HIST 323W / 423W

World War II: The Eastern Front

Fall 2021

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Office hours: M, 2:30-3:45 p.m.; T, 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

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Assignments and Topics for Week:

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| W, 8/25 | **Introduction** |  |
| W, 9/1 | **1941** | Overy, Introduction and chs. 1-4. Grossman, chs. 1-8. “Suvorov, Icebreaker” read all except Ch. 26 at end) on e-reserve. “Soldiers Letters and Diaries” on e-reserve. |
| 8W, 9/8 | **Leningrad** and **Soldiers’ Feelings and Morale** | Simmons, *Writing the Siege of Leningrad,* all. Documents from Alexander Hill, *Great Patriotic War*  on e-reserve. “Soldiers Letters and Diaries” on e-reserve. |
| W, 9/15 | **Fight from Within** | Overy, Ch. 5. Nolte and Gartenschlag on e-reserve. Grossman, 247-261. |
| W, 9/22 | **Fight from Within / Ukraine** | Berkhoff. ***Three-four page source paper due.*** |
| W, 9/29 | **Stalingrad** | Hellbeck. Read Alexander Hill review of Hellbeck in *Slavic Review* 75, no. 4 (Winter 2016). Find in JSTOR.Read Rutherford review of Hellbeck, at <http://www.miwsr.com/2016/downloads/2016-023.pdf> **.** Optional: Grossman, 116-200. |
| W, 10/6 | **Soldiers’ lives / History of Things** | Schechter |
| W, 10/13 | **To the war’s end.** | Overy, 186-289. Grossman, 309-343. Vojin Majstorovic, “The Red Army in Yugoslavia, 1944-1945”. In class: View excerpts from “The Battle of Stalingrad” (1949). ***Topic choices for final paper due.*** |
| W, 10/20 | **Home front** | Filtzer and Goldman, *Fortress Dark and Stern****.*** ***Book review due.*** |
| W, 10/27 | **Displacement** | Manley. „Memorandum on Crimean Tatars,” at <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/archives/intn.html#depo> . |
| W, 11/3 | **Women in Combat** | Excerpts from Krylova, Anna, Soviet Women in Combat: A History of Violence on the Eastern Front,” on e-reserve. Conze, “Soviet Women as Comrades-in-Arms, on e-reserve. In class: View *The Cranes are Flying.* ***Bibliography due***.  |
| W, 11/10 | **To the Cold War** | Kennan and Novikov telegrams; Overy, ch. 10 and Epilogue.  |
| W, 11/17 |  | ***Discussions of work to date***. In class: View “The Cranes are Flying.” |
| W, 12/1 | **Individual meetings** |  |
| W, 12/8 |  | ***Final presentation discussions / wrap-up*** |
| M, 12/20 |  | Final papers due. |

Books you are required to get hold of:

Overy, Richard.  Russia's War.  New York: Penguin Books, 1998. **Amazon has a Kindle version on sale as well.**

Grossman, Vasily.  A Writer at War: A Soviet Journalist with the Red Army, 1941-1945.  New York: Vintage Books, 2007.  **Any edition will do. Amazon has a Kindle version.**

Simmons, Cynthia and Nina Perlina.  Writing the Siege of Leningrad: Women's Diaries, Memoirs and Documentary Prose. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003.  **Online version available at River Campus Libraries (RCL) website.**

Filtzer, Donald and Wendy Goldman.  Fortress Dark and Stern: The Soviet Home Front During World War II.  Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021.  **Kindle edition available on Amazon.**

Manley, Rebecca.  To the Tashkent Station: Evacuation and Survival in the Soviet Union. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009.  **At the moment your only options are Kindle, an expensive hard cover version, or a used copy from Amazon (or elsewhere).**

Schechter. Brandon. The Stuff of Soldiers: A History of the Red Army in World War II Through Objects. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019.  **Kindle or a $35 hardback version.**

Berkhoff, Karel.  Harvest of Despair.  Life and Death in Ukraine Under Nazi Rule.  Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008.  **Purchase hard copy or Kindle on Amazon.  There is also an e-book on the library website**

Grading:

Class discussion … 20%

Final paper … 44%

Source paper … 12%

Book review … 12%

Bibliography … 12 %

**Submisssion of Written Assignments:** You will need to submit assignments using the course Blackboard page. I’ll provide instructions on doing so.

**Structure of the course:**

The readings include a mix of primary and secondary sources. I would like to familiarize you with reading the important types of documents for the history of the Eastern Front, and also with some of the key debates and arguments in the field. I also aim for you to produce a quality history paper of the sort that might be published in a journal. We will build toward that goal. The first assignment involves primary source analysis. In the second you will review a book of your choice (with my advice) on a topic that you are interested in researching. The third is a bibliography on your topic of choice, which you will then use for your paper. The final is the actual research paper. You will have multiple chances to discuss with me and other students the progress of your paper.

The length of reading assignments tails off towards the end of the course to give you more time to work on the paper. The class will not meet one week towards the end of the semester so you have time to meet individually with me.

**Goals of the course:**

1. To learn what historians do:
	1. Analysis of primary sources, including authorship, audience, and connections to historical context.
	2. Understanding and evaluating secondary sources, including debates among scholars, implicit assumptions and storylines, and the historical context of the *secondary source itself*.
	3. Analysis of popular culture representations of historical events.
2. Improvement of writing skills, including the composition of primary source based research papers.
3. Deepening student’s knowledge of the Eastern Front, including life on the Soviet home front, soldiers’ experiences, the Holocaust, women’s experiences, economic forces, military tactics, logistics, etc.
4. Producing a near-publication quality history paper, either based on research in primary sources, or a discussion of the scholarly (secondary) literature on a particular topic.
5. Provide students with tools to think rigorously about political, social, and economic upheaval in our own time.

**Academic honesty:** All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with the University of Rochester's Academic Honesty Policy. *I will not accept Paper One from students who have not signed the “Acceptance of Academic Honesty Policy” on the course Blackboard site.*

**I DO NOT TOLERATE CHEATING OR PLAGIARISM (PRESENTING SOMEONE ELSE’S SCHOLARLY WORK AS YOUR OWN). I WILL PURSUE THE UNIVERSITY DISCIPLINARY PROCESS AGAINST STUDENTS WHO PLAGIARIZE OTHERS’ WORK. AT A MINIMUM, STUDENTS WHO PLAGIARIZE WILL RECEIVE A “0” ON THE ASSIGNMENT IN QUESTION.**

You are required to read the American Historical Association’s “Defining Plagiarism” at <https://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/teaching-resources-for-historians/plagiarism-curricular-materials-for-history-instructors/defining-plagiarism> before the second class meeting.

The College’s credit hour policy on undergraduate courses is to award 4 credit hours for courses that meet for the equivalent of 3 periods of 50 minutes each week.  Students enrolled in History 208/208W are expected to devote at least several hours each week outside of class to reading, identifying the main lines of argument in readings, preparing for class discussion, writing papers, etc.

**MASKING:** As per university policy, it is required that all students wear a mask covering mouth **and nose** during class. I will be doing the same. Masking is mostly to protect others from infection (you can be a carrier without symptoms). So it is a matter of concern *for others*. The usefulness of masks in preventing COVID spread is very well-documented in the scientific literature (as opposed to rumors on FB or websites that focus on politics or are run by hucksters of quack health products).

**COVID CONTINGENCIES:** The course will meet in person. Given the fluid nature of the COVID pandemic, it is possible that we will have to meet online. We will follow university guidance in this matter.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR READING.** For a number of discussion classes there are several different documents assigned. Keeping track of these sources for the class discussions is one of the biggest challenge of reading for the course. I would recommend noting down for yourself the date and authorship/provenance of each source, so you can place each in context and differentiate one from another during class discussions.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDYING IN GENERAL.** Because there are no tests for the course, you may have the impression that you can skate through or nor turn up for discussions, and just do readings when it is time to write your papers. This would be a mistake. I would take notes on discussions, not as dense as you would on lectures, but when something particularly interesting pops up (you don’t need to transcribe all of class discussion!!). Also I deliver mini-lectures from time to time, and there is information in these you might find useful. I will expect you to show mastery of all course materials in your papers, including the short tlectures and concepts that we explore during discussion

**ATTENDANCE:** You need to attend class regularly and contribute to discussion. My experience shows that students who do not do these things get substantially lower grades, because they do poorly on class assignments.

**CLASS PARTICIPATION:** Class participation is 20% of your grade. You don’t have to be the most active student in class to get full credit (100%) for this, but you do need to contribute a several comments per class. I will often ask students early in discussion to offer any thoughts at all they had about the reading. This is your chance, if you are shy, to have formulated something beforehand and to offer it for discussion.

If you never say a word in class, you will get a “zero” for class participation and you will have lost two full-grade grade steps right there.

If you have real difficulties speaking up in class, contact me to discuss.

In my experience students almost never ask “stupid” questions or make “stupid” comments. So don’t fear doing this. Moreover, your classmates may be grateful to you if you ask a very basic question – they may have also been confused, but afraid to ask. Also, do not be intimidated if some class members show superior background knowledge about events we are discussing. The course is designed for students with very little background in the events we study, and such students generally do as well as any others. Moreover, students with weaker background knowledge will often make very perceptive comments.

**Students with disabilities:**The University of Rochester respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. In the event you encounter any barrier(s) to full participation in this course due to the impact of disability, please contact the Office of Disability Resources. The access coordinators in the Office of Disability Resources can meet with you to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic accommodations. You can reach the [Office of Disability Resources](http://www.rochester.edu/college/disability/index.html) at: disability@rochester.edu; (585) 276-5075; Taylor Hall.