

## **HI 125 Russian History through Photographs: from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century to the Present Day**

**Spring 2024, Wednesday and Friday, 17:30 -19.00**

Seminar Leader: Denis Skopin

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Office Hours: after class or by appointment

The goal of this course is to introduce the students to Russian history through the study of corresponding photographic records. The priority will be given to the photographs illustrating the phenomena and events that shaped Russian society: Tsarist Russia's penitentiary system and colonial policy, Revolution, WWI and WWII, Stalinist terror, but also the continuing war in Ukraine. In addition to the study of visual documents, we'll read and discuss the most important theoretical and historical texts devoted to the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union and to today's Russia. A particular emphasis will be put on the Stalinist period. We will begin by exploring official Stalinist imagery – posters, photographic collages created by loyal Soviet artists, but also the famous illustrated book *White Sea-Baltic canal* (1934) with photographs by Alexander Rodchenko, the circulation of which was subsequently prohibited. We'll then see some rare photographic records from the Gulag showing victims and perpetrators. Finally, we will examine the ways ordinary Soviet citizens of the Stalin era handled the communist leaders' portraits and how they were punished for showing disrespect for such representations. Special attention will be paid to the manipulation of snapshots, and in particular, the falsification of historical photographs and the practice of editing family photographs for political reasons.

### **Required Texts**

David King. *The commissar vanishes*. Tate Publishing, 2014.

### **Library and Book Purchase Policies**

Students are expected to have at their disposal a hard copy of all required texts (David King. *The commissar vanishes*. Tate Publishing, 2014). Copies of the required books and additional readings are available on reserve at the library.

### **Writing**

Image assignment. Students should find a photograph which represents what Russian history means to them. In addition, they should write a short caption (no more than 100 words) explaining why they chose this photograph.

Midterm paper. The midterm paper is an essay of approx. 1200 words containing an in-depth analysis of one photograph of your choice in the framework of the course topic.

Final essay. The final essay is a paper of up to 3000 words which should be based on original research and demonstrate the student's familiarity with the themes discussed in class throughout the semester. Students are expected to discuss their final essay topic, selection of visual materials and bibliography with the instructor.

All papers should be uploaded on google classroom.

### **Essay Deadlines**

Midterm essay: March 20, 2023.

Final essay: May 14, 2023.

### **Concept map of Russian history and presentation**

A concept map is a diagram or visual representation that maps the relationships between concepts and ideas. Building the concept map is a group work that takes place once the students have done enough reading and discussion.

Presentation. Each student is expected to make a presentation (a selection of photographs with comments) during a class session throughout the semester.

Students will receive detailed instructions by the third week of the spring semester.

### **Assessment**

Assessment will be based on seminar participation (30%), midterm paper (15%), presentations (10%), concept map (15 %), and final essay (30%).

semester week	Wednesday session 17:30 -19.00	Friday session 17:30 -19.00 pm
	<i>Readings</i>	<i>Readings</i>
1. Jan 29-Feb 2	Introductory  Image assignment	Russian history and geography.
2. Feb 5-9	<p>1. David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye. <i>What is Russian Orientalism?</i> In <i>Russian Orientalism: Asia in the Russian Mind from Peter the Great to the Emigration</i></p> <p>2. David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye. <i>Vasilij V. Vereshchagin's Canvases of Central Asian Conquest</i>, <a href="https://journals.openedition.org/asiacentrale/1196#bodyftn14">https://journals.openedition.org/asiacentrale/1196#bodyftn14</a></p> <p>Visual materials: <i>V. Vereshchagin's Turkestan series</i></p>	<p>1. Margaret Dikovitskaya. <i>Central Asia in Early Photographs: Russian Colonial Attitudes and Visual Culture</i>. In <i>Empire, Islam and Politics in Central Eurasia / Edited by Tomohiko Uyama</i>. Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University, 2007.</p> <p>2. Alexander Etkind. <i>Internal Colonization. Russia's Imperial Experience</i>. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011, p. 1-19.</p> <p>Visual materials: <i>Prokudin-Gorskii Collection</i> <a href="https://www.loc.gov/collections/prokudin-gorskii/about-this-collection/">https://www.loc.gov/collections/prokudin-gorskii/about-this-collection/</a></p>
3. Feb 12-16	<p>Screening: <i>White Sun of the Desert</i>, 1970 (Vladimir Motyl)</p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GqnqFhc9aho&amp;t=955s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GqnqFhc9aho&amp;t=955s</a> (English subtitles)</p>	<p>Fyodor Dostoevsky, <i>The House of the Dead</i> (portions: 8. New Acquaintances—Petroff, 9. Men of Determination—Luka, 2. The Hospital (continued), 3. The Hospital (continued)).</p> <p>Visual materials: <i>Views and inhabitants of the Nerchinsk hard labor camps (Katorga)</i>, by Alexei Kuznetsov, 1891, <a href="https://www.loc.gov/item/2018691430/">https://www.loc.gov/item/2018691430/</a></p>
4. Feb 19-23	<p>David King. <i>The commissar vanishes</i>. Tate Publishing, 2014, p. 18-43</p> <p>King, David. <i>Trotsky: A Photographic Biography</i>. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986, p. 68-83</p>	<p>Simon Dell. <i>Visualizing Labour: The Problem and a Case Study, U.S.S.R. in Construction</i>, <i>Labour History Review</i>, Volume 84, Number 2, <a href="https://www.liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk/doi/10.3828/lhr.2019.7">https://www.liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk/doi/10.3828/lhr.2019.7</a></p>
5. Feb 26 - Mar 1	<p>1. Erika Wolf. "As at the Philippines": <i>The Foreign Origins of the Soviet Narrative Photographic Essay</i>, in</p>	<p>1. John Steinbeck. <i>A Russian Journal</i> (portions).</p>

	<p>Translations from Russian and German of primary source documents related to the international worker photography, p.124-132</p> <p>2. Shelia Fitzpatrick. <i>Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s</i>. Oxford University Press, 1999, Chapters Shortages and Housing.</p> <p>As at the Filippovs series: <a href="https://electro.nekrasovka.ru/books/1818/pages/23">https://electro.nekrasovka.ru/books/1818/pages/23</a> p.44-52</p>	<p><a href="https://archive.org/details/russianjournalby0000unse/page/n9/mode/2up">https://archive.org/details/russianjournalby0000unse/page/n9/mode/2up</a> Chapters 1, 9, ch.3</p> <p>2. Lia Zhdanova. <i>John Steinbeck' Russian Journal in the Soviet optics</i>. Izdatelskie Reshenia, 2016 (portions).</p> <p>Robert Capa's photographs: <a href="https://www.magnumphotos.com/arts-culture/travel/robert-capa-russian-journal/">https://www.magnumphotos.com/arts-culture/travel/robert-capa-russian-journal/</a></p>
6. Mar 4-8	<p>1. Dmytro Dzhulay, Coilin O'Connor, "A gift to posterity", <a href="https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-holodomor-photographs-directory-wienerberger-abbe-whiting-bokan/31235172.html">https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-holodomor-photographs-directory-wienerberger-abbe-whiting-bokan/31235172.html</a></p> <p>2. Ilya Ilf &amp; Evgeny Petrov, <i>American photographs: the road</i>: <a href="https://www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/14/ilf_petrov.php">https://www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/14/ilf_petrov.php</a></p>	<p>March 8, 2024</p> <p>Public holiday</p>
7. Mar 11-15	<p>1. David King. <i>The commissar vanishes</i>. Tate Publishing, 2014, p. 126-139</p> <p>2. Bonnell, Victoria E. <i>Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters Under Lenin and Stalin</i>. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2007, p.155-168 + pictures.</p>	<p>Denis Skopin. <i>Photography and Political Repressions in Stalin's Russia: Defacing the Enemy</i>. London, Routledge (Taylor &amp; Francis), 2022, p.74 – 102.</p>
8. Mar 18-22	<p>Denis Skopin. <i>Photography and Political Repressions in Stalin's Russia: Defacing the Enemy</i>. London, Routledge (Taylor &amp; Francis), 2022, 168 p.</p>	<p>1. Jan Plamper, section <i>A new censorship mode in the 1930s</i> in 'Abolishing ambiguity: Soviet censorship practices in the 1930s', <i>Russian Review</i>, 60:4, 2001, pp. 532–544.</p> <p>2. Eduard Andryushchenko. <i>Trotsky In The Trees: The Tragic Aftermath Of a 'Face' Spotted In The Soviet Press</i>, <a href="https://www.rferl.org/a/trotsky-in-the-trees-the-tragic-aftermath-of-a-face-spotted-in-the-soviet-press-/30362350.html">https://www.rferl.org/a/trotsky-in-the-trees-the-tragic-aftermath-of-a-face-spotted-in-the-soviet-press-/30362350.html</a></p>

Mar. 25- Apr. 1	<b>Spring break</b>	
9. Apr. 2- Apr. 5	1. Thomasz Kizny. <i>GULAG</i> . Firefly Books, 2004 (text and photos in the pdf document)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Alexandre Solzhenitsyn. <i>One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich</i> (p. 1-18, to went to the hospital block, and 106-111 from <i>They were going to lay the walls to both were tight</i>).</li> <li>2. Varlam Shalamov. <i>The Artist of the Spade</i>, in <i>Kolyma Tales</i>.</li> <li>3. Varlam Shalamov. <i>Resurrection of the Larch</i> <a href="http://www.stosvet.net/12/shalamov/index3.html">http://www.stosvet.net/12/shalamov/index3.html</a></li> </ol>
10. Apr. 8-12	David Shneer. <i>Grief: The Biography of a Holocaust Photograph</i> . Oxford University Press, 2020.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Alla Mozhdzhenskaya. <i>Soviet life through the lens of 'Enemies of the State'</i> <a href="https://www.rferl.org/a/triva-soviet-photography/30725559.html">https://www.rferl.org/a/triva-soviet-photography/30725559.html</a></li> <li>2. Triva's photographs (website in Russian): <a href="https://cameralabs.org/aeon/triva/album">https://cameralabs.org/aeon/triva/album</a></li> <li>3. <i>The Missing Picture. Alternative Contemporary Photography from the Soviet Union</i>. Massachusetts Inst Technology, 1990. <a href="https://www.rferl.org/a/photographs-shot-by-soviet-engineer-show-the-harsh-reality-of-life-in-the-ussr/30675553.html">https://www.rferl.org/a/photographs-shot-by-soviet-engineer-show-the-harsh-reality-of-life-in-the-ussr/30675553.html</a></li> </ol>
11. Apr 15-19	Visit of Stasi museum	<p>The lives of others: Ute Mahler's images of the real East Germany (The Guardian, Wed 6 Jan 2021), <a href="https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/gallery/2021/jan/06/ute-mahler-images-real-east-germany-in-pictures">https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/gallery/2021/jan/06/ute-mahler-images-real-east-germany-in-pictures</a></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Donna West Brett. <i>Stasi Surveillance Photographs and Extra-Archival Legacy</i>, Photography and culture, Volume 12, 2019</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Concept map of Russian history.</p>

12. Apr 22-26	A guest speaker	<p>1. Petr Kropotkin. <i>In Russian and French Prisons</i>.</p> <p>2. Olga Osipova. <i>The other Side of the Wall. What Russian Jails look like from Inside</i>. Aug, 12, 2016.  <a href="https://birdinflight.com/en/inspiration/project/20160812-telkov-tarasov-other-side-of-the-wall.html">https://birdinflight.com/en/inspiration/project/20160812-telkov-tarasov-other-side-of-the-wall.html</a></p>
13. Apr 29- May 3	<p>1. Alexander Etkind. <i>Warped Mourning: Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied</i>. Stanford University Press, 2013, Ch. <i>Mimetic and subversive, portions Too much memory?</i> and <i>The work of mourning</i>.</p> <p>2. Denis Skopin. <i>Sheltering the Ghosts? Digitized Photographs of Political Victims and World War II Veterans on Russian Online Databases</i>, Photography and Culture, Volume 14 (2021):  <a href="https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/AXMKWXVBEGIVK7ENVTO6/full?target=10.1080/17514517.2021.1927367">https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/AXMKWXVBEGIVK7ENVTO6/full?target=10.1080/17514517.2021.1927367</a>          (portion <i>Mobilizing the dead</i>)</p>	<p>1. <i>Russo-Ukrainian war: photographs by Konstantin and Vlada Liberov</i>:  <a href="https://libkos.com/ukraine-war-2022">https://libkos.com/ukraine-war-2022</a></p> <p>2. Denis Skopin. <i>Exploring Photographs about Political Life in Russia after February 24th, 2022</i></p>
14. May 6-10	Presentations.	<p>Nina Khrushcheva. <i>Don't cancel Russian culture</i>, Social Europe, 7/1/22  <a href="https://www.socialeurope.eu/dont-cancel-russian-culture">https://www.socialeurope.eu/dont-cancel-russian-culture</a></p> <p>Olesya Khromeychuk. <i>Where is Ukraine?</i> RSA, 6/13/22  <a href="https://www.thersa.org/comment/2022/06/where-is-ukraine">https://www.thersa.org/comment/2022/06/where-is-ukraine</a></p> <p>Concept map of Russian history</p> <p>Wrap up</p>

15. May 13-17	<b>Final Essay due: Monday, May 13, 23:59</b>	<i>Navalny</i> movie (optional)
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