

**HIST 743 – The Thaw
Fall Term 2014**

Wednesdays 9:30-12:30 in CNH 614
Dr. T. McDonald
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Course Aims

The course focuses on the period in Soviet history known as the “Thaw.” There is debate as to when the Thaw begins and ends and this debate will be a constant backdrop of our discussions. In general, the “Thaw” refers roughly to the years beginning with the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953 to the end of Nikita Khrushchev’s tenure as leader of the Soviet Union in 1964. The Thaw is one of the most recent areas of historical investigation in Soviet History. The course aims to explore and assess this new area.

Term Work and Percentage Value of Final Grade

Task	Value	Due
Participation	25%	ongoing
Facilitation	10%	rolling
Historiographical Review (10-12 pages)	25% (MA)	29 Oct
(PhDs integrate more sources 15-20 pages)	35% (Ph.D)	
Historiography or Methodology Paper MA (30 pages)	40%	20 Dec
Exam (PhDs only)	30%	Tba

Late Penalty

There is a late penalty of 3% per day for all late assignments

The Nature of the Assignments

Participation

This portion of your grade is based on attendance and participation in discussion. Just being present will get you 50% of the participation grade. The rest is based on your contribution to discussion. If you are having difficulty participating, please speak with me *in the first two weeks of class*. Students, while they are encouraged to challenge one another, must be professional and respectful to their colleagues.

Facilitation

Depending on the number of students in the class, each student will be responsible for leading one or more class discussions along with me. Students will be asked to raise discussion questions and facilitate the discussion for the class itself. Students will be assessed on the quality of questions raised and their ability to facilitate discussion. You should also be the most active participant in the week that you facilitate.

Historiographical Assessment / Review

Students will be asked to write an historiographical review/assessment of the articles by Susan Reid for Week 8. Reid has done a great deal of work on gender, design, and domesticity in the post-Stalin years. Assess Reid's historiographic contribution engaging with both its strengths and weaknesses. Your review should be approximately 10-12 pages long and should develop an argument about how Reid has conceptualized, researched, argued, and presented the issues she has chosen to focus on. The assignment is due to me in class **BEFORE** our discussion so that no one has the unfair advantage of writing after the discussion.

Research Paper

Your paper topic will be developed in consultation with the instructor. The paper should be approximately 20 to 25 pages in length. The quote an esteemed colleague, the historiography on the Thaw is "threadbare." Research papers may make more sense. Come and talk to me early on.

Books Available for Purchase

Required:

- Abadzis, Nick. *Laika*. New York: MacMillan, 2007.
Brown, Kate. *Plutopia*. Oxford, 2013.
Fitzpatrick, et al, *Sedition: Everyday Resistance in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev and Brezhnev*. Yale, 2011
Jones, Polly. *Myth, Memory, Trauma*. Yale, 2013
Kozlov and Gilburd, *The Thaw: Soviet Society and Culture During the 1950s and 1960s*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013
Pontieri, Laura. *Soviet Animation and the Thaw of the 1960s: Not Only for Children*. John Libby: 2012
Taubman, William. *Khrushchev the Man and his Era*. Norton: 2004

Note on Readings

Most articles are available online through the Mills library catalog. I will place a copy of articles or excerpts that are not available online in the department mail slot for our course.

Those readings will be marked with an *. Please cooperate with one another and share access to readings. I expect all readings to be done by every student each week.

Support Services

The University provides a variety of support services to help students manage their many demands. Reference librarians can provide invaluable research assistance. The Student Wellness centre wellness.mcmaster.ca and Student Accessibility Services sas.mcmaster.ca can assist with health, counseling, learning, and accessibility issues.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity>

http://www.mcmaster.ca/senate/academic/ac_integrity.pdf

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained. Failure to adequately acknowledge the sources used in essays is plagiarism
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Course Modifications

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his or her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Email Policy

It is the policy of the McMaster History Department that all email communication between students and instructors (including TAs) must originate from the student's own **McMaster University email account**. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms

the identities of both the student and instructor. History department instructors will delete emails that do not originate from a McMaster email account.

Course Outline

Week 1 – 10 September

Introductions
Discussion of syllabus
Organization of facilitations

Week 2 – 17 September – Narrative and Context

Taubman, William. *Khrushchev the Man and his Era*. Norton: 2004

Facilitator: McDonald

Week 3 - 24 September – Origins and Periodization

What is the “thaw”?
What dates should we use?

Kozlov and Gilburd, *The Thaw: Soviet Society and Culture During the 1950s and 1960s*, pp. 3-108

Edele, “Strange Young Men in Stalin’s Moscow: The Birth and Life of the Stiliagi, 1945-1953,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* [Germany], 50 2002: 37-61

Facilitator:

Added Ph.D. Readings:

Loewenstein, Karl E. “Ideology and Ritual: How Stalinist Rituals Shaped The Thaw in the USSR, 1953–4.” *Totalitarian Movements & Political Religions*. Vol. 8 Issue 1, Mar 2007: 93-114

Week 4 – 1 October – Primary Sources

Who are the historians who put this book together? Why did they collect these documents in particular?
How do we use a collection of selected documents?

Fitzpatrick, et al, *Sedition: Everyday Resistance in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev and Brezhnev*. Yale, 2011

Facilitator:

Added Ph.D. Readings:

Alexeyev, Ludmilla and Goldberg, Paul. *The Thaw Generation: Coming of Age in the Post-Stalin Era*. Pittsburgh, 1993

Raleigh, Donald. *Soviet Baby Boomers: An Oral History of Russia's Cold War Generation*. Oxford, 2011

Week 5 – 8 October – Legacy of Incarceration

Kozlov and Gilburd, *The Thaw: Soviet Society and Culture During the 1950s and 1960s*, pp. 109-231

Harrison, Mark. "Secrecy, Fear and Transaction Costs: The Business of Soviet Forced Labour in the Early Cold War." *Europe-Asia Studies*. 65 6 (August 2013): 1112-1135.

Barnes, Steven A. "In a Manner Befitting Soviet Citizens": An Uprising in the Post-Stalin Gulag." *Slavic Review* 64 1 (Winter 2005): 823-850

Facilitator:

Added Ph.D. Readings:

Barenberg, Alan. *Gulag Town, Company Town: Forced Labor and Its Legacy in Vorkuta*. Yale, 2013.

Week 6 – 15 October – Trauma and Memory

Jones, Polly. *Myth, Memory, Trauma*. Yale, 2013

Facilitator:

Added Ph.D. Readings:

Bittner, Stephen. *The Many Lives of Khrushchev's Thaw. Experience and Memory in Moscow's Arbat*. Cornell, 2008.

Dobson, Mariam. *Khrushchev's Cold Summer: Gulag Returnees, Crime, and the Fate of Reform after Stalin*. Cornell, 2011.

Kozlov, Denis. *The Readers of Novyi Mir*. Harvard, 2013

Week 7 – 22 October – Sport, Travel, Leisure

Edelman, Robert. "A Small Way of Saying "No": Moscow Working Men, Spartak Soccer, and the Communist Party, 1900-1945." *American Historical Review*, Vol. 107, No. 5 (December 2002):1441-1474

Maurer, Eva. "Cold War, 'Thaw' and 'Everlasting Friendship': Soviet Mountaineers and Mount Everest, 1953-1960." *International Journal of the History of Sport*. Vol. 26 Issue 4, March 2009: 484-500.

*Gorsuch and Koenker, *Turizm: The Russian and East European Tourist under Capitalism and Socialism*. Cornell 2006. (selections to be found in rm 619)

Facilitator:

Added Ph.D. Readings

Edelman, *Spartak Moscow: A History of the People's Team in the Workers' State*. Cornell, 2012

Riordan, Jim. *Comrade Jim: The Spy who Played for Spartak*. Fourth Estate, 2008.

Week 8 – 29 October – Home, Space, Gender

Reid, Susan E. "Communist Comfort: Socialist Modernism and the Making of Cosy Homes in the Khrushchev Era." *Gender & History*. Vol. 21 Issue 3, Nov 2009: 465-498.

Reid, Susan E. "Who Will Beat Whom? Soviet Popular Reception of the American National Exhibition in Moscow, 1959," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian & Eurasian History*. Vol. 9 Issue 4, Fall 2008: 855-904.

Reid, Susan E. "Khrushchev Modern: Agency and Modernization in the Soviet Home." *Cahiers du Monde Russe*. Vol. 47 Issue 1/2, Jan 2006: 227-268.

Reid, Susan E. "The Khrushchev Kitchen: Domesticating the Scientific-Technological Revolution," *Journal of Contemporary History* .Vol. 40 Issue 2 April 2005: 289-316 –

Reid, Susan E. "Masters of the Earth: Gender and Destalinisation in Soviet Reformist Painting of the Khrushchev Thaw." *Gender & History*. Vol. 11 Issue 2, July 1999: 276-313. Gender Art Culture

Reid, Susan E. "Destalinization and Taste, 1953-1963." *Journal of Design History*. Vol. 10 Issue 2, 1997: 177-201.

Added Ph.D. Materials (Ph.Ds do the assignment described above but also incorporate the following readings. Your paper should be about 20 pages long.)

Roy-Ey, Kristin. "Finding a Home for Television in the USSR, 1950-1970." *Slavic Review*. Vol. 66 Issue 2, Summer 2007: 278-306

Varga-Harris, Christine. "Homemaking and the Domestic and Moral Perimeters of the Soviet Home During the Khrushchev Era," *Journal of Social History*. Vol. 41 Issue 3, Spring 2008: 561-589.

Week 9 – 5 November – Intelligentsia and the Thaw

Gerovitch, Slava. "Stalin's Rocket Designers' Leap into Space: The Technical Intelligentsia Faces the Thaw." *Osiris*. Vol. 23, 2008: 189-209 - **Intelligentsia**

Gilburd, Eleonory. "Picasso in Thaw Culture." *Cahiers du Monde Russe*. Vol. 47 Issue 1/2, Jan 2006: 65-108

Tromly, Benjamin. "Intelligentsia Self-Fashioning in the Postwar Soviet Union." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian & Eurasian History*. Vol. 13 Issue 1, Winter 2012: 151-176

Facilitator:

Added Ph.D. Readings:

Nathans, Benjamin. "The Dictatorship of Reason: Aleksandr Vol'pin and the Idea of Rights under "Developed Socialism"." *Slavic Review*., Vol. 66 Issue 4, Winter 2007: 630-663.

Tromly, Benjamin. *Making the Soviet Intelligentsia: Universities and Intellectual Life under Stalin and Khrushchev*. Cambridge, 2014

Week 10 – 12 November - Film

Watch *Wings* or *Commissar*. To be decided as a group.

Kaganovsky, Lilya. "Ways of Seeing: On Kira Muratova's *Brief Encounters* and Larisa Shepit'ko's *Wings*." *Russian Review*. Vol. 71 Issue 3, July 2012: 482-499.

Monastireva-Ansdell, Elena. "Redressing *the Commissar*: Thaw Cinema Revises Soviet Structuring Myths." *Russian Review*. Vol. 65 Issue 2, April 2006: 230-249

Facilitator:

Added Ph.D. Readings:

Dowling, Rhiannon. "Communism, Consumerism, and Gender in Early Cold War Film: The Case of Ninotchka and Russkii vopros." *Aspasia*. Vol. 8 Issue 1, 2014: 26-44

First, Joshua. *Ukrainian Cinema: Belonging and Identity during the Soviet Thaw*. I.B. Tauris, 2014.

Shaw, Tony and Younglood, Denise J. *Cinematic Cold War: The American and Soviet Struggle for Hearts and Minds*. Kansas, 2010

Woll, Josephine. *Real Images: Soviet Cinema and the Thaw*. I.B. Tauris: 2000.

Week 11 – 19 November - Animation

Pontieri, Laura. *Soviet Animation and the Thaw of the 1960s: Not Only for Children*. John Libby: 2012

Facilitator:

Added Ph.D. Material:

Masters of Russian Animation DVD Collection (4 vols)

Animated Soviet Propaganda DVD Collection (4 disks)
(we have both collections at Mills)

Week 12 – 26 November - Environment

Brown, *Plutopia*. Oxford, 2013

Coumel, Laurent. "A Failed Environmental Turn? Khrushchev's Thaw and Nature Protection in Soviet Russia." *Soviet & Post-Soviet Review*. Vol. 40 Issue 2 2013: 167-189.

Facilitator:

Added Ph.D. Readings:

Josephson, Paul R. *Would Trotsky Wear a Bluetooth?: Technological Utopianism under Socialism, 1917—1989*. Hopkins, 2009

_____. *New Atlantis Revisited: Akademgorodok, the Siberian City of Science*.
Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997

Week 13 – 3 December - Laika

Graphic Novels and History

Abadzis, Nick. *Laika*. New York: MacMillan, 2007.

Facilitator:

Final Paper Due, 20 December 2014