This course will focus on four contentious relationships of the early Soviet period: between the state and the peasantry, between the state and artists, between the state and Jews, and between the state and women. We shall explore these relationships in depth, analyzing the history of each group’s fate under Soviet rule through film, memoir, fiction, and primary and secondary sources. Why were these relationships marked by conflict and, in many cases, violence? How did the peasantry respond to the Soviet leadership’s determination to transform and modernize rural society? How did Soviet filmmakers, artists, and writers fare when official definitions of what was permissible narrowed and eventually calcified? Why did a socialist system that claimed to emancipate women actually entrench gender inequality? Finally, why did a regime ostensibly committed to internationalism fail to solve the problems of national, ethnic, and religious antagonisms?

Required reading:


Secondary sources posted on Sakai Resources
Primary sources posted on Sakai Resources
Class meets Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30-10:50 am

Course requirements:

**Attendance** (10 points)
Students are expected to attend each and every scheduled class, to arrive on time, to come prepared in terms of the reading and writing assignments, and to participate in class discussions. There will be no use of cell phones or other communication devices during class: students are to turn off their communication devices before they come into the classroom. There are no excused absences: students simply lose 1 point every time they are absent and when they leave class without informing me in advance. Students are also penalized when they are late. Courtesy dictates that students should not walk in and out of the room during class time, and also that those who cannot attend a scheduled class should let me know via email or voicemail prior to that class.

**Comments on secondary sources** (20 points)
In time for the second meeting of each unit, students are required to have read the three assigned secondary sources, all peer-reviewed essays, posted on Sakai Resources. Typed, double-spaced comments on two of the three essays that make it clear the essays have been read carefully and seriously considered are due for that class. These comments should not echo what was read; rather they should contain informed student responses to what was read with relation to the overall issues. Most importantly, the comments should leave no doubt in my mind that the essays were read. If a student is absent, that student’s paper will only be accepted if a hard copy was left for me in my Cooper Street mailbox or sent to me via email in a readable Word file before the start of class on the day it was due.

**Reviews of secondary sources** (10 points each for a total of 40 points)
In time for the last meeting of each unit, students are to choose one of the three assigned secondary sources for that unit and write a 4-5-page formal paper that summarizes in their own words and elaborates on the author’s main point (the overall historical argument); examines the structure of the essay with reference to that argument; summarizes and considers the main primary sources on which the author relied on as evidence for the article (how the author knows what s/he knows); and comments on the relevance of the article to that week’s unit. If a student is absent, that student’s paper will only be accepted if a hard copy was left for me in my Cooper Street mailbox or sent to me via email in a readable Word file before the start of class on the day it was due. Papers that receive under 7.5 points must be rewritten and handed in, along with the marked-up original, exactly one week after they were returned. (Detailed guidelines are posted on Sakai Resources.)
**Quizzes on assigned books** (20 points)
There will be four short quizzes worth 5 points each on Hindus, Babel, Kulbak, and Engel/Posadskaya-Vanderbeck.

**Take-home final examination** (10 points)
Students will be required to analyze and annotate a primary source.

**Introduction**

**Tuesday, September 3**
The course and its requirements

**Thursday, September 5**
No class scheduled – Rosh Hashanah

**The Soviet state and the peasants**

**Tuesday, September 10**
Lecture and discussion

**Thursday, September 12**
Be ready to discuss these secondary sources available on Sakai Resources:
- Beatrice Farnsworth, “The Rural Batrachka (Hired Agricultural Laborer) and the Soviet Campaign to Unionize her,” in *Journal of Women's History* v. 14, #1 (Spring 2002): 64-93;

*Informal comments on two of the three above sources due in class

**Tuesday, September 17**
Be ready to discuss these primary sources available on Sakai Resources:
- Peasant letter (1917);
- Tambov peasant uprising (1920);
- Joseph Stalin “on eliminating the kulaks as a class” (1929);
- “Mass uprisings among kulaks” (1929); and
- Stalin, “Problems of the collective-farm movement” (1930)

**Thursday, September 19**
Read and be ready to discuss Hindus, *Red Bread*

*Quiz on Hindus, *Red Bread*

**Tuesday, September 24**
View Dovzhenko, *Earth* (1930)

**Thursday, September 26**
Discussion of *Earth* and Papazian

*Formal review of one of the secondary sources due in class

**The Soviet state and artists**

**Tuesday, October 1**
Lecture and discussion
Thursday, October 3

Be ready to discuss these secondary sources available on Sakai Resources:

*Informal comments on two of the three above sources due in class

Tuesday, October 8

Be ready to discuss these primary sources available on Sakai Resources:
Alexander Bogdanov, “The Proletarian and Art” (1918); Anatoly Lunacharsky, “The Tasks of the State Cinema in the RSFSR” (1919); Sergei Eisenstein, “The Art of Making Workers’ Films” (1925); Osip Mandelstam, “Ode to Stalin” (1933); and Andrei Zhdanov, “Soviet Literature” (1934)

Thursday, October 10

Read and be ready to discuss Babel, Red Cavalry and Other Stories
*Quiz on Babel, Red Cavalry and Other Stories

Tuesday, October 15

View Eisenstein, Ivan the Terrible, part I (1944)
Read this secondary source available on Sakai Resources: Katerina Clark, “Sergei Eisenstein’s Ivan the Terrible and the Renaissance: An Example of Stalinist Cosmopolitanism?” Slavic Review v 71, #1 (Spring 2012): 49-69

Thursday, October 17

Finishing viewing Ivan the Terrible. Discussion of the film and Clark
*Formal review of one of the secondary sources due in class

The Soviet state and Jews

Tuesday, October 22

Lecture and discussion

Thursday, October 24

Be ready to discuss these secondary sources available on Sakai Resources:

*Informal comments on two of the three above sources due in class

Tuesday, October 29

Be ready to discuss these primary sources available on Sakai Resources:
Vladimir Lenin, “The National Spectre of ‘Assimilation’” (1913); Joseph Stalin’s reply to an inquiry of the Jewish News Agency in the
United States (1931); Leon Trotsky on the “Jewish Question” (1937); The Jager Report (1941); and Hermann Friedrich Graebe, “Account of Mass Shooting” (1942)

**Thursday, October 31**
Read and be ready to discuss Kulbak, *The Zelmenyaners*
*Quiz on Kulbak, *The Zelmenyaners*

**Tuesday, November 5**
View Vladimir Korsh and Iosif Shapiro, *Seekers of Happiness* (1936)
Read [http://www.swarthmore.edu/Home/News/biro/](http://www.swarthmore.edu/Home/News/biro/)

**Thursday, November 7**
Finish viewing *Seekers of Happiness*. Discussion of the film and website
*Formal review of one of the secondary sources due in class

**The Soviet state and women**

**Tuesday, November 12**
Lecture and discussion

**Thursday, November 14**
*Informal comments on two of the three above sources due in class

**Tuesday, November 19**
Be ready to discuss these primary sources available on Sakai Resources: Alexandra Kollontai, “Communism and the Family” (1920); Clara Zetkin, “Lenin on the Woman Question” (1934); Central Committee, “On Anti-Religious Agitation and Propaganda among Women Workers and Peasants,” (1921); and Maria Filipenko, “My Life” (1924)

**Thursday, November 21**
No class scheduled – Dr. Bernstein at the annual Slavic Studies conference

**Tuesday, November 26**
Read and be ready to discuss Engel and Posadskaya-Vanderbeck, *A Revolution of Their Own*
*Quiz on Engel and Posadskaya-Vanderbeck, *A Revolution of Their Own*

**Thursday, November 28**
No class scheduled – Thanksgiving holiday

**Tuesday, December 3**
View Abram Room, *Bed and Sofa* (1927)
Read film review available on Sakai Resources: Stuart Liebman, “*Bed and Sofa,*” *Cineaste* v. 30, #3 (Summer 2005): 71-73

**Thursday, December 5**
Finish viewing *Bed and Sofa*. Discussion of the film and Liebman’s review
*Formal review of one of the secondary sources due in class

**Final examination due in my office on**