

HIS198—Daily Life in Socialist Countries
University of Rochester, Spring 2021
Instructor Alyssa Rodriguez

Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:25 – 4:40pm

Location: Hylan 206

Office Hours: via Zoom, Thursdays 11:00am – 12:30pm
and by appointment

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Course Description

In this course, we will be studying the lived experience of socialism in various socialist countries, including the Soviet Union, Cuba, Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Argentina. In the United States, it is common to think of socialism characterized only by queue lines, censorship, and the KGB. While it is true that many people struggled with the reality of police violence and censorship, and suffered due to a lack of food or personal freedom, it's also true that people lived full lives under socialist dictatorship. Without discounting these struggles, we will be studying the various aspects of daily life under socialism, and will be working to understand this ideology from the point of view of people living within it.

The lived experience of socialism was not the same for everyone, however. Women struggled to both be workers and mothers, and the ordinary worker often did not experience the same issues with censorship or the police as the intelligentsia. Across countries, the socialist experience varied as well. While the Soviet Union struggled to dispel the Stalinist cult of personality after the 1950s, Cuba's socialist movement was still in its early stages.

We will work to understand not only how socialist daily life differed between countries, but how it differed between various types of people, and how socialism as a system changed throughout the period largely following World War II. While we will touch on socialism and its origins in the first half of the 20th century, the period beginning in the mid-1950s displays the culmination of socialist ideology in countries beyond the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and especially within Latin America. This is necessarily why we will confine our focus geographically, and why we will study the latter half of the 20th century: in order to understand how socialism was lived when it first began, years after its inception, and in various locations and by a multitude of people.

Course Learning Objectives:

1. Analyze various primary and secondary sources to improve our understanding of daily life in socialist countries largely following World War II.

2. Consider what socialism is, how people responded to it, and how it was instituted in various countries.
3. Utilize pictures, videos, and interviews to more fully understand our historical subjects.
4. Improve source analyses through discussion of pictures and testimonies, and improve writing skills through papers, exams, and discussion boards.

Course Requirements:

Blackboard: Any updates to our course will be posted on Blackboard. Please check Blackboard frequently to ensure that you are up to date. You can also find recordings of our lectures, assignments, a citation guide, rubrics, and a copy of this syllabus on Blackboard as well.

Papers: You will have two papers this semester, one 4-5 pages and the other 5-7 pages. Both papers should be formatted in Times New Roman, 12-point font, with 1-inch margins. Each paper will ask you to respond to a prompt that I will provide. Your second paper will additionally ask you to find some outside research, but I will have more information concerning both papers later in the semester.

Please submit your papers to Blackboard as Word documents (.doc or .docx) by the **beginning of class on the day each paper is due (3:25ET)**. You are expected to use Chicago Style to format your papers. You can find the style guide here:

https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-1.html. I will additionally have a document posted to Blackboard to act as a citation guide.

You will lose 1/3 of a letter grade for every day that a paper is late, so a B+ would be a B, for example. Please contact me beforehand if you are having trouble meeting your deadlines.

Source Assignment: In this course, I will ask you to gather a list of sources to help you with your second paper. I will compose a “master list” of all of our sources to post on Blackboard. More information will be provided later in the course.

Participation: All students are expected to participate in course discussion, whether you are attending in person, synchronously via Zoom, or asynchronously. Some of this course discussion will occur through our discussion board posts that you will be asked to use a few times during this course. This will mean answering a prompt with a paragraph that adds new information and that can be used to further discussion. Answers such as “I agree, that’s a good point” will not receive credit.

I will also ask asynchronous students to submit short assignments to substitute for the in-class discussion.

Exams: Students will be given both a midterm and a final examination, which will cover lectures, readings, and information from our discussions. Both exams will be submitted to me via email. Your midterm will be due at **4:50PM ET** on the day of the exam. You will have 72 hours to complete your final from the time I provide your instructions. Handing in your exam late will result in a loss of points.

Readings: Our books for this course are all available at the University of Rochester bookstore if you would like physical copies, and you are of course welcome to purchase them independently. You may also download *Born in the GDR* for free from the University of Rochester Library online. The remaining readings are available online through the library and via Blackboard.

It is expected that you complete your readings for class each day, as our discussions will be largely centered around your readings.

Required Books:

Molloy, Peter. *The Lost World of Communism: An Oral History of Daily Life Behind the Iron Curtain*. BBC Books, 2017. **(you might also find this book entitled *Bloc Life: Stories from the Lost World of Communism*. BBC Books, 2019. These are the SAME book)**

Vaizey, Hester. *Born in the GDR: Living in the Shadow of the Wall*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. **(This is available as a free e-book as part of the UR Library; you only need to purchase this if you would prefer a physical copy)**

Optional Books:

If you would like more context on any of our lectures, these two books are great options. **They are NOT required reading for this class.**

Judt, Tony. *Postwar Europe: A History of Europe Since 1945*

Hobsbawm, Eric. *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991*

Grading Structure:

Class Participation	15% (including in-class assignments and discussion boards)
Source Assignment	5%
Paper 1	15%
Paper 2	20%
Midterm	20%
Final Exam	25%

Should you find that you're having trouble with the work or with keeping up with the course, please do not hesitate to contact me. I would be more than happy to talk about your options.

Course Policies:

Attendance: In order to do well in this course, it is important that you attend lectures regularly, whether you attend in-person, synchronously, or asynchronously. Repeated absences will make it difficult for you to participate in discussion, which will affect your grade in this course.

Emails: Please feel free to email me if you have any concerns. I will attempt to respond within 24 hours, but if it has been a few days, please email again to be sure I have not missed your question. Do check to be sure that your question hasn't already been answered on the syllabus or within Blackboard, however.

Office Hours: I will be holding Zoom office hours regularly on Thursdays from 11:00am to 12:30pm. During this time, you can click on the link that I have posted on Blackboard to enter office hours. You do not need an appointment if you come to office hours, although you may be in the waiting room if I am speaking to another student.

Should you need a different time to meet online, or you need to meet in person, please email me and we will determine a time and place. If you do require a meeting in person, also keep in mind that you will need to be wearing a mask, and we will be socially distanced at 6 feet apart.

Recording: This is a hybrid course, meaning that it will be taught both to in-person and to online students. As such, per University of Rochester guidelines, our lectures will be recorded and uploaded to Blackboard.

Computers: If you are taking this course in-person, you are still encouraged to bring your computer or device to class if you have one in order to access readings during discussions. As I will also be uploading documents to Blackboard instead of handing them out to in-person students, you may also find your computer or device to be helpful.

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism in any form, and any other form of academic dishonesty, will not be tolerated and will be penalized to the fullest possible extent. Any time you use someone else's words or ideas to make a point, you must cite and acknowledge their work. All outside sources must be given credit and cited according to the latest edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style*, and should be clearly separated from the rest of your work. Make sure to use a footnote, and quote when using someone else's work. If you are not sure about what to cite, it is always better to cite. You may also refer here for more information:

<http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/policy.html#plagiarism>

Students are expected to be aware of and to abide by the Academic Honesty Policy at the University of Rochester for all assignments and activities. For the full policy and the consequences of its violation, please see www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/.

You are welcome to utilize databases to assist you in finding sources for your papers. The University subscribes to multiple databases that may be beneficial. You can find some of these databases through a search here <http://libguides.lib.rochester.edu/az/php>

Disability Services: 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 at: disability@rochester.edu; (585) 276-5075; Taylor Hall.

Statement Regarding Credit Hours: 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 HIS198 are expected to devote at least one hour each week to reading for our discussions and in preparation for papers and examinations.

University of Rochester COVID-19 Regulations: The University is committed to protecting the health and safety of the entire community—students, faculty, and staff. For this reason, it is mandatory that everyone wear a mask in University buildings and observe appropriate social distancing, including in classrooms. Masks have been provided to students, faculty, and staff, and classrooms have been specifically assigned to allow for social distancing to support these requirements. You must wear a mask appropriately (e.g., over nose and mouth) if you are attending class in person, and you must do this for every class session and for the entire duration of each class session. If you fail to do this, you will be politely reminded of the requirement and then asked to leave if you do not comply.

If you do not want to wear a mask, you may consider taking the course remotely (online). This may require you to complete a set of online requirements different from the in-person requirements, although these will be equivalent in their learning objectives.

Students who refuse to adhere to the requirement for mask wearing or social distancing in the course will be in violation of the COVID-19 Community Commitment and will be referred to the Student Conduct system through a COVID-19 Concern Report. Such referrals will lead to student conduct hearing and may result in a disciplinary action.

Students who feel unable to wear a mask may contact the Office of Disability Resources to explore options for accommodations. Students requirement accommodations may be asked to participate in the course through synchronous or asynchronous learning as a part of this accommodation.

Course Disclaimer: While I will try to stick to this syllabus throughout the duration of this course, in the event of unforeseen circumstances, I reserve the right to alter the syllabus. Any alterations will be made very clear, and will be noted in class and posted on Blackboard.

Weekly Schedule:

*The readings under each day should be completed for class on that day.

* Readings available through the library are linked on Blackboard, but you will need to login using your university ID and password to access them.

Week 1: Introductions and Early Marxism

(2/2) What is Socialism?

(2/4) Karl Marx and Marxist Ideology

- Chapters 1 (Bourgeoisie and Proletarians) and 2 (Proletarians and Communists) of The Communist Manifesto (<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/>)
- Please post a little bit about yourself on Blackboard
- Fill out the Academic Honesty quiz on Blackboard

Week 2: Early Socialism

(2/9) Soviet Socialism

- Excerpts from Steinberg, Mark. *Voices of Revolution, 1917*, documents 16, 20-22, 33, 67-68, 89, 91, 108, 110-111, 122-125, 127 (**Blackboard**)
- Chapter 2 “A Sudden Thaw” in Smith, Kathleen. *Moscow, 1956* (**Blackboard**)
- Excerpts from *Sedition: Everyday Resistance in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev and Brezhnev*, documents 14, 16, 19, 28, 29, 77, 81, 86 (chapters 2 and 6) (**available UR Library online**)

(2/11) Eastern European Socialism

- Molloy, *The Lost World of Communism*, pgs. 1-36, 58-62

Week 3: Socialist Movements

(2/16) Latin American Socialism

- Che Guevara, *Socialism and Man in Cuba* (online: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1965/03/man-socialism.htm>)

(2/18) Building the Socialist Person

- Excerpts from Gladkov, Fyodor. *Cement*, pgs. 3-7, 290-292 (**Blackboard**)
- Excerpts from Kataev, Valentin. *Time Forward!* pgs. 267-273, 289-297, 316-317 (**Blackboard**)

- Chapter 2 “Back then I really wanted to join the party” from Raleigh, Donald. *Russia’s Sputnik Generation: Soviet Baby Boomers Talk about Their Lives*, pgs. 55-86 (**available UR Library online**)

Week 4: Living Conditions

(2/23) The Battle for an Apartment

- Chapter 5 “The Quest for Normalcy” in Varga-Harris, Christine. *Stories of House and Home: Soviet Apartment Life during the Khrushchev Years*, pgs. 136-170 (**available UR Library online**)

(2/25) Coming Home

- Chapter 6 “Constructing Soviet Identity” in Varga-Harris, Christine. *Stories of House and Home*, pgs. 171-210 (**available UR Library online**)

Week 5: Technology

(3/2) Making the Household (Paper 1 Due 3/2)

- Discussion board post

(3/4) Driving Around Town

- Chapter 8 “The Common Heritage of the Socialist Car Culture” in *The Socialist Car: Automobility in the Eastern Bloc*. Edited by Lewis Siegelbaum, pgs. 143-156 (**available UR Library online**)
- Chapter 9 “Autobasteln: Modifying, Maintaining, and Repairing Private Cars in the GDR” in *The Socialist Car*, pgs. 157-169 (**available UR Library online**)

Week 6: Women

(3/9) Working Women and Mothers

- Chapter 6 “It’s very hard to be a woman in our country” in *Russia’s Sputnik Generation*, Donald Raleigh, pgs. 187-219 (**available UR Library online**)

(3/11) The Place of the Family in Socialism + midterm study activity

- Excerpt from *Cement*, 33-41 (**Blackboard**)
- Molloy, *The Lost World of Communism*, pgs. 224-227

Week 7: Workers' Movements

(3/16) MIDTERM

(3/18) The Working Proletariat

- Molloy, *The Lost World of Communism*, pgs. 86-109

Week 8: Socialist Media

(3/23) Broadcasting Socialism

- Watch part 2 of *The Lost World of Communism* (first 36 minutes)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sUVro3TKjow>
- Discussion board post
- Chapter 1 “The Olive Green Revolution” in Guerra, Lillian. *Visions of Power in Cuba: Revolution, Redemption, and Resistance, 1959-1971*, pgs. 37-49 (**available UR Library online**)

(3/25) Writers and Newspapers

- Molloy, *The Lost World of Communism*, pgs. 181-202

Week 9: Leisure Time and Sports

(3/30) Study Break Day (No class)

(4/1) Spending Time Outside of Socialism (Source Assignment Due 4/1)

- Molloy, *The Lost World of Communism*, pgs. 135-146

Week 10: Consumption

(4/6) How to be a Socialist Consumer

- Chapter 5 “Love in the Time of Mass Consumption” in Milanesio, Natalia. *Workers go shopping in Argentina: The Rise of Popular Consumer Culture*, pgs. 158-189 (**available UR Library online**)

(4/8) Fashion and Individuality

- Gronow, Jukka and Sergey Zhuravlev. *Fashion meets Socialism: Fashion Industry in the Soviet Union after the Second World War*, pgs. 211-215, 230-238, 240-242 (**available UR Library online**)

Week 11: Having Fun in Socialism

(4/13) Festivals

- Molloy, *The Lost World of Communism*, pgs. 146-158

(4/15) Musical Days

- Chapter 6 “The True Colors of Communism” in Yurchak, Alexei. *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*, pgs. 208-237 (**available UR Library online**)

Week 12: Living Young

(4/20) Young People Problems (Paper 2 Due 4/20)

- Molloy, *The Lost World of Communism*, pgs. 110-123
- Vaizey, *Born in the GDR*, pgs. 1-25, 39-66 (**available UR Library online**)

(4/22) The World of Romance and Education

- Molloy, *The Lost World of Communism*, pgs. 228-252
- Chapter 6 “First Flush of Youth” in Smith, Kathleen. *Moscow, 1956* (**Blackboard**)

Week 13: Developing Modern Socialism

(4/27) The Fall of Socialism

- Molloy, *The Lost World of Communism*, pgs. 253-276, 292-302
- Vaizey, *Born in the GDR*, pgs. 115-146 (**available UR Library online**)

(4/29) The Cases of Cuba and Argentina

- Discussion board post

Week 14: Socialism and Capitalism

(5/4) Transitioning from Socialism

- Chapter 8 “People have lost a great deal in terms of their confidence in tomorrow” in *Russia’s Sputnik Generation*, Donald Raleigh, 253-280 (**available UR Library online**)
- Molloy, *The Lost World of Communism*, pgs. 303-306
- Vaizey, *Born in the GDR*, pgs. 161-179 (**available UR Library online**)

(5/6) Review and Study Day

FINAL EXAM

You will have 72 hours to complete your final.