Department of History/College of Arts and Letters

HIST 130. The Fall of Communism.

Summer 2024 ver. 5-20-24

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) for Summer 2024. Note: starting in Fall 2024, this course will be in GE category C2 (Humanities).**

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.** Do not view them from other sources.

Course technology

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. The goal of an education is not to complete assignments but to learn. Learning involves direct engagement with material and practice. Anything that prevents students from engagement and practice (such as plagiarism, buying a paper from someone else, or using AI to write papers) does not contribute to learning but undermines it. Any work determined to be AI generated in this class will therefore be treated as the equivalent of plagiarism according to the policies in this syllabus. However, spelling and grammar checkers that do not write or rewrite papers are allowed.

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.

Please do NOT use Google Docs OR portable devices as word processors in this course. The history profession uses Microsoft Word for its robust tools, especially footnotes. Google Docs often does not often format footnotes correctly, and it is good to practice using the industry standard. **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 and more."

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.
- **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.
- To take a break from a film, **exit the film and close the browser**. **Do not put the computer to sleep** before you exit the film and close the browser.

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 about Canvas, 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.

Disability Access Center (DAC)

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 the Disability Access Center (DAC) to discuss eligibility. A current accommodation letter from DAC 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 follow the [Hornet honor code](). Students will:
- Promote an inclusive campus and community.
- Listen and respect each other's thoughts, interests, and views.
- Value diversity and learn from one another.
- Engage daily with mutual trust, care, and integrity.
- Support a culture of honor and adhere to campus policies for honesty, ethics, and conduct.
- Be proud to be Sac State Hornets.

Part 2: Course objectives

In this course, students will be able to:

General course learning outcomes

- Demonstrate a broad knowledge of the history of the Soviet Union, eastern Europe, socialist Yugoslavia, and the People's Republic of China from 1960 to 2000.
- Recognize how persons of differing socio-economic status, religion, gender, age, and ethnic affiliation participated in and dealt with the end of communism.
- Employ cultural expressions and representations to help reconstruct historical context.
- Create arguments about the end of communism based on empirical evidence and critical thinking.
- Apply written communication skills as practiced in history, teaching, and related professions.

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

I. Instructor video viewing

Watch the instructor video posted on Thursday in each module **before 11:59 p.m. Friday in each module.** Instructor videos are not prerecorded lectures. They are short videos in which the instructor answers questions from the bulletin board and course material and addresses student interests related to the course. Do not skip them as they are a critical part of the learning process. **At least 95% of each video must be watched with the Panopto links in each Canvas module to receive credit**. Video viewing will be graded using the standard percentage scale, e.g., three videos missed = 9/12 or 75% or C. **No late viewing accepted.**

II. 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, but the lowest three (3) quiz scores will be dropped to allow for circumstances that might cause students to miss assignments.**

III. Engagement

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

1. **Short answer** (67% of engagement grade). Students must post **one (1) acceptable short answer** on the appropriate bulletin board to one (1) study question listed on the Canvas assignment page for each module. **Note that an unacceptable short answer will make the entire engagement grade unacceptable. 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) as described in the course writing style guide in module 0.
- Have at least 250 words.
- Contain a thesis statement (i.e., argument or main idea) in **boldface** in the introduction or near the beginning.
- Have at least two (2) specific, detailed, and relevant examples with page number citations (for readings) or time stamps (for films) in parenthesis from sources assigned in each module. Answers with no examples, page numbers, or timestamps will make the entire engagement performance unacceptable. For excellent performance use at least four (4).
- **CITE ONLY ASSIGNED SOURCES.** One or more references to outside sources will make the entire engagement performance unacceptable.
- For short answers that require film viewing, at least 75% of the film(s) must be viewed for the entire engagement performance to be acceptable.

2. **Participation** (33% of engagement grade). Students must:

a) **Read** all Canvas pages, assigned materials, and posts by other students and **watch** all required films linked to Panopto. **For modules that require film viewing, 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 link on the Canvas assignments page and submit an acceptable 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 bulletin 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 or clarified, not "teacher" questions that attempt to test what other students know. Questions may therefore involve:

- The historical background of events related to the module topic.
- Ideas that other students have posted related to the topic.
- Requests for factual or interpretive clarification about the topic.

c) **Post** at least **one (1) follow-up response with contributory content** to other students on the bulletin 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. Friday in each module.** 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.**

Late engagement work is accepted with a penalty but must be completed **before 11:59 p.m. Friday in each module. No late work will be accepted FOR ANY REASON after each module closes, but the lowest three (3) engagement scores will be dropped to allow for circumstances that might cause students to miss assignments.**

IV. 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.**

V. Summative essay

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

Part 4: Course schedule

Detailed assignments are not listed here but on the relevant Canvas assignment page. Very short assignments are omitted here. Readings and film viewing should be completed for the module they are listed. The instructor may add assignments or alter the schedule for special events. Changes will be communicated via Canvas.

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

Module 1 (May 28 through May 31). **Introduction.** Watch *The Red Army Vanishes* (2019). **Note: Module 1 is a four-day module.**

Module 2 (June 1 through 7). **"Real-existing" socialism.** Watch *East Side Story* (1997); *Economy of the Soviet Union* (2020). Read Drakulić, "Trivial as Political" (1992); Verdery, "What was Socialism, and Why Did it Fall?" (1996).

Module 3 (June 8 through 14). **The end of the Soviet Union.** Watch *My Perestroika* (2010). Read Kapuściński, "Pomona of the Little Town of Drohobych" (1995).

Module 4 (June 15 through 21). **Back in the USSR.** Watch *Vanished Empire* (2008). Read Piccolo, "Back in the USSR" (2015).

Module 5 (June 22 through 28). **The fall of the Berlin Wall.** Watch *Coming Out* (1989). Read Hirschman, "Exit, Voice, and the Fate of the German Democratic Republic" (1993).

Module 6 (June 29 through July 5). *Ostalgie.* Watch *Goodbye, Lenin!* (2003). Read Drakulić, "I Think of Ulrike This Night in November" (1992); Boyer, "*Ostalgie* and the Politics of the Future in Eastern Germany" (2006).

Module 7 (July 6 through 12). **Socialist Yugoslavia.** Watch *The Other Side of Everything* (2017). Read Djilas, "Criticism of the Soviet System" (2018); Banerji, "Interview with Marshal Tito" (1950).

Essay 1 due before 11:59 p.m. Saturday, July 13, in the online drop box. Late papers will receive a full grade penalty.

Module 8 (July 13 through 19). **The end of Yugoslavia.** Read Donia and Fine, "Misunderstood Society" (1994); Kaplan, "White City and Its Prophet" (1994); Vuckovic, "Failure of Socialist Self-Management to Create a Viable Nation-State" (1998); Pratt, "Economic Change, Ethnic Relations and the Disintegration of Yugoslavia" (2000); Pavković, "Why Did Yugoslavia Disintegrate?" (2004).

Module 9 (July 20 through 26). **Yugonostalgia.** Watch *Tito and Me* (1992). Read Djilas, "Development of My Political Thinking" (2018); Petrov, "Yugonostalgia as a Kind of Love" (2018).

Module 10 (July 27 through August 2). **Maoist China.** Watch *Morning Sun* (2003). Read Mao, "Socialism and Communism," "Youth," and "Women" (1966); Jiang, "Four Olds," (1997); Chang, "Soar to Heaven" (2003).

Module 11 (August 3 through 9). **After Mao.** Watch *Beijing Taxi* (2010). Read Wudunn, "Red Emperors" and "God of Wealth" (1995).

Module 12 (August 10 through 16): **Nostalgia in the PRC.** Watch *Youth* (2017). Read Yang, "Days of Old Are Not Puffs of Smoke" (2005).

Essay 2 due before 11:59 p.m. Saturday, August 17, in the online drop box. Late papers will receive a full grade penalty.

Summative essay due before 11:59 p.m. Sunday, August 18, in the online drop box. Final deadline for late essays 1 and 2. No late papers.

Deadline for late essays: Sunday, August 18, 11:59 p.m.

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

Grades are based on the average grade in each activity category, not a cumulative point system. **In categories II and III the lowest three (3) scores will be dropped to allow for circumstances that might cause students to miss assignments. 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, students who fail more than three categories will fail the course. Students will be expected to follow the writing guide posted on Canvas in categories with formal writing. Each category will be combined using this weighting:

Category	Assignment	% of course grade
I	12 instructor videos viewed at least 95% in Panopto	10
II	12 quizzes (lowest 3 scores dropped)	10
III	12 engagement modules, i.e., short answers and participation (lowest 3 scores dropped)	50
IV	2 formal written essays	20
V	1 summative essay	10

Late work

Be sure to pay close attention to deadlines as **there will be no makeups or late 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 viewing will be accepted with a penalty. Essays 1 and 2 may be turned in late 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.

For pedagogical purposes, modules will not be opened early for any reason. Working ahead is possible as long as items are posted when the module is open.

Viewing grades in Canvas

This class does not use the Canvas gradebook. Grades and student progress and information indicators are calculated from an Excel spreadsheet and uploaded by the instructor manually. They can be viewed in the Canvas gradebook or Canvas assignments section **(click "View By Type")**. **For information see module 0.** The instructor will update the online grades each time a grading session has been complete (typically 7 days after the completion of an activity but often quicker).

Letter grade assignment

Grades for most work are given as letter grades, calculated and averaged using a 12-point system. Some assignments may be graded on a percentage basis. 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 not intervene in online engagement except to answer questions directed at him, monitor for unacceptable behavior, or make occasional comments. 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 Sac State's Academic Honesty Policy)

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.