

HIST 130. The Fall of Communism.

Summer 2023 ver. 5-15-23

Part 1: Course information

Time and place: Asynchronous web online with no class meetings.

Instructor information

Instructor: Aaron J. Cohen, PhD

Office hours: By appointment via Zoom @

<https://csus.zoom.us/my/cohenofficehours>

E-mail: cohenaj@csus.edu.

Catalog description

Causes and consequences of the dramatic transformations in the political, economic, and cultural life of the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and China after 1970. Topics include “real-existing” socialism, Gorbachev and the revolutions of 1989, the emergence of China, impact on the non-socialist world, and implications for the future.

Registration details

Graded: Graded Student.

Units: 3.0.

Prerequisite: None.

GE area: **D (The Individual and Society).**

Course description

The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the breakup of Soviet civilization had tremendous effects on lives across the world. We cannot underestimate the significance of these changes for modern history and for our own understanding of our place in today’s world. In this course students will examine the dramatic transformations in the Soviet Union, eastern Europe, Yugoslavia, and China in the late twentieth century and the ways that people experienced and still experience the fall of communism. We will view these experiences through the eyes of eyewitnesses as presented in feature films, documentaries, and popular non-fiction.

Textbooks and course materials

Required materials (no required book purchases).

1. Various readings and short videos posted on each Canvas assignment page.
2. Full-length films made available through Panopto links on each Canvas assignment page. **Students must use these course links to receive credit for viewing the films.** Please do not view them from other sources.

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.

Note: The use of artificial intelligence to complete assignments 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.

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.

All required technology is available at low or no cost through student support services at Sac State. Students can check computers out of the library or university union on a short-term basis. They can also request a laptop to use throughout the semester here: <https://www.csus.edu/information-resources-technology/csuccess/student-laptop-checkout.html>.

Do NOT use Google Docs OR portable devices as word processors in this course. Use a computer and the desktop version of MS Word. 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](#). 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:

- Recount the history of the Soviet Union, eastern Europe, Yugoslavia, and China from 1970 to 2000.
- Examine how persons of differing socio-economic status, religion, gender, age, and ethnic affiliation participated in and dealt with the end of communism.
- Improve skills for professional development in the field of history, teaching, and related occupations. Class assignments will help students practice written communication, computing, and critical thinking necessary for professional and personal success regardless of major.
- Think about the world and the individual's place in society.

Specific topical learning objectives are available in each Canvas module.

GE Area D learning outcomes

- Describe and evaluate ethical and social values in their historical and cultural contexts.
- Explain and apply the principles and methods of academic disciplines to the study of social and individual behavior.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the role of human diversity in human society, for example, race, ethnicity, class, age, ability/disability, sexual

identity, gender and gender expression.

- Explain and critically examine social dynamics and issues in their historical and cultural contexts.

Part 3: Course assignments

Students will meet the learning objectives through satisfactory completion of the following activities. Details on rubrics, grading criteria, and assignment information are posted on the Canvas site. All deadlines are Pacific Time.

I. Quizzes

Each module has **one (1) short quiz** of ten (10) randomized, multiple-choice questions worth one point each. Quizzes are designed to be easy for anyone who completes assignments. These assessments will cover the material assigned in the course; some questions **may** be repeated from module to module so they **may** cover material assigned in previous modules. **Students will have three (3) attempts to complete each quiz before 11:59 p.m. Tuesday in each module. Late quizzes will not be accepted for ANY reason.**

II. Engagement

The engagement grade has two parts and uses the Canvas discussion boards.

1. **Short answer** (67% of the engagement grade). Students must post **one (1) short answer** on the appropriate discussion board to one (1) study question listed on the Canvas assignment page for each module. **Short answers must be posted before 11:59 p.m. Wednesday in each module to receive full credit AND**

- Use formal writing style appropriate for university-level work (i.e., correct grammar, punctuation, spelling, and paragraph structure).
- Have at least 250 words.
- Contain a thesis statement (i.e., argument or main idea) in **bold face** in the introduction or near the beginning.
- For short answers that require film viewing, at least 75% of the film(s) must have been viewed.
- **USE ONLY ASSIGNED MATERIALS. One or more references to outside sources will make the short answer unacceptable.**

For satisfactory performance, students must use at least two (2) specific, detailed, and relevant examples from the sources assigned the module as well as relevant specific historical details. For excellent performance, use at least four (4).

2. **Online participation** (33% of the engagement grade). Students must:

- a) **Read** all Canvas pages, assigned readings, and postings by other students and **watch** all required films linked to Panopto. **At least 95% of each film must be watched before 11:59 p.m. Tuesday in each module to receive full**

credit. Students must ALSO use the Panopto link on the Canvas assignments page AND submit a satisfactory short answer in the module to receive credit for viewing the films.

- b) **Post** at least **one (1) individual question** of any length about the topic on the discussion board. **Individual questions must be posted before 11:59 p.m. Wednesday in each module to receive full credit.** There are no restrictions on the number or type of questions that you post except that they be serious questions about the module content that you would like to have answered, not “teacher” questions that attempt to test what other students know. Questions therefore may involve:
- Readings or class participation.
 - The historical background of events related to the module topic.
 - Ideas that other students have posted.
 - Requests for factual clarification about the module topic.
- c) **Post** at least **one (1) follow-up response** with significant content to other students on the discussion board. **The FIRST follow-up response must be posted before 11:59 p.m. Thursday in each module to receive full credit, but you may post additional follow-up responses for more credit before 11:59 p.m. on the final day.** The goal is to help others, so responses should contribute to the improvement of another student’s short answer or answer another student’s question. Response posts **do not** have to be written as formal papers, but for satisfactory performance they must contribute through relevant, specific, and accurate examples from the assigned sources or relevant, specific, and accurate historical details. **Multiple contributory responses will result in a higher grade.**
- d) **Watch** the instructor video linked to Panopto in each module **before 11:59 p.m. Friday in each module.** During this session the instructor will answer questions from the discussion board and course material from each module and address student interests related to the course. **At least 95% of each video must be watched to receive full credit.** Students must use the Panopto links on the Canvas assignments page AND submit a satisfactory short answer in the module to receive credit for viewing.

Late module engagement work must be completed **before 11:59 p.m. Friday in each module. No late engagement work will be accepted FOR ANY REASON.**

III. Essays 1 and 2

There are **two (2)** formal written essays based on the module study questions. Details will be posted on the Canvas site. Late work accepted with a penalty.

IV. Summative essay

There is **one (1)** formal paper of around 750 words (ca. 3 double-spaced pages) that allows you to reflect upon the issues brought up in the course. No late work.

Part 4: Course schedule

Note: Detailed assignments are not listed here but on the relevant Canvas assignment page. Some short assignments are omitted here. All must be completed for the module listed. The instructor may add assignments or alter the schedule for special events as needed. Changes will be communicated via Canvas.

Module 0 (Read first and use as a reference). **Course information.**

Module 1 (May 30 through June 2). **Introduction.** Watch *The Red Army Vanishes* (2019).

Module 2 (June 3 through 9). **"Actual" socialism.** Watch *Soviet Hippies* (2017). Read Katherine Verdery, "What was Socialism, and Why Did it Fall?" (1996).

Module 3 (June 10 through 16). **The end of the Soviet Union.** Watch *My Perestroika* (2010). Read Ryszard Kapuściński, "Pomona of the Little Town of Drohobych," from *Imperium* (1995).

Module 4 (June 17 through 23). **After the USSR.** Watch *Vanished Empire* (2008); Read Ana Petrov, "Yugonostalgia as a Kind of Love: Politics of Emotional Reconciliations through Yugoslav Popular Music" (2018).

Module 5 (June 24 through 30). **Eastern Europe.** Watch *East Side Story* (1997). Read Slavenka Drakulić, "The Trivial is Political" and "On Doing Laundry," from *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed* (1992).

Module 6 (July 1 through 7). **The fall of the Berlin Wall.** Watch *Coming Out* (1989). Read Albert O. Hirschman, "Exit, Voice, and the Fate of the German Democratic Republic: An Essay in Conceptual History" (1993).

Module 7 (July 8 through 14). **Ostalgie.** Watch *Goodbye, Lenin!* (2003). Read Slavenka Drakulić, "I Think of Ulrike This Night in November."

Essay 1 due before 11:59 p.m. Saturday, July 15, in the online drop box. Late papers will receive a full grade penalty.

Module 8 (July 15 through 21). **Socialist Yugoslavia.** Watch *The Other Side of Everything* (2017). Read Milovan Djilas, "The Development of My Political Thinking," from *Fall of the New Class* (2018); Kalamesh Banerji, "Interview with Marshal Tito" (1950).

Module 9 (July 22 through 28). **The end of Yugoslavia.** Read Slavenka Drakulić, "That Sunday, Like An Empty Red Balloon;" Robert Donia and John Fine, Jr., "A Misunderstood Society," from *Bosnia and Hercegovina: A Tradition Betrayed* (1994); Robert Kaplan, "The White City and Its Prophet," from *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History* (1994); Gojko Vuckovic, "Failure of Socialist Self-

Management to Create a Viable Nation-State, and Disintegration of the Yugoslav Administrative State and State Institutions” (1998); Jeff Pratt, “Commentary: Economic Change, Ethnic Relations and the Disintegration of Yugoslavia” (2000); Aleksandar Pavković, “Why Did Yugoslavia Disintegrate? Is There a Conclusive Answer?” (2004).

Module 10 (July 29 through August 4). **Maoist China.** Read Mao Zedong, “Socialism and Communism,” “The Mass Line,” “Youth,” and “Women,” from *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung* (1966); selections from Ji-li Jiang, *Red Scarf Girl: A Memoir of the Cultural Revolution* (1997); selections from Jung Chang, *Wild Swans: Three Daughters of China* (2003).

Module 11 (August 5 through 11). **After Mao.** Watch *Beijing Taxi* (2010). Read Sheryl Wudunn, “Red Emperors” and “The God of Wealth,” from (with Nicholas Kristof) *China Wakes: The Struggle for the Soul of a Rising Power* (1995).

Module 12 (August 12 through 18): **Nostalgia in the PRC.** Watch *Youth* (2017). Read Sheryl Wudunn, “What Kind of Chinese Are You, Anyway?”

Essay 2 due before 11:59 p.m. Saturday, August 19, in the online drop box. Late papers will receive a full grade penalty.

Summative essay due before 11:59 p.m. Sunday, August 20, in the online drop box. Final deadline for late essays 1 and 2 (no late papers).

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 final course grade will be based on the average grade for each activity category. **In categories I-II (quizzes, engagement) the highest nine (9) scores will be averaged into the engagement category grade (i.e., the lowest three scores will be dropped) to allow for circumstances that might cause students to miss assignments.** Missing work will be scored as 0.

Each category will be combined using this weighting:

| Category | Assignment | % of course grade |
|----------|------------|-------------------|
| I | Quizzes | 20 |

| | | |
|-----|--|----|
| II | Engagement (short answers, film and/or video watching, and online participation) | 50 |
| III | Essays 1 and 2 | 20 |
| IV | Summative essay | 10 |

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 one category will fail the course.

Late work

Be sure to pay close attention to deadlines as **there will be no makeups for online work after each module closes for any reason.** Inside each module quizzes cannot be made up after the quiz deadline passes, but late short answers, questions, responses, and film and video viewing will be accepted with a penalty. Essays 1 and 2 may be turned in late before the end of the course with a full grade penalty. 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.

| 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

Formal written essays are reviewed using the Canvas Turnitin tool for writing feedback and originality check purposes.

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.

Students should submit essays to Turnitin assignments without identifying information included in the paper (e.g., name or student number), the system will automatically show this info to faculty in your course when viewing the submission, but the information will not be retained by Turnitin.

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."

Note: The use of artificial intelligence to complete assignments 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](#).