

CTI 218 DG- J
“Forging Utopia---Stalinism: Culture and Civilization”

Fall 2021

Time: TTh 8:45 a.m.-10:25 a.m. Room: PLC 110

Professor Holiman

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Office Hours: M/W 8:00-8:45 am; T/Th 10:30-11:30 pm, or by appointment

Course Description:

In the world of culture and traditions, we recognize the work of great painters, sculptors, musicians, poets, novelists, etc., because they produce works of transcendent beauty. In some respects, we can include the life and work of Joseph Stalin in this discussion. Why? Because he created a transcendental work of art: no dictatorship is greater than Stalin's. Nobody accumulated or exercised as much power as Stalin so quickly, so ruthlessly, or for so long. He is the Picasso of dictatorship, a huge historical and cultural figure, a man very much a product of the times in which he lived, but who also shaped those times and ultimately the world in which we live. Stalin was born into a world of “Big History,” a son of a laundress and a shoemaker, coming from the periphery of the Russian Empire, who altered the time in which he lived. He certainly changed and shaped the world in which Russians live and the effects of his “artistry” Russians still labor to understand and to overcome.

Is it possible for revolutionaries to build Utopia? This course examines that question in the Russian case, focusing on the efforts of the Soviet state, led by Joseph Stalin, to build a civilization of a “new type” based on the principles of Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist ideology. During the course of the semester, students will explore the following elements of emergent “Stalinist civilization”: class identity, customs & law, culture & the arts, scientific-technological institutions and organizations, religious rituals & monuments, architecture, social organization & daily life, with an emphasis on the period from 1924 through 1956.

Course Goals:

- To explore the challenges and ramifications of forced cultural and social transformation by examining the creation of “Stalinist Civilization” in the USSR.
- To examine conflicting views of human dignity and society rooted in traditional Russian culture, Orthodox Christianity, and Marxism-Leninism.
- To examine how culture, traditions, and daily life were affected and changed by this attempt at radical socio-cultural transformation.

Learning Objectives:

- To understand the successes and terrible costs of the Soviet model of modernization in the 20th century.
- To understand the nature of the power that Stalin exercised as dictatorial leader of the party/state and the limitations of that power.
- To understand the official image of the Soviet Union's utopian project versus the daily reality of life in Stalin's USSR.
- To understand some of the key challenges in creating an ideologically-inspired utopia on the deep foundation of pre-existing political, social, and cultural traditions.
- To understand the legacy of the Soviet utopian experiment for Russia today.

Course Mode of Delivery: FtF

Face-to-Face (FtF): This course meets physically face-to-face for 76%-100% of the course contact hours prescribed for the course type and units. The course has a dedicated website. It also has a presence on Moodle, including the syllabus and links to TURNITIN for submission of papers. It is my ***firm*** intention to conduct this course Face to Face for as long as possible. The cooperation, dedication, and **discipline** of students to wear masks and practice social distancing consistently (both inside and outside the classroom) will, of course, affect the final outcome. If we have a COVID outbreak on campus that is widespread, we will move the course online.

Classroom Community:

We aim to create a great learning experience with a strong classroom community. To achieve it, we all will need to minimize or eliminate distractions, from technology to actions or conduct that can or does disrupt our learning community. Because our class will involve serious topics, and some serious discussion, no recording of any component of the class may be communicated in any way to a person outside of the class without the permission of the instructor and any class member who may be in the recording.

ZOOM Video Components:

ZOOM access will only be provided to students who have been required by the College to isolate or quarantine, and proper documentation will be required. Because student engagement in our class is crucial, students attending this class virtually on Zoom will be expected normally to activate their cameras or demonstrate engagement as requested, e.g., using the chat function, sharing reactions, participating in breakout sessions, etc. Students are welcome to use virtual backgrounds. Under special circumstances, students may join a class virtually with audio-only with the instructor's permission.

COVID-19 Statement:

William Jewell College is committed to maintaining a safe learning environment for all students, faculty and staff. Our class delivery approach is a Face-to-Face class, and we will follow Jewell's protocols for [Operation Safe Campus](#). Remember, Jewell's goal is to get and keep an environment safe for on-campus learning. We will be acting for the common good and to protect the most vulnerable in our community. Our class will do its part for this common goal.

Here is what we will do in this class:

- **Preventive Safety Measures:** This class will always require [a face covering](#). If everyone wears a mask and engages in social distancing, we have the best chance of preventing the spread of the virus. You should be wearing your face covering from the moment you enter the building, making sure to cover both your mouth and nose. We will follow all recommended hygiene and social distancing guidelines. In the unlikely event that you forget your mask, tell your professor as you enter class so arrangements can be made to get you a temporary face covering.
- **Virtual Access for Students in Quarantine or Isolation:** Although we hope this will not be necessary, to keep us safe and take care of our most vulnerable, there may be students who need to take this course virtually at times. *If the College requires you to quarantine or isolate and proper documentation is provided*, I will work with you to continue in this course. If physically able, you will be expected to join the class virtually at its regular class time. You will have access to course materials on the course website and on Moodle. You will be welcome to meet with me during office hours or by appointment to follow up on anything involving class. If you are incapable of academic work, we will create a plan together. It could involve an [incomplete contract](#) or withdrawing from the course.
- **Virtual Access for Students with COVID-19/Pandemic Accommodations:** Any student in the course of the semester with reasonable concerns about safety during the COVID-19 pandemic may apply for authorization to take this class virtually completing the following form: https://williamjewell.formstack.com/forms/covid_support_request. Students will join the class virtually at its regular class time.
- **Illness:** If you are feeling ill before class, please email your professor and do not come to class that day. Contact the Student Health Center for next steps. If you are in class and appear to be exhibiting symptoms, your professor may ask you leave class for the day. Always maintain close contact with your professor if you need to miss class for any reason.

Course Readings:

The following books are required reading for the course and may be purchased in the WJC Bookstore:

- Oleg Khlevniuk, "Stalin: A New Biography of a Dictator" (Yale University Press, 2015)
- David Hoffmann, "The Stalinist Era" (Cambridge University Press, 2018)

- Valentin Kataev, “Time, Forward!” (Northwestern University Press, 1995)
- Lydia Chukhovskaya, “Sophia Petrovna” (Northwestern University Press, 1994)
- Anne Applebaum, “Gulag Voices: An Anthology” (Yale University Press, 2011)

Other required reading will be made available on the course website and via Moodle.

Course Components:

- **In-Class Exams (x2): 40% (20% each).**
Each exam will consist of six (6) short-answer Identification items (60%), and a short essay (40%).
- **Comparative Genres Paper: 15%**
A brief (5-7 pp.) response essay requiring students to evaluate and compare the representation of Stalinist cultural images and "official" values in reference to individual works drawn from three separate artistic genres. Guidelines for the assignment will be distributed in class. Papers will be submitted in hard copy AND must be uploaded electronically to TURNITIN via the course’s Moodle site. Make certain to do your work honestly.
- **Comparative Lives Paper: 20%**
A comparative essay (8-10 pages) comparing the books *Gulag Voices* and *Sophia Petrovna* using questions that will be assigned.
- **Final Exam: 25%**
Identical in format to the in-class course exams. The final exam is *cumulative* in nature; it will, however, be weighted toward materials/topics addressed in the final third of the semester.

Grading Policy is straightforward. **The grade “A” is earned by consistently excellent work in this course.** In other words, it is not the default grade. Improvement in the course over the duration of the semester will be considered in assigning the final course grade in marginal cases. *Non-performance of any assignment will result in an F for the assignment.*

Grading Scale:

Letter Grade	From	To	Letter Grade	From	To
A+	97	100	C+	77	77.9
A	93	96.9	C	73	76.9
A-	90	92.9	C-	70	72.9
B+	87	89.9	D+	67	69.9
B	83	86.9	D	63	66.9
B-	80	82.9	D-	60	62.9

Two-Week Turnaround Policy: Exams and other written assignments will be returned to students within two weeks of being submitted. Often the turnaround time is less.

Course Requirements:

1. Attending all class sessions. *Class notes will constitute an important amount of testable material, especially early in the semester.*
2. Completion of assigned readings.
3. Two sectional examinations.
4. Two comparative-analytical papers.
5. Final examination.

Course Policies:

1. **Withdrawal.** The standard College policy will apply to this course.
2. **Absences on Exam Days.** The instructor must approve an absence on an examination day in advance. In the event of illness, a note from a physician, signed and dated on official letterhead, will be expected from the student in order to make up the exam. If a student will be absent due to a College-sponsored event, the faculty-staff sponsor should notify the instructor in writing in advance; no electronic messages or voice-mail messages, please.
3. **Electronic Devices.** Pagers and cellular telephones, if brought to class, should be deactivated. The use of laptop computers is permitted, but I expect you to use them to take notes, check sources, etc., and not to check Facebook or play with other social media.
4. **Punctuality.** Students are expected to be on time for class sessions.
5. **Professorial Prerogative.** The professor reserves the right to alter the syllabus as the course proceeds if circumstances require it. As in all courses, this course is a “work in progress.” The syllabus is a guide, not a contract.
6. **Attendance.** Attendance is expected. Students should be aware that excessive absences affect your grade adversely.
7. **Classroom Decorum.** The classroom is a constructed community whose members share a common interest: learning. To achieve it, we must all address one another in a respectful, civil manner. It is also important to minimize or eliminate distractions, from inappropriate use of technology to actions or conduct that can or will disrupt learning together.
8. **Special Accommodations.** William Jewell College pursues a non-discrimination policy with regards to all education programs and employment. Jewell is committed to ensuring that educational opportunities and programs are available and accessible to all qualified students in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADAAA) of 2008. To prevent discrimination on the basis of disability, reasonable and appropriate accommodations, academic adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids are determined on an individual basis for otherwise qualified students who have a demonstrated need for these services and can provide appropriate documentation. Contact the Director of Disability Services and Compliance, Mrs. Missy Henry (Room T-15, Yates-Gill College Union, 816-415-7556, henrymr@william.jewell.edu) to initiate any request for accommodations. Additional information about these services can also be found at www.jewell.edu on the Disability Services webpage (<https://www.jewell.edu/disability-services>.)

9. **Academic Dishonesty.** Academic honesty is required in all academic endeavors. Violations of academic honesty may result in a failing grade on an examination, failure in the course, or expulsion from the college. When a student's grade has been affected, *violations of academic honesty will be reported to the Provost and may result in an Honor Code violation.*

Violations of academic honesty include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Copying another's work and claiming it as your own (plagiarism); purchasing papers or using AI paraphrasing software.
2. Using the work of a group of students when the assignment requires individual work;
3. Looking or attempting to look at an examination before it is administered;
4. Using materials during an examination that are not permitted;
5. Allowing another student to take your examination for you;
6. Intentionally impeding the work of others;
7. Using an electronic device during an examination to transmit questions or answers to other students;
8. Using an electronic device to improperly store information for an examination;
9. Knowingly furnishing false information to the college or any of its representatives;
10. Assisting other students in any of the acts listed above.

William Jewell College had adopted an Honor Code. It is, therefore, important to be clear concerning academic honesty. Students may work with other students when answering review questions or practice examination questions. Since this work is not graded, such collaboration does not violate the Honor Code and can contribute to a deeper understanding of the material. Students can learn by working with other students.

Students are not permitted to work together on examinations and any such collaboration would be a violation of the Honor Code and subject to the appropriate penalty. Be aware that TURNITIN already has on file a database of papers from this course against which your work will be compared and TURNITIN searches the internet for papers submitted at other colleges, universities and purchased from websites.

Examinations:

Examinations will be given in class.

- **Absences on examination days and on assignment due days will be treated seriously.** A student with an unexcused absence on either type of day will NOT be allowed to make up the examination or submit the written assignment.
- **Absences on examination days MUST be cleared in advance with the instructor** (an e-mail or voice mail message left for the instructor on exam day does not constitute advance clearance).

Make-up examinations will be given *at the discretion and convenience of the instructor and will be given only in essay format.*

Late Assignments:

- Students are expected to complete assigned class work on time. A student anticipating absence from class on a day when work is due is expected to submit the work in advance of the due date.
- Papers submitted past the due date/time printed on the assignment will be penalized by one letter grade per day (per 24 hour period) for each day they were late, *after* having been graded for content.
- If unexpected circumstances such as illness or a personal or family emergency make meeting a due date or attending an examination impossible, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor, in advance of the due date or exam, to explain the situation and request alternate arrangements. Documentation supporting the unexpected circumstances may be required. Failure to provide documentation when requested will result in a penalty.

Absences:

- Attendance in is required and expected. If you are absent, you are expected to obtain class notes, and to keep up with the content and assignments as the course proceeds.

How to Do Well in the Course:

This course will require you to familiarize yourself with strange names, concepts, places, and events. This is a very content-intensive course. It will also require you to think.

- It is very important that you *attend classes regularly* and *take good notes*. There is a great deal of information, especially in the beginning, that will be given in class that is not in the reading assignments per se. Class lectures will not merely parrot the readings but will seek to reinforce them and to expand upon them. You are advised to consider taking notes by hand and not by laptop. The former reinforces memory and mastery, while the latter stretches fingers.
- *Discipline yourself to read over your notes at the end of each week*. Do they make sense to you? Are there gaps in them that need to be filled? If so, take care of this. (In doing this brief review, you are also already preparing for examination).
- *Do the reading assignments when they are given and do not get behind*. If you do the readings when assigned, you will find that the class sessions make much more sense AND you might find some questions that you wish to raise in class.
- *If you wait until a couple of days before the exams to begin cramming intensively, you will likely be in deep kimchee*. In other words, the material in the course does not cram easily. Please understand this going in.
- **REMEMBER:** Your education is your own responsibility. If you want to get one, as opposed to merely passing the course, the instructors will do their best to help you. We promise.

Course Website:

Note: "Stalinism: Culture & Civilization" is a work-in-progress. The organizational and structural SNAFUs typically associated with course offerings are likely to be compounded by the fact that "Stalinism: Culture & Civilization" is team-taught at two different institutions and heavily reliant upon electronic media. Problems will occur.

While every effort will be made to ensure that course exams and assignments will be administered/due on their scheduled dates, owing to the evolving nature of the course "reading, viewing, and browsing" assignments as well as daily lecture-discussion topics are likely to change. You should, however, make it a priority to keep up your readings according the assignment schedule on the course website.

All readings, viewings, & browsings should be completed before class meets on the dates listed on the assignment schedule.

*****The SCHEDULE OF READING ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS may be found on the course website: <http://scottwpalmer.com/stalinism>**

Wednesday, 15 December: FINAL EXAM (8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.)