COURSE: EURR 4202/5202 & HIST 4201A
Everyday Life in the Soviet Union

TERM: Fall 2018

PROFESSOR: Dr. Erica Fraser

CLASS: Day & Time: Thursdays, 2:35–5:25pm
Room: Please check with Carleton Central for room location

CONTACT: Office: Paterson Hall 448
Office Hours: Thurs. 5:30–6:30pm; Fri. 10:45am–12pm or by appointment
Email: erica.fraser@carleton.ca

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In Soviet ideology, the isolation, complacency, or ennui of the oppressed proletarian’s everyday life was supposed to have been conquered by the new access all workers had to a meaningful revolutionary community. This utopian vision sounded good, but how did people actually live? How did they negotiate their daily lives and personal spaces under such ideological and state control? We will examine the blurred boundaries between public and private, and the collective and the individual, over the course of the 20th century and at different moments in Soviet history. We will also discuss the parameters of choice in Soviet life, challenging the totalitarianism narrative that persists in western minds that Soviet citizens could live only how they were told to live.

Topics will include: city life and rural life (housing, transportation, work, childcare, leisure), life in the non-Russian republics, soldier life and the home front in World War II, prison life in the Gulag, religious life in an atheist state, shopping and bartering in a command economy, and courtship and sex in a progressive society turned puritan. Overall, we will consider the broad themes of everyday resistance, everyday violence, and everyday hope.

REQUIRED READINGS
All readings will be available electronically via ARES and cuLearn.
**Grading & Evaluation**

Undergraduate students (EURR 4202 & HIST 4201A)

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seminar Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>every class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation &amp; Discussion Leading</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>your choice</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Reading Response Papers (4-6 pages; 10% each)</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>your choice, Fridays by noon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal &amp; Bibliography for Research Essay</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>due Nov. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Source Show-and-Tell &amp; Peer Review</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>due Nov. 15 &amp; 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Research Essay (15-18 pages)</td>
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Graduate students (EURR 5202)

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<tr>
<td>4 Reading Response Papers (4-6 pages; 10% each)</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>your choice, Fridays by noon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal &amp; Bibliography for Research Essay</td>
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<td>due Nov. 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Source Show-and-Tell &amp; Peer Review</td>
<td>optional +3%</td>
<td>due Nov. 15 &amp; 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Research Essay (18-22 pages)</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>due Dec. 7</td>
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**Learning Objectives**

By the end of this course, students (who pass) will be able to:

- Identify historiographical trends that have generated histories of everyday life and comfortably explain why those histories matter.
- Compare (in writing and discussion) different eras and themes in Soviet history in terms of history “from below.”
- Conduct independent research using primary evidence and secondary scholarship and synthesize different arguments and perspectives.
- Present arguments orally to the class about a given topic and facilitate group discussion of it.

**Background Required**

This is a fourth year and M.A. joint seminar that discusses the history of the Soviet Union at an advanced level. Students should have taken at least one previous course in Russian or Soviet history in the History Department or a post-Soviet studies course through EURUS. Students without this background should come see me before continuing in this course.

Even with the background course, students who would like further context for our topics should take the initiative to consult a textbook on Soviet history. Recommended: Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States*, 2nd edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. (ISBN: 978-0195340556). This book is on reserve in the library for our class and may be used for consultation, or used copies are widely available for purchase online.

**Assignments**

For each assignment, detailed instructions will be posted separately to cuLearn. These are only brief descriptions:

- **Seminar participation**
  
  See below regarding class format.

- **Presentation & Discussion Leading**
  
  At least once during the semester, students will give presentations of about 10 minutes each that will give some background and offer a way to frame the issues of the week. No extra readings are required, but students should think more broadly about connecting the week’s themes, rather than
only summarizing the assigned reading. The presenter will then lead the rest of the class discussion. This assignment may be done in pairs or threes.

- **Reading Response Papers:**
  These discussion papers will compare and analyze the readings for the week, discussing the authors’ arguments and pinpointing major issues within the selected theme. Undergraduate students must submit one of their three papers before the Fall Break; graduate students must submit two of their four papers before the Fall Break. Papers are due (via cuLearn) by Fridays at noon for the readings discussed in class the day before. That does not mean you only have a few hours to write them, of course; this is just an extra window of time in which to polish what you will have already written before we meet in class on Thursdays. See the separate assignment sheet for details on how to structure and time these papers.

- **Proposal & Bibliography for Research Essay**
  It is in your best interests to begin thinking about possible essay topics early in the semester. To help with that, you will submit a 1-2 page proposal outlining your major research question(s) and a preliminary bibliography that includes material you have already consulted as well as material you intend to consult as you continue working on the project. You don’t have to have all the answers at this stage, but the assignment will be graded on how much effort you have put into developing a feasible and analytically compelling topic at this point in the course.

- **Research Source Show-and-Tell & Peer Review**
  This assignment has two parts. We will discuss it in more detail in class before it is due. It is mandatory for undergraduate students and optional (for bonus credit) for graduate students.

  Once you have identified your final essay topic (see below) and begun your research, you will choose one of your sources to “Show-and-Tell” to the rest of the class – be it a primary source like a cartoon, a newspaper article, a speech, etc. or a secondary source like a particularly intriguing excerpt from a historical work. Post your source to the Discussion Board on cuLearn with a short write-up about it. Once everyone has posted their Show-and-Tells, you will read through them and choose one for Peer Review, where you will engage with the other student’s source and offer constructive advice.

- **Final Research Essay:**
  The essay will take one of three forms. #1 and 2 are designed for history students, and #3 is for political science or post-Soviet studies students, but you may pick any option:

  **Option 1: Focus on primary sources:** the student will rely mainly on a body of primary sources to write an essay. Some primary source ideas include: memoirs, novels or films, newspapers, advice manuals, posters, political cartoons, television or radio broadcasts, advertisements, pamphlets, diaries, government documents, music performances, documentary or newsreel footage, museum exhibits, etc. More guidance on finding primary sources will be posted to cuLearn and we will discuss this more in class.

  **Option 2: Focus on historiography (historical secondary sources):** the student will select a group of scholarly books and/or articles about an everyday life theme and write an essay considering historiographical trends. How have historians written about your theme? How have views of it changed over time, or not? Why are these historians’ arguments significant?
Option 3: Focus on historicizing a contemporary issue: the student will identify an issue in Russian, Ukrainian, or any post-Soviet society of particular interest to them and explore the historical roots of the issue in Soviet everyday life. Topics might include: housing or transportation issues, architecture and urban planning, education, sports and leisure, censorship, youth protests, the arts, shopping and consumerism, marriage or dating, diary-writing (VKontakte?), labour, prisons, women’s rights, LGBT rights, etc.

CLASS FORMAT & SEMINAR PARTICIPATION

• As you likely already know, seminars are not lecture-based classes. The readings are intensive, but you are expected to participate and contribute much more than simply “doing” the reading. As you prepare for class each week, think actively rather than passively, ie: rather than waiting for the discussion leaders or me to set the agenda, what do you want to discuss?

• Read carefully, critically, and identify questions, problems, contradictions, critiques, etc. about what you have read. Bring those issues to the group when we meet, and be prepared to respond to the questions, problems, contradictions, critiques, etc. your classmates have also brought forth for the day. With that kind of active reading and participation from everyone in the group, we will have productive discussions that will help you not only to come to terms with the topics we are discussing, but in a broader way to develop your own voice as a scholar.

• A big component of active learning is also active listening. For shy students who are often careful listeners, I would advise you to challenge yourself to come out of your shell at least once per class and engage with a question or problem that I or another student has posed. For the more gregarious students, however, I would coach you to practice active listening, and to engage directly with comments that other students have made, in order to make sure you are not dominating the discussion with all your own ideas.

• I take note of your participation grade out of 3 after each class (roughly, A, B, or C-level). A-level involves actively listening, contributing ideas to move the discussion forward or draw on previous comments, and demonstrating advanced engagement with the readings. B-level does the same but less often, perhaps only one or two comments per class, or less rigorously, not moving the discussion forward to the same extent. C-level and below is silence throughout the class, or participation that only derails the discussion or does not demonstrate any engagement with the required texts. These grades are not written in stone, however, and I look for improvement throughout the course.

• I am not interested in embarrassing shy students or making you uncomfortable in class. However, if you are not used to this sort of format, this is a perfect opportunity to work on your oral argument skills – which will serve you well in any career path! Come see me for more pointers if you are having trouble venturing into our discussions.

• Your participation grade will also take your attendance record into account (ie: if you aren’t in class, you can’t participate). Absences may be excused due to emergencies, serious illness, or religious holidays only; please see me about discussing excused absences.

• I expect all students to arrive on time and stay for the entire class. Barring an emergency, you may not come and go as you please during class time. We will take a 10-minute coffee break in the middle of the 3 hours, so please wait until then to leave the room.
** We are all responsible for cultivating a productive and comfortable class environment and demonstrating respect for each other and for diverse perspectives. If there is anything I can do (or not do) to be more inclusive of your perspective in our discussions, please do let me know.

**CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY**

- Please turn your phone off during class. Come talk to me if you have a legitimate reason for keeping it on, i.e: childcare concerns, waiting for urgent news, etc. In general, however, calls and texts can and should wait until class is over.

- **I strongly recommend using a pen and paper to take notes during class and leaving your laptops out of it.** Studies have shown that if you think you are efficiently multi-tasking by working on other things during class, you are in fact not doing either thing very well. And if you are focused on the class and taking notes, you are far more likely to retain material written by hand than typed.¹ Moreover, this class is not so much about taking notes as it is about being present in the conversation each week.

- That said, I don’t ban laptops or tablets, so long as you use them only to focus on the course material or pull up the readings. If it becomes obvious in class that you are distracted or are distracting others with non-course material, I will ask you to put the tech away and use a pen and paper for the rest of the semester.

- From my point of view, my role is not to ban you from using the technology that has become a crucial part of our daily lives, but rather to help you practice using it for professional reasons in the classroom, rather than personal reasons. Learning and practicing that distinction now will serve you well in your life and career after university.

- The “Eyeball check”: Even if you are engaged with the readings on your screen, be sure to take some time during the class to lower or close your laptop or tablet and look up! Are you truly engaging with your classmates and with me, or are you using your screen to hide?

**Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. carleton.ca/pmc

**How I Use cuLearn**

I like cuLearn, and I use it in every aspect of the course. You should ensure you are familiar with the system as a whole and our course site in particular. There you will find our weekly readings and assignment instructions. **You will also submit all your written work electronically via cuLearn.** This allows me to return feedback to you more quickly than paper versions. I will also post your grades to cuLearn. Make sure you have regular access to a computer and internet connection.

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**DEADLINES**

- Your work must be submitted on time (or earlier) according to the dates on the Course Outline and assignment instructions.

- Late work will be deducted 5% per day to a maximum of 7 days (including weekends). After that, unless you have spoken with me, your assignments will not be accepted. (Exception: see the Reading Responses Instruction sheet on cuLearn for specific rules for how you can roll one week’s Response over to the following week, incorporating new readings, if you miss the Friday deadline).

**MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS**

University-level work can be very stressful, especially at this advanced level. Whether you have just arrived at Carleton for your M.A. or have been here for several years, I encourage you to familiarize yourself with the many resources we have available to help you manage your workload and maintain your health in the middle of a busy semester, starting with the Well-being Resources listed here: https://carleton.ca/thrive/well-being-resources/.

In addition to considering outside resources, please come see me if you are struggling in this class. I enforce deadlines for your benefit, to help you avoid too much work piling up at the end of the semester. But that said, if you need some breathing room with an assignment or help managing the reading schedule, it is better for you to come talk to me about it than to avoid me, or cause yourself undue stress trying to manage the situation alone. I am open to negotiating due dates for your work (within reason and at my discretion) as long as I see that you are committed to the class.

**TOPICS & READING SCHEDULE**

**September 6 – Introduction**

*No reading*

What is “everyday life”? Why does it deserve its own topic in Soviet history?

**September 13 – Methodology, Historiography, & Revolution: How Should We Study Everyday Life?**


**September 20 – Building a New Society**


September 27 – Peasant Life in the 1920s and 1930s

October 4 – Stalinism: “Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times”
• Sheila Fitzpatrick, Ch. 2, “Hard Times,” Ch. 4, “The Magic Tablecloth,” and Ch. 6, “Family Problems,” in Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s (Oxford UP, 1999), 40-66, 89-114, 139-63. (If pressed for time, choose one of these chapters to focus on).

October 11 – Stalinism: Everyday Violence

October 18 – Religious Life
*** First Reading Response Paper(s) due before Fall Break (UGs: at least one; Grads: at least two) ***
• Victoria Smolkin, Ch. 1, “The Religious Front: Militant Atheism Under Lenin and Stalin,” in A
[Optional: historian Sean Guillory’s podcast interview with Victoria Smolkin (link to podcast & transcript available on cuLearn).]

October 25 – No class (Fall Break)

November 1 – The Great Patriotic War & Its Aftermath
*** Proposal & Bibliography due for EURR 4202 & HIST 4201A ***
- Catherine Merridale, Ivan’s War: The Red Army, 1939-1945 (Faber and Faber, 2010), excerpts.
- Donald Filtzer, “Standard of Living versus Quality of Life: Struggling with the Urban Environment in Russia during the Early Years of Post-War Reconstruction,” in Fürst, ed, Late Stalinist Russia: Society Between Reconstruction and Reinvention (Routledge, 2006), 81-102.

November 8 – Prison Life
*** Proposal & Bibliography due for EURR 5202 ***

November 15 – Living Spaces & Privacy
*** Research Source Show-and-Tell post due (on cuLearn) ***
- Juliane Fürst, Ch. 8, “‘We All Live in a Yellow Submarine’: Dropping Out in a Leningrad Commune,” in Dropping out of Socialism: The Creation of Alternative Spheres in the Soviet Bloc (Lexington Books, 2016).
- Deborah A. Field, Ch. 6, “Child Rearing and the Problem of Selfishness,” in Field, Private Life and Communist Morality in Khrushchev’s Russia (Peter Lang, 2007), 83-98.

November 22 – Everyday Life on the Margins: Historicizing Disability in the USSR
*** Peer Review of Show-and-Tell posts due ***
November 29 – Life in the 1970s and 1980s: From Stagnation to Glasnost


December 6 – Wrap-Up


Final Research Paper due via cuLearn by December 7 at 11:55pm.
Requests for Academic Accommodation
You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation
Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

Religious obligation
Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

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Survivors of Sexual Violence
As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and is survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support

Accommodation for Student Activities
Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: students.carleton.ca/course-outline