This first-year seminar focuses on the history of Russia from the Revolution of 1917 through the Stalinist purges of the 1930s. Particular attention is paid to assessing the impact of Lenin and Stalin on developments in the Soviet Union and the interplay among socioeconomic, gender, cultural, and ideological currents. We explore the significance of the Soviet socialist experiment and try to explain how and why the Stalinist dictatorship emerged. Topics focus on the Bolshevik seizure of power, the cultural dreams of the Bolshevik revolutionaries, the struggle to succeed Lenin, the rise of Stalin, the cult of personality, collectivization and industrialization, the purges, and women’s liberation. Course materials include documents, memoirs, monographs, and films.

In addition, the seminar will devote attention to the writing process. Students will have the opportunity to revise papers and work with me and other students to improve the quality of their writing.

Course Requirements

1. Attendance and active participation are required
2. Lead one class discussion
3. Several short papers
4. Group presentation

Written assignments are due the following dates:

January 24: 300-word essay
February 2: 4-page
February 18: 4-page essay
March 18: 4-page essay
April 15: 4-page essay
May 10: 7-page essay

Please note that you have to write only three of the four-page essays (and revise two of them).

The following books are also on course reserve for those students who want more background reading:

Ronald Suny, *The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States*
John Thompson, *A Vision Unfulfilled: Russian and the Soviet Union in the Twentieth Century*
Gregory Freeze, ed., *Russia: A History*
All students are expected to read the College’s policy on academic honesty and integrity that appears in the Swarthmore College Bulletin. The work you submit must be your own, and plagiarism will be penalized. I will submit papers suspected of containing plagiarized materials to the College Judiciary Committee. Finally, unexcused absences will result in a lower final grade.

**Week One (January 19): Introduction to the Course**

Sheila Fitzpatrick, “Introduction” and “The Setting,” pp. 1-33 Blackboard
OR
Reginald Zelnik, “Revolutionary Russia, 1890-1914” Blackboard

**Week Two (January 26): The Bolshevik Seizure of Power**

John Thompson, *Revolutionary Russia, 1917*, 2nd edition

**Week Three (February 2): Revolutionary Dreaming**

Moshe Lewin, “A Dictatorship in the Void” Blackboard
Sheila Fitzpatrick, “The Civil War,” pp. 61-84 Blackboard
Paul Avrich, “The Crisis of War Communism” Blackboard
Alexandra Kollontai, “Theses on Communist Morality,” “The Family and the Communist State” and “Make Way for Winged Eros” Blackboard
P. Vinogradskaya, “The ‘Winged Eros’ of Comrade Kollontai” Blackboard
Barbara Evans Clements, “The Birth of the New Soviet Woman” Blackboard

**Week Four (February 9): The Civil War**

Film: *Commissar* (105 minutes) We will watch and discuss in class.

**Week Five (February 16): Women, War and Revolution**

Elizabeth Wood, *The Baba and the Comrade*
OR
William Husband, “The New Economic Policy (NEP) and the Revolutionary Experiment, 1921-1929” Blackboard

**Week Six (February 23): Revolutionary Dystopia**

Evgenii Zamiatin, *We*

Film: *Bed and Sofa* (72 minutes) We will watch and discuss in class.

**Week Seven (March 2): Intellectuals and the Revolution**

Loren Graham, *The Ghost of the Executed Engineer*
Stalin Documentary (Part One, 55 minutes) We will watch and discuss in class.

**Week Eight (March 16): The Rise of Stalin**

Robert Tucker, *Stalin as Revolutionary, 1879-1929: A Study in History and Personality*
Week Nine (March 23): Building Socialist Culture

David Hoffmann, *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity*
OR
Lewis Siegelbaum, “Building Socialism, 1929-1941” (until section on Great Purges) Blackboard

Week Ten (March 30): Understanding the Bolshevik Mentality

Stephen Cohen, “Bolshevism and Stalinism” Blackboard
Robert Tucker, “Stalinism as Revolution from Above” Blackboard
Stephen Kotkin, “Coercion and Identity: Workers’ Lives in Stalin’s Showcase City” Blackboard
J. Arch Getty, “Afraid of Their Shadows: The Bolshevik Recourse to Terror, 1932-1938” Blackboard
Lev Kopelev, *Education of a True Believer* Blackboard
Lynne Viola, “The Peasant Nightmare: Visions of the Apocalypse in the Soviet Countryside” Blackboard
Lynne Viola, “Bab’i Bunty and Peasant Women’s Protest during Collectivization” Blackboard

Film: *Burnt by the Sun* (On course reserve in McCabe) 134 minutes. Watch before class.

Week Eleven (April 6): Building Socialism in the Factory

John Scott, *Behind the Urals: An American Worker in Russia’s City of Steel*

Film: *Enthusiasm* (67 minutes) We will watch and discuss in class.

Week Twelve (April 13): The Gods are Athirst: Life in the Gulag

Evgeniia Ginzburg, *Journey into the Whirlwind*
Sheila Fitzpatrick, “The End of the Revolutionary Era,” pp. 135-161 Blackboard
OR
Lewis Siegelbaum, “Building Stalinism, 1929-1941” (Finish) Blackboard

Film: Stalin Documentary (Part Two, 55 minutes) We will watch and discuss in class.

Week Thirteen (April 20): Life in the 1930s

Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*

Film: *Repentance* (On course reserve in McCabe) 151 minutes. Watch before class.

Week Fourteen (April 27): Group Presentations

Final Paper Due May 10