

## HISTORY 4796G

### Selected Topics in International or Comparative History: Comparative Communisms in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Winter 2023

Tuesdays, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. STVH 3166

Course delivery in-person, synchronous

**Instructor: Professor Oleksa Drachewych**

Office Hours: TBA

Department of History, Office: Lawson Hall 2233

Email: odrachew@uwo.ca

---

**This is a draft syllabus. Please see your course OWL site for the final syllabus.**

#### **Course Description:**

This course will investigate the nature of communist regimes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in a global and comparative perspective. Themes covered will include lived experiences, gender, repression, ideology, and international relations among others.

#### **Prerequisite(s):**

2.0 History courses at the 2200 level or above

Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

#### **Course Syllabus:**

What is communism and how did it develop in different regions? How did the Bolshevik Revolution and the Soviet Union provide a template for the spread of communism or the development of other ideologically similar regimes? To what extent did different people in different regions apply communist ideals in different ways to develop unique regimes? Were these regimes legitimately communist or were they doomed to fall into terror and dictatorship? Over the course of this class, students will become familiar with communist regimes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century from all over the world including the Soviet Union, China, Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe. Taking a global, transnational, and comparative approach, students will understand how communism was perceived in different regions and by different groups of people. This course will focus on a series of themes, some focusing on the lived experience under communism, others focusing on communist ideology, and others explaining the allure of the movement. Students will gain an understanding of how these regimes differed from one another, but also understand why individuals flocked to communism and why communism became a desired option for certain individuals demanding political or economic change.

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the communist experience and be able to compare and contrast different communist regimes
- Consider the role of communism in other global movements and trends in the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- Analyze secondary sources, including identifying their argument, methodology, strengths, and limitations
- Develop verbal and written communication skills through class discussion, discussion leadership, and various written assignments
- Develop a research project from identifying a topic, refining your approach, doing extensive primary and secondary source research and developing a thorough and defensible argument in a research essay.

### **Course Materials:**

All readings will be linked via OWL. Please note – this is a class that will have a healthy amount of reading. This is to both allow some depth of discussion and analysis, but also to allow a comparative approach to a global phenomenon.

Additionally, while this class will cover key ideas across multiple communist regimes, it does presume some background knowledge of these regimes.

**The following books are NOT available at the Bookstore but are recommended should students require further background knowledge:**

Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Soviet Experiment*

Rebecca Karl, *Mao Zedong and China in the Twentieth Century World*

Archie Brown, *The Rise and Fall of Communism*

Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War*

### **Methods of Evaluation:**

Participation: 30%

Class Facilitation: 10%

Essay Proposal: 10% (Due January 27)

Annotated Bibliography: 10% (Due Feb. 15)

Research Paper: 40% (Due April 6)

*Participation:* This class will be predominantly discussion based. Class discussion is always stronger when all students are prepared for class, having completed the readings, and are actively participating. Participation will be determined by the quality of student contributions over the entire duration of the course in each class. No marks will be given solely for attendance. Should you be anxious about participating in class, you should contact the professor early in the course.

*Class Facilitation:* Each week, one to two students will be charged with leading discussion. These students will be expected to prepare five discussion questions each which will be sent to Professor Drachewych to be posted on

OWL no later than the night before class. In the discussion, these students will be expected to be active, leading discussion, and encouraging deeper discussion of course readings.

*Research Paper:* There will be three parts to the research paper for this class. An important process in this course will be developing a research project which will see students get significant feedback over the course of the term to help develop a polished research paper. The first step will be an *essay proposal*. This will be a two page, double-spaced in 12 pt. font, overview of a research topic. The second step will be a 10-source *annotated bibliography*. The third step will be a 20 to 25 page, double-spaced in 12 pt. font, *research paper*. Further information about each part will be posted on OWL.

*Students must attend at least half (7 out of 12) of the seminar meetings and obtain a passing grade on the research paper in order to pass the course, regardless of grades received for other assignments.*

***General Information about Submissions and Deadlines:***

**All assignments should be submitted online via OWL at 11:59:59 pm ET on its due date. The timestamp on OWL will be considered final for any disputes regarding the punctuality of submissions.**

All written assignments will require citations (endnotes/footnotes and bibliography) in the most recent version of Chicago Style. Hardcopies are not required nor will be accepted.

***Late Policy:***

For all late assignments, a late penalty of **2% per day** (weekends will count as one day) will be applied. Should you require accommodation due to medical reasons or otherwise, please contact Academic Counselling, or consult the History Course Must-Knows on the History Department website.

**Planned Course Schedule:**

**Week 1: Course Introduction**

**Week 2: Communism as a System**

**Week 3: Communism as Utopia**

**ESSAY PROPOSAL DUE January 27**

**Week 4: Communism as Movement**

**Week 5: Communism as Modernity**

**Week 6: Repression under Communism**

**ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE February 15**

**Week 7: Communism, Women, Gender & Sexuality**

**Week 8: Communism and International Relations: Cultural Diplomacy & Fellow Travelers**

**Week 9: Communism and International Relations: The Cold War**

**Week 10: Communism as Liberation**

**Week 11: Communism, Material Culture & Consumption**

**Week 12: The Collapse of the Soviet Union and the Communist World**

**RESEARCH PAPER DUE APRIL 6**

**Use of Electronic Devices:**

No electronic devices will be allowed during tests and exams. In class, students are welcome to use laptops and other technology as appropriate, provided they use them for class-related matters.

**Additional Statements:**

Please review the Department of History Course Must-Knows document, <https://www.history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/Docs/Department%20of%20History%20Course%20Must-Knows.pdf>, for additional information regarding:

- Academic Offences
- Accessibility Options
- Medical Issues
- Plagiarism
- Scholastic Offences
- Copyright
- Health and Wellness