

HIST 471E6: Second World Urbanity



Aleksandr Deineka, “Peaceful Construction Sites.” (1959)

Instructor: Prof. Steven E. Harris

University of Mary Washington – Spring Semester, 2014

This class meets TR, 2:00-3:15pm, Monroe Hall 233

Office Hours: TR, 9:15am-11:00am and 3:15pm-4:00pm, and by appointment

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Course blog: <http://secondworldurbanityseminar.umwblogs.org>

Course Description:

This seminar examines an urban civilization that largely disappeared a few years before you were born: the socialist city. We will study how communist countries of the “second world” built their cities according to Marxist-Leninist ideological values such as egalitarianism, a scientific and technologically modern way of life, and non-private, socialist property. The seminar examines the national and international aesthetic traditions that informed the design of socialist cities and their architecture such as Stalinist neo-classicism and 20th century modernism. We will explore well-known capital cities such as Moscow, as well as less well-known regional cities such as Skopje and Novosibirsk. We will also study how inhabitants of such cities experienced everyday life from shopping for scarce goods and fighting in communal apartments to riding monumental subway systems, building mass housing, and patrolling neighborhood streets. And we’ll consider how this urban civilization collapsed by 1991 and what remnants of it still exist today. This course draws upon the scholarly project www.secondworldurbanity.org and the cutting-edge research that scholars in a variety of fields—history, architectural history, sociology, and art history—are presently producing in studies of socialist cities, their architecture, and residents’ everyday lives.

Format of the Class and Preparation for Each Class:

This seminar is structured around class discussion of the assigned texts. While I will provide brief introductory lectures on major themes in the course, our main focus will be on discussing the texts we read for class. For this reason, your daily participation in this course is extremely

important. Attendance in this class is absolutely mandatory and crucial. For each class, you are expected to have read all the readings assigned for that day in order to discuss them in class.

Course Credits, Goals, and Objectives:

This course counts as a 400-level course for a major in History.

This course aims to teach students critical skills of historical analysis. As a course in the Department of History and American Studies, this course aims to teach the following skill sets:

1. Ability to analyze sources and arguments
2. Comprehension of historical process
3. Historical understanding of global processes

Course Assignments and Requirements:

All students begin the class with a 0% grade. Your task is to earn a grade for each of the assignments and requirements, which together will determine your final grade (see breakdown of grades below).

1) Class participation: the quality of this class depends largely upon what each student will contribute to it, so your class participation is of paramount importance. You are asked to engage one another's interpretations and opinions in an effort to understand better any given text and also to challenge one another's readings of the texts.

The following is the guideline for participation grades: A range (90-100%): student shows that he/she has read all of the assigned readings, and he/she makes several comments and poses questions that are insightful and guide the discussion for that particular class; B range (80-89%): student shows that he/she has read most of the readings and makes some comments/questions; C range (70-79%): student may have read some of the readings, but makes little or no comments; D range (60-69%): student shows little effort to read the texts or participate in class; F range (0-59%): student never participates in class and shows no effort in reading the texts.

Blog entries: For each text (book or article) we read, you must write a 400-word comment on our course blog in which you describe the main topic of the work, identify the author's main argument, critique the work, and discuss what you find to be most interesting about the book or article. Use illustrative examples from the text in addressing these and other points. You must post your comment the night before (8pm) we begin discussing each text and read what your peers have written before class. Your blog entries will be counted as part of your participation grade. See the course schedule below to see on which days and for what readings you must write these comments. If there is more than one reading on one particular day, you need only write one 400-word comment addressing each of those readings.

Failure to attend class without an excused absence on a day when your peers present their work in class (book reviews, final paper projects) will result in an automatic lowering of your final participation grade by a full letter grade.

2) Book review: You will write a 2-3 page review of one of the books on the course reading list. You will make a presentation on the book the first day we discuss it in class.

3) Research paper proposal and bibliography: You will write a 2-3 page proposal of your research paper, including a bibliography. Each student will choose a topic from a range of topics provided at the beginning of the semester.

4) Research paper and presentation: You will write a 10-12 page research paper about a particular topic in the history of socialist cities. You will give a 5-minute presentation on your paper at the end of the semester.

Numerical grades in this course correspond to the following letter grades: A (95-100); A- (90-94); B+ (87-89); B (83-86); B- (80-82); C+ (77-79); C (73-76); C- (70-72); D+ (67-69); D (60-66); F (59 and below).

When computing final numerical grades, I do not round up to the highest decimal point (i.e., if your final numerical grade is an 82.99, your final grade is a B-).

Midterm Deficiency Report: You will receive a midterm deficiency report if you receive a C- or below on any assignment or class participation before those reports are due.

Relative Weight of Grades for the Course:

Class participation (including blog entries):	20%
Book review:	20%
Paper proposal and bibliography:	20%
Final paper and presentation:	40%

Legitimate Excuses for Missing Class and Turning Work in Late:

Legitimate excuses include family emergencies, medical appointments, illness, religious holidays, and trips related to official student activities. Athletic practices never constitute a legitimate excuse for missing class. All excuses must be supported with documentary proof, such as a note from a doctor, with the contact information of the person writing the excuse. In the event of a family emergency, such as a death in the family, contact the Office of Academic Affairs and ask them to contact me about the emergency.

If you miss class or fail to turn something in on time and you have a legitimate excuse, do the following: give me the documentary proof explaining your absence or the reasons for which you turned something in late; stop by during office hours to discuss what you missed in class. Unless warranted by a legitimate excuse as defined above, there will be no extensions on the assignments in this course.

If you miss class or fail to turn something in on time without a legitimate excuse, do not e-mail me to tell me this and do not ask me to explain to you over e-mail what you missed in class; I will not respond to such e-mails. For every day after a deadline that you turn work in late without a legitimate excuse, your grade on the assignment is dropped by a full letter grade until you reach an F (0%) on the assignment. Failure to complete any of the writing assignments by the final exam day (even though you will receive a 0% on them for being late) will result in an automatic F for the course. Failure to turn in a final research paper on the final exam day will result in an automatic F for the course.

Honor Code:

The Honor Code of the University of Mary Washington will be strictly enforced, as explained in the Honor Constitution. All violations of the Honor Code (e.g., plagiarism on papers) will be immediately reported to the Honor Council.

The Office of Disability Resources (401 Lee Hall; 540-654-1266; ods@umw.edu) is the primary office to guide, counsel, and assist students with disabilities. If a student receives services through that office and requires accommodations for this class, he/ she should make an appointment with the instructor as soon as possible to discuss the approved accommodations. All

shared information will be held in strictest confidence unless a student permits otherwise. (If a student has not made contact with the Office of Disability Resources and has reasonable accommodation needs, the instructor will be happy to help contact the office [which will require appropriate documentation of a disability].)

Additional Class Policies:

- * Out of respect for your peers and your instructor, arrive to class on time. You must attend the entire class time in order to receive credit for participation for that day.
- * This syllabus is subject to change exclusively at my discretion.

Course Readings:

The course texts are available for purchase at the bookstore. When purchasing the texts, obtain the edition indicated below since this will facilitate class discussion when the instructor and students refer to the texts. Additional texts will be distributed via the course blog; they are indicated in the course schedule below.

The following required texts are available at the UMW bookstore:

Stephen V. Bittner, *The Many Lives of Khrushchev's Thaw: Experience and Memory in Moscow's Arbat* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2008).

Kate Brown, *Plutopia: Nuclear Families, Atomic Cities, and the Great Soviet and American Plutonium Disasters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Greg Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

David Crowley and Susan E. Reid, *Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc* (Oxford: Berg, 2002).

Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

Course Schedule:

Foundations of the Socialist City

January 14: Introduction to the course

January 16: Film viewing and discussion of Dziga Vertov, *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929).

January 21: Film viewing and discussion of Dziga Vertov, *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929).

What Was Socialism (and Communism)?

January 23: Encyclopedia entries for “socialism” and “communism” (blog)

January 28: Katherine Verdery, “What Was Socialism, and Why Did It Fall?” (blog)
 * post comment on blog about this reading

The Soviet Union: Crucible of Socialist Urbanity

January 30: S. Frederick Starr, “Visionary Town Planning during the Cultural Revolution.”
 (blog)
 * post comment on blog about this reading

February 4: Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain*.
 * post comment on blog about this reading

February 6: Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain*.

February 11: Bittner, *The Many Lives of Khrushchev's Thaw*.
 * post comment on blog about this reading

February 13: Bittner, *The Many Lives of Khrushchev's Thaw*.

Tracing the Spread of Socialism: A Transnational Approach

February 18: Yves Cohen, “Circulatory Localities: The Example of Stalinism in the 1930s.”
 (blog)
 * post comment on blog about this reading
 * **Paper proposals due today**

February 20: György Péteri, “Nylon Curtain – Transnational and Transsystemic Tendencies in the Cultural Life of State-Socialist Russia and East-Central Europe.” (blog)
 * post comment on blog about this reading

Eastern Europe

February 25: Crowley and Reid, *Socialist Spaces*.
 * post comment on blog about this reading

February 27: Crowley and Reid, *Socialist Spaces*.

March 1-9: Spring Break

Class Presentations on Term Paper Projects

March 11: Presentations

March 13: Presentations

Everyday Life and Consumption in the Socialist City

March 18: Steven E. Harris, “I Know All the Secrets of My Neighbors’: The Quest for Privacy in the Era of the Separate Apartment.” (blog)
 * post comment on blog about this reading

March 20: Sándor Horváth, “Everyday Life in the First Hungarian Socialist City.” (blog)
 * post comment on blog about this reading

Second World and the First World: Interactions and Competition

March 25: Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front*.
 * post comment on blog about this reading

March 27: Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front*.

April 1: Brown, *Plutopia*.
 * post comment on blog about this reading

April 3: Brown, *Plutopia*.

Second World and the Third World: Interactions and Cooperation

April 8: David C. Engerman, “The Second World’s Third World.” (blog)
 Maxim Waldstein, “Theorizing the Second World: Challenges and Prospects.” (blog)
 * post comment on blog about these readings

April 10: Discussion with participants of Second World Urbanity conference; read their two papers before class

April 11-12: Second World Urbanity conference at Georgetown University

April 15: Select articles from *Journal of Architecture* special issue, Volume 17, no. 3 (2012).
 * Łukasz Stanek, “Introduction: The ‘Second World’s’ Architecture and Planning in the ‘Third World’.” (blog)
 * Elke Beyer, “Competitive Coexistence: Soviet Town Planning and Housing Projects in Kabul in the 1960s.” (blog)
 * Ludger Wimmelbücker, “Architecture and City Planning Projects of the German Democratic Republic in Zanzibar.” (blog)
 * post comment on blog about these readings

April 17: Łukasz Stanek, *PRL™. Export Architecture and Urbanism from Socialist Poland*. (blog)
 * post comment on blog about this reading

Class Presentations on Term Papers

April 22: Presentations

April 24: Presentations

Final Exam: Term Paper deadline: Thursday, May 1, 3:30pm.