

History 100-02: Making History
Europe under the Great Dictators
Fall 2014: Tuesday/Thursday 12:45-2:05

Edward Cohn
Mears 316 (X3107)

cohned@grinnell.edu
Office hours: Mon 3:00-4:00;
Wed. 1:15-2:00;
Thurs. 9:00-10:00

Course description

This course is one of several sections of the Grinnell history department's introductory class, which is called "Making History." Each section of the class has two main goals: to provide an introduction to the discipline of history (discussing how historians interpret the past and how history differs from other academic disciplines) and then to illustrate how the historical craft works through the in-depth study of a specific historical topic. History 100 will therefore work on two different levels, helping students understand both a series of historical events and the methods used by scholars to analyze and interpret those events.

This particular section will focus on the social and political history of two of the most infamous dictatorships in history—Hitler's Germany and Stalin's USSR. It will examine how each dictatorship arose, how each leader sought to control and reshape his country's society, and how citizens lived their everyday lives in the face of social upheaval and terror. It will also delve into a series of more particular themes from Soviet and Nazi history, including the personality cults of Hitler and Stalin, the role of the secret police in each country, the origins of the USSR's Great Purges of the 1930s, and the developments that led to the Holocaust. Overall, this class will have two main goals: to look at the functioning of each regime in all its complexity (comparing historians' interpretation of Hitler and Stalin to the popular, common-sense view of each dictatorship) and to compare and contrast Nazi Germany and Stalin's USSR. Were these two regimes similar in their motivations and their methodology, or were they fundamentally different in how they interacted with the societies they sought to control?

Course readings

The following books are on reserve at Burling Library and are available for purchase at the Grinnell College Bookstore:

John Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction*

Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times*

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*

Other readings (marked "[Pioneerweb]" below) will be available on the course's Blackboard site.

Assignments and grading

Your grade in this class will be based on the following requirements. Note that you must hand in every written assignment in order to pass the class, and that if your grades improve steadily over the course of the semester, I will take that into consideration in deciding your final grade:

Film analysis (10%). A 2-page analysis of the film *A Midwife's Tale*, due on Monday, September 8, at 10 PM by email. A revised version of this paper will then be due on Friday, September 19.

Document analysis (10%). A 3-page analysis of Hitler's writings, due at 5:00 PM on Friday, October 10, by email.

Lecture response (5%). Grinnell will host two lectures by high-profile outside historians this semester, by Tara Zahra on September 24 and by Priya Satia on November 4. Each student in the class is required to attend one of these lectures and to write a 1-page summary, analysis, and critique of the talk (according to specifications I'll hand out in class.)

Oral history analysis (20%). A 5-page analysis of the oral history interviews of the Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System (available online), which looks at life under Stalin; this paper will be due at 5:00 PM on Sunday, November 9.

Annotated bibliography with introduction (30%). Your final assignment of the semester will be to write a research guide to a topic that interests you from Stalinist or Nazi history, consisting of a 3-page overview of your topic and a 6-to-8 page list of sources pertaining to that topic (presented in proper bibliographic formatting, with an annotation analyzing each source.) You will need to submit a brief proposal and a draft of your bibliography; you will also have a few short exercises to complete in the weeks ahead of the due date. The final version will be due at 5:00 PM on Thursday, December 18.

Class participation (25% of your grade). The final requirement for this course is active and informed participation in class discussions. Unlike some professors at Grinnell, I do not have an ironclad rule about how often each student needs to speak: you should generally average at least one comment or question per class period (and often more in a 80-minute class like this one), but I understand that some of you will always be more reserved than others and that everyone has days when they are less likely to participate. What's more, you should remember that the thoughtfulness of your classroom comments is more important than the frequency with which you speak and that there are many good ways to take part in the discussion (such as answering a question, recalling a detail from the readings, responding to a classmate, making a connection between the day's reading and earlier discussions, or posing a question to me or the class.)

More concretely, remember these general principles about class discussions:

- Like Soviet history, this class is a collective enterprise (although I hope you'll find it vastly more benign than life under Lenin or Stalin!) In general, I'll be looking for evidence that you've done the reading, that you're thinking about the themes and issues

covered by the class, and that you're making a good-faith effort to improve the classroom experience for everyone enrolled in the course.

- Class participation depends on attendance. I'll therefore keep track of attendance throughout the semester; if you miss class once or twice, that won't affect your performance in the class, but if you have more than two unexcused absences, your participation grade will go down. If you have more than six unexcused absences, you will generally receive a participation grade of F or zero.
- Remember that informed participation depends on preparation and that your contributions to the discussion will always be more compelling if you can provide evidence for your ideas. You should therefore come to class with copies of the day's reading and with your notes on what you've read. (You are of course welcome to bring the readings either in hard copies or in files on a laptop computer, but you should bear in mind that it is often easier to mark significant passages in primary texts in a paper copy of the readings.) In particular, I recommend that you make note of quotations and details in the readings that you find especially significant or compelling.
- Preparation for history classes can be subtly different from preparation for courses in other disciplines. Early on in the semester, I will give you handouts on how to read a primary source (a historical document) and how to read a secondary source (a text by a historian). In general, if you're reading a historical document, come to class ready to talk about that document's context: who wrote it, what was the author's audience, and what did the author hope to achieve by writing the document? If you're reading a secondary text, what was the author's main argument, how was the author contributing to the larger scholarly debate, and how did the author seek to prove his or her point? You should also pay close attention to the structure of every text, primary or secondary. What form does the reading take, and why?
- Good class participation can—and should—take many forms. For one thing, you should be willing and able to participate in whatever way will best suit the needs of the class at any given moment; if your participation consists entirely of recalling factual details or posing a question to your classmates, I'll encourage you to broaden your horizons. Just as importantly, the strongest participants in class will be able both to provide the factual details needed for an informed discussion and to analyze those details by explaining their larger significance. I will encourage all students to participate in class discussions in a variety of ways, and I will be particularly interested in classroom comments that show an especially strong grasp of the readings and an ability to analyze—not just summarize—the day's text.

I will generally give each student a brief written "participation update" each time I return a piece of written work. I also encourage you to check in with me at any point if you have questions about how you're doing in class or about how you can become more involved in the discussion.

Extension policy

Each student in the class can have one (and only one) 48-hour extension on a writing assignment over the course of the semester. To claim this extension, send me a brief email asking for extra time before the assignment's deadline; I will grant this extension automatically, so there is no need for you to explain why you need more time. Keep in mind, however, that once you've been

given an extension on an assignment, I will not give you an extension on another except in the case of a documented emergency. Note, too, that you can have one extension of up to 48 hours; you cannot break your extension into two 24-hour extensions, for example. In the absence of an extension, late assignments will be penalized one third of a letter grade per day.

Paper revision policy

This class is a writing-intensive course designed not only to teach students about history, but to help them develop their writing skills. Over the course of the semester, then, you will have two opportunities to revise a paper that you've already handed in and to resubmit it for re-grading. Every student in the class will be required to hand in a revised version of the first assignment (the film review due on September 8); after fall break, students will have the option to hand in a revised version of one of their next two papers (the document analysis or the oral history analysis). If you choose to exercise this option, your final grade for the assignment will be the average of your original grade and the grade for your revised paper. (In other words, if you earn a B- on the first version of a paper and a B+ on the rewrite, you'll earn a final grade of B.)

In exchange for getting the opportunity to resubmit one of your papers, you will need to meet three requirements. First, as you begin the revision process, come speak with me to discuss how you plan to address the critique I gave you in my written comments. (Please come to this meeting with a tentative plan for your revisions and a marked-up version of your original paper.) Second, if I suggested that you go to the Writing Lab in my written comments on the first version of your paper, you'll need to do so for me to accept your revised paper. Third, when you send me your revised paper, the text of your email should include a paragraph discussing how you revised your paper. (Note: these requirements do not apply to the revision of the film review.)

Peer writing fellow

If you have questions as you work on your papers this semester, you are welcome to come talk either to me or to the class's writing fellow (or both.) This class's fellow is Sarah Weitekamp '15, a history/Russian double major enrolled in the Writing Lab's course on the teaching of writing. She will hold weekly drop-in office hours (at a time and place to be announced later), where she will be available to discuss everything from brainstorming and revision to the proper use of thesis statements and the best way to construct an introduction

Office Hours

I hold office hours on Monday from 3:00 to 4:00, on Wednesday from 1:15 to 2:00, and on Thursday from 9:00 to 10:00. These are drop-in hours; you are welcome to come by without an appointment (and, in fact, I will generally leave these hours free for drop-ins.) You are also welcome to email me to arrange a different time to meet. I will most likely cancel my regular office hours a couple weeks each semester and instead offer meetings by appointment only (most often during pre-registration.)

Important notes

Grinnell College makes reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. If you have any special needs, please provide documentation of those needs to the Dean for Student Success and Academic Advising, Joyce Stern. Students should then bring me paperwork from Joyce Stern's office within the first few days of class.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND READINGS

Unit One: The Craft of History

Thursday, August 28: Course Introduction

Tuesday, September 2: What is History?

Reading: John Arnold, *History: A Very Short Introduction*, pp. 1–79

Assignment: email me 4 important quotations from Arnold that you feel capture his approach to history (deadline: Monday at 10 PM)

Thursday, September 4: Was the Past a Foreign Country?

Reading: Robert Darnton, "Workers Revolt: The Great Cat Massacre of the Rue St. Severin" [Pioneerweb]
Arnold, pp. 80-109

FILM SHOWING: *A Midwife's Tale* at 7:00 PM on Thursday, September 4, in ARH 302

ALTERNATIVE FILM SHOWING: 4:00 PM on Saturday, September 6, IN ARH 302

Monday, September 8: **film analysis is due at 10 PM by email**

Tuesday, September 9: A Midwife's Tale

Reading: Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]
<http://dohistory.org> (as needed); Arnold, pp. 110-125

Unit Two: Marxism, The Russian Revolution, and Stalin's Rise

Thursday, September 11: Communism Defined

Reading: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, parts I and II
introduction by John Toews, pp. 1-22, 50-53

Tuesday, September 16: Revolution!

Reading: Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, part III
Frederick Engels, draft of a Communist confession of faith (pp. 99-104)
"Marx and the Lessons of Revolution II" (pp. 146-149)

Frederick Engels, "Speech at Karl Marx's Funeral" (pp. 164-165)
introduction by Toews, pp. 53-59

Thursday, September 18: Red October

Reading: Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, pp. 1-67

Friday, September 19: **revised film analysis is due by email**

Tuesday, September 23: Stalin and His Revolution

Reading: Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, pp. 120-172

Wednesday, September 24: Recommended lecture

Lecture: Tara Zahra, "Exodus from the East: Emigration from Eastern Europe and the Making of the Free World," JRC 101, noon

Assignment: send me a brief critique of either this talk or of the Priya Satia talk in November (due by email by Friday at 5:00)

Unit Three: The Rise of the Nazis

Thursday, September 25: Hitler and his Ideology

Reading: Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]
Adolf Hitler, "On the Use of Mass Meetings" (*Mein Kampf*) [Pioneerweb]
Adolf Hitler's manifesto [Pioneerweb]
Albert Speer, "On Joining the Nazi Movement" [Pioneerweb]

Tuesday, September 30: Hitler and the Nazis: An Overview

Reading: Adolf Hitler, "On His Hopes for Germany in 1914" [Pioneerweb]
Magnus Hirschfeld, "Sexual Catastrophes" [Pioneerweb]
Elsa Herrmann, "This is the New Woman" [Pioneerweb]
Adolf Hitler, "Anti-Semitic Speech" [Pioneerweb]
Elsbeth Zander, "Tasks Facing the German Woman" [Pioneerweb]

Thursday, October 2: The Rise of the Nazis

Reading: Richard Bessel, *Nazism and War*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]

Unit Four: Dictatorships at Work

Tuesday, October 7: How did Stalin's Dictatorship Work?

Reading: Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Stalin: In the Court of the Red Tsar*, excerpts

[Pioneerweb]
Oleg Khlevniuk, "Stalin as Dictator" [Pioneerweb]

Thursday, October 9: How did Hitler's Dictatorship Work?

Reading: Ian Kershaw, "Working Toward the Führer" [Pioneerweb]
Jeremy Noakes, "Hitler and the Nazi state: leadership, hierarchy, and power"
[Pioneerweb]

Friday, October 10: **document analysis is due by 5:00 PM**

Tuesday, October 14: Stalin's Personality Cult

Reading: documents on the cult (5 pages) [Pioneerweb]
Sarah Davies, "Stalin and the making of the leader cult in the 1930s"
[Pioneerweb]
Sarah Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]

Thursday, October 16: Hitler's Personality Cult

Reading: Ian Kershaw, *The Hitler Myth*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]

Friday, October 17: **brief bibliography proposal is due by noon (by email)**

FALL BREAK: OCTOBER 17 TO OCTOBER 26

Unit Five: Everyday Life under Stalin

Tuesday, October 28: Life under Stalin

Reading: Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, pp. 1-66

Thursday, October 30: The Transformation of Everyday Society in the 1930s

Reading: Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, pp. 67-114
begin looking at the Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System
David Brandenberger's guide to the Harvard Project [Pioneerweb]

Tuesday, November 4: Political Disputes and Family Problems in Stalin's USSR

Reading: Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, pp. 115-163
Assignment: **email me three more sources for your bibliography (by Monday at 10)**

Lecture: Priya Satia (evening lecture, title TBA) (email me a response to this talk by Thursday at 5:00 PM, unless you wrote about the Zahra talk in September)

- Thursday, November 6: Summing up Stalinist Everyday Life
- Reading: Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, pp. 164-190, 218-229
- Sunday, November 9: **oral history analysis is due at 5:00 (by email)**
- Unit Six: Nazi and Stalinist Terror**
- Tuesday, November 11: Everyday Life and Resistance in Nazi Germany
- Reading: primary documents on everyday life, resistance, and the Holocaust
(pp. 53–56, 61–77, 84-85, 88-95, 160-173) [Pioneerweb]
- Thursday, November 13: The Order Police in Poland
- Reading: Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men*, pp. 1-77
- Tuesday, November 18: Police Officers and the Holocaust
- Reading: Browning, pp. 78-158
- Thursday, November 20: **NO CLASS**
- Sunday, November 23: **send me at least 15 good sources for your bibliography, along with one annotation and a paragraph with a tentative thesis**
- Tuesday, November 25: Ordinary Men?
- Reading: Browning, pp. 159-224
- Tuesday, December 2: The Purges
- Reading: Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Soviet Experiment*, pp. 282–289 [Pioneerweb]
Weinberg and Bernstein, *Revolutionary Russia*, ch. 8 [Pioneerweb]
Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, pp. 190-217
- Thursday, December 4: The Nature of the GULAG
- Reading: Steven Barnes, *Death and Redemption: The Gulag and the Shaping of Soviet Society*, pp. 1-78 [Pioneerweb]
- Saturday, December 6: **email me a complete list of sources for your bibliography project, with 5 annotations and a paragraph on your thesis**

Tuesday, December 9: A Woman in the GULAG

Reading: Olga Adamova-Sliozberg, "My Journey," excerpts [Pioneerweb]

Thursday, December 11: Experiences of the Holocaust

Reading: Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, excerpts [Pioneerweb]

Thursday, December 18: final version of annotated bibliography is due by email at 5:00