plugins that block analytics or anonymize.** These can interfere with Panopto.
- **Avoid having open multiple windows while viewing.** If you would like to have a different page open while viewing, use a separate device.

If Panopto is still not correctly registering your participation, contact the Information Resources and Technology (IRT) department and [open a service ticket](#).

For technical questions, please:

- See [Canvas for Students](#) for common Canvas questions and solutions.

- Email the [Academic Technology Center](#) in AIRC 2005.
- Call (916) 278-7337.

Crisis Assistance & Resource Education Support (CARES)

If you are experiencing challenges with food, housing, financial or other unique circumstances that are impacting your education, help is just a phone call or email away. The [CARES](#) office provides case management support for any enrolled student.

Services to Students with Disability (SSWD)

Sacramento State is committed to ensuring an accessible learning environment where course or instructional content are usable by all students and faculty. If you believe that you require disability-related academic adjustments for this class, please immediately contact [Services for Students with Disabilities \(SSWD\)](#) to discuss eligibility. A current accommodation letter from SSWD is required before any modifications, above and beyond what is otherwise available for all other students in this class will be provided.

Title IX information

Sac State is committed to supporting students and fostering a campus environment free of sexual misconduct and gender-based discrimination. If a student chooses to disclose to a faculty or staff member an experience related to sexual misconduct which includes, but is not limited to rape, relationship violence, or stalking, all faculty and staff members are obligated to report this disclosure to the university's Title IX Coordinator. Contact Sac State's Title IX Coordinator, Skip Bishop, at (916) 278-5770 or email at william.bishop@csus.edu. Upon receipt of the report, the Title IX Coordinator will contact you to inform you of your rights and options as a survivor and connect you with support resources, including resolution options for holding accountable the person who harmed you.

Students who elect not to discuss their experience with the Title IX Coordinator can speak confidentially to the following confidential resources: Student Health & Counseling Services at The WELL On Campus Phone Number: 916-278-6461 Website: www.csus.edu/shcs. Campus Confidential Advocate – Laura Swartzen Email: weave@csus.edu. On Campus Phone Number: 916-278-5850 (during business hours) WEAVE 24/7 Hotline: 916-920-2952.

Student Health and Counseling Services

Your physical and mental health are important to your success as a college student. [Student Health and Counseling Services \(SHCS\)](#) in The WELL offers medical, counseling, and wellness services to help you get and stay healthy during your time at Sac State. SHCS offers: Primary Care medical services, including sexual and reproductive healthcare, transgender care, and immunizations; urgent care for acute illness, injuries, and urgent counseling needs; pharmacy for prescriptions and over-the-counter products; mental health counseling, including individual sessions, group counseling, support groups, mindfulness training, and peer counseling;

athletic training for sports injury rehabilitation; wellness services, including nutrition counseling, peer-led health education and wellness workshops, and free safer sex supplies; violence and sexual assault support services. Most services are covered by the Health Services fee and available at no additional cost.

Important notes: Any form of academic dishonesty, including cheating and plagiarism, may be reported to the office of student affairs. **This syllabus and course policies are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances or typographical errors. In case of a conflict between the syllabus and Canvas instructions, the syllabus will take precedence unless the syllabus shows a clear error.** Any changes will be announced in class and posted on Canvas. It is the student's responsibility to check Canvas for corrections or updates to the syllabus.

All students are expected to behave according to the [Hornet honor code](#).

Part 2: Course objectives

General course learning objectives

In this course, students will be able to

- Recount a broad outline of Soviet history and its legacy for contemporary Russia.
- Practice written communication, critical thinking, and other skills necessary for professional development in history, teaching, and related occupations.
- Learn something interesting about the world and about the self.

Specific topical learning objectives are available on Canvas.

Part 3: Course assignments

Students will meet these objectives through a combination of these course activities. Details on rubrics, criteria for grading, and other information are posted on Canvas.

I. Attendance. Attendance will be graded using the standard percentage scale.

II. Identification quizzes. There are **three (3)** thirty-minute in-class identification quizzes as indicated on the class schedule. For each quiz, **seven quiz items** (people, places, dates, and concepts) will be chosen from lecture material and reading assignments. Students will identify, describe, and state the significance of **four (4)** out of these seven items. Each answer should be at least a paragraph containing the "who, what, where, when, and why" for that item in as much detail as possible. Quizzes are not cumulative.

III. Formal essays. There are **three (3)** short (minimum 750 word) formal take-home essays due when indicated on the class schedule. All essays in this class must be submitted electronically using the Canvas Turnitin tool.

IV. Primary source analyses. The primary source analysis assignment is an online space where students present a historical analysis of **any single (1) primary source assigned for the week**. Do not analyze multiple sources in any individual submission. The instructor strongly encourages you to read the essay questions first and choose a primary source for the analysis that you can use to make your argument in the essay. In this way you will be able to scaffold your work, i.e., use the analyses to help write the essays, but this suggestion is not a requirement. The due dates are **Tuesdays, 11:45 a.m. Pacific Time**.

V. Final examination. The final examination will take place in our classroom. It will be divided into three parts: 1 identification quiz and 2 short essays.

Part 4: Course schedule

Note: Readings should be completed for the week they are listed. **Students are not expected to read duplicate assignments if they occur in the schedule.** The instructor may add assignments or alter the schedule for special events. Changes will be communicated via Canvas. **Assignments for readings in Suny given in page numbers refer to entire documents, not partial documents.**

Week 0 (read this material first). **Course information.**

Week 1 (August 29, 31): **Introduction.** Read: Suny, introduction, chapter 11; Putin, "Historical Unity" (2021).

Week 2 (September 5, 7): **Russian social democracy and the October Revolution.** Read: Suny, chapter 1; Lenin, prefaces, chapter 1, postscript.

Week 3 (September 12, 14): **Civil war and Bolshevik victory.** Read: Suny, chapter 2; Lenin, chapter 2 (21-24 only), chapter 3.

Week 4 (September 19, 21): **The New Economic Policy.** Read: Suny, 107-144; Lenin, chapter 5.

Week 5 (September 26, 28): **The twenties.** Read: Suny, 91-107, 323-332; Ulianova, "Lenin Childhood" (1925); Bulgakov, selected letters (1929-1930); Watch *Samoyed Boy* (1928).

Week 6 (October 3): **Essay 1 (October 5). The Stalinist revolution. Class meeting on October 5 cancelled. All other assignments are due as usual.** Read: Suny, 144-186, 230-254; *Intimacy and Terror*, xi-65.

Week 7 (October 10, 12): **Quiz 1 (October 12). Terror.** Read: Suny, 254-274; *Intimacy and Terror*, 67-215.

Week 8 (October 17, 19): **Stalinist life.** Read: Suny, 187-230; *Intimacy and Terror*, 219-331. Watch *Bukovina, A Ukrainian Land* (1939).

Week 9 (October 24, 26): **The Great Patriotic War.** Read: Suny, chapter 5 (all except 323-332); Stalin's radio broadcast on July 3, 1941.

Week 10 (October 31, November 2): **High Stalinism.** Read: Suny, 274-288; *Intimacy and Terror*, 333-394; Novikov, "Memorandum" (1946); Kollontai, "Soviet Woman" (1946).

Week 11 (November 7, 9): **Essay 2 (November 9). Post-Stalinist reconstruction.** Read: Suny, chapter 6. Watch *Shadows on the Sidewalks* (1960).

Week 12 (November 14, 16): **Quiz 2 (November 16). "Developed" socialism.** Read: Suny, chapter 7; Sorokina, "Soviets' favorite bologna" (2018). Alexievich, xiv-104.

Week 13 (November 21): **Perestroika and glasnost.** Read: Suny, chapter 8; Alexievich, 105-208.

Week 14 (November 28, 30): **The end of the Soviet Union.** Read: chapter 9; Alexievich, 209-300. Watch "Magadan," *Full Circle* (1996).

Week 15 (December 5, 7): **Essay 3 (December 7). Postsocialist Russia.** Read: Suny, chapter 10; Alexievich, 301-468.

Final exam: Tuesday, December 12, 12:45 - 2:45 p.m., in our classroom. Quiz 3 will take place during the final exam period.

Important policies: Course deadlines are enforced by Canvas and cannot be extended for any reason. Keep copies of all your work on a hard drive, flash drive, or paper in the event of a computer malfunction or other technical problem.

Part 5: Grading policy

Graded course activities

The course grade will be based on the average grade for each activity category. **In category III (primary source analysis) the lowest five (5) scores (out of**

14) will be dropped to allow for circumstances that might cause students to miss assignments. Each category will be combined using this weighting:

Category	Assignment	% of course grade
I	Attendance	10
II	Identification quizzes	20
III	Formal essays	30
IV	Primary source analyses (9 required to pass the category, lowest 5 of 14 dropped)	20
V	Final examination	20

Note: To pass the class, students must demonstrate passing competence (60% or above) attempted in 60% or more of assignments within categories AND in 60% or more of all categories. In this class, then, students who fail more than two categories will fail the course. Students must also complete the final to pass the class.

Late work

To be fair to students who work hard to make deadlines, late essays will receive a full letter grade penalty. **No other assignments will be accepted late.** Late essays will normally be graded at the end of the semester, not when submitted, except upon request by the student directly to the instructor.

These late policies will be in force also for foreseeable scheduled power outages, COVID-19 physical distancing regulations, travel, and work schedule changes. Students are expected to be aware of technical and social limits that may impact their area of residence and to plan around them by completing work in advance and notifying the instructor.

Viewing grades in Canvas

Marks received for graded activities will be posted in the Canvas grade book. The instructor will update the online grades each time a grading session has been complete (typically 7 days after the completion of an activity).

Letter grade assignment

Grades for most work are given as letter grades, calculated and averaged using a 12-point system. Attendance is graded on a standard percentage scale. All are computed and rounded by Canvas or Excel. Missing work will be scored as 0.

Letter grade earned	Points used in calculation	Percentage equivalent	GPA equivalent	Standard
A	12	93-100	4.0	Excellent work
A-	11	90-92	3.7	Nearly excellent work
B+	10	87-89	3.3	Very good work
B	9	83-86	3.0	Good work
B-	8	80-82	2.7	Mostly good work
C+	7	77-79	2.3	Above average work
C	6	73-76	2.0	Average work
C-	5	70-72	1.7	Mostly average work
D+	4	67-69	1.3	Below average work
D	3	63-67	1.0	Poor work
D-	2	60-62	0.7	Very poor work
F	1	Below 60	0.0	Failing work
F	0	0	0.0	Not attempted

Part 6: Course policies

Build rapport

If you find that you have any trouble keeping up with assignments or other aspects of the course, make sure you let your instructor know as early as possible. As you will find, building rapport and effective relationships are key to becoming an effective professional. Make sure that you are proactive in informing your instructor when difficulties arise during the semester so that we can help you find a solution.

Complete assignments

All assignments for this course will be submitted electronically through Canvas. Assignments must be submitted by the given deadline. Late or missing assignments will impact the student's grade.

Understand when you may drop this course

It is the student's responsibility to understand when they need to consider disenrolling from a course. Refer to the Sac State Course Schedule for dates and deadlines for registration. After this period, a serious and compelling reason is required to drop from the course. Serious and compelling reasons include documented and significant change in work hours, leaving student unable to attend class, or documented and severe physical or mental illness or injury to the student or student's family.

Incomplete policy

Under emergency or special circumstances students may petition for an incomplete grade. Incompletes will not be given except for a documented emergency that prevents completion of the final assignments (missing online work is not eligible).

Communication policy

The instructor monitors email daily and will respond when contacted with questions. Normally a response should come immediately, but students should wait at least 24 hours before sending follow-up communications. The instructor will normally give feedback on assignments only through Canvas course rubrics but is happy to provide more personalized feedback by email, Zoom, or in person.

Part 7: Commit to integrity

By taking this class you agree to abide by the guidelines described in this syllabus and on the academic honesty page available on the Canvas site.

Students must respect the intellectual property of others in this class. Make sure to cite sources of other people's ideas; do not pass them off as your own. Copying from other students, assigned course work, or outside web sites without quotation and attribution will be treated as plagiarism and dealt with according to university policy. Students who plagiarize will be warned and receive an F for that assignment. On the second infraction, the student will receive an F for the course.

Turnitin tool

Consistent with Sacramento State's efforts to enhance student learning, foster honesty, and maintain integrity in our academic processes, instructors may use a tool called Turnitin to compare a student's work with multiple sources. The tool compares each student's work with an extensive database of prior publications and papers, providing links to possible matches and a "similarity score." The tool does not determine whether plagiarism has occurred or not. Instead, the instructor must make a complete assessment and judge the originality of the student's work.

Sac State's academic honesty policy & procedures

"The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of scholars and teachers. California State University, Sacramento expects that both faculty and students will honor these principles, and in so doing, will protect the integrity of academic work and student grades."

Definitions (from the Sacramento State University Library)

At Sac State, "**cheating** is the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through the use of any dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means." For clarity, "**plagiarism is a form of cheating**," defined by the university as "the use of distinctive ideas or works belonging to another person without providing adequate acknowledgement of that person's contribution."

The use of artificial intelligence to complete assignments without instructor permission is considered by the university to be academic dishonesty. Any work determined to be AI generated in this class will be treated as the equivalent of plagiarism according to the policies in this syllabus.

Read more about Sac State's [Academic Honesty Policy & Procedures](#).