

Lifting the Curtain Life behind the Iron Curtain (1945-1990)

EUS 3110 – Section 12E4, 12EO

Spring 2024

Class Meeting Times and Location

Tuesday P 4 (@ 10.40 am - 11.30 am) – Asynchronous Online
Thursday P4&5 (@ 10.40 am-12.20 pm) - LIT 0235 (Little Hall)

Instructor

Edit Nagy edit@ufl.edu

352-294-7149 (voice)

Office Location: Turlington Hall (TUR) 2326-A

Office Hours – Spring 2024:

Wednesday P4-5 (10.40 am-12.35pm)

Thursday P2 (8.30 am-9.20am)

or TBA (students can contact the instructor by email anytime)

<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/98858593490>

Course Description

“**Lifting the Curtain – Life Behind the Iron Curtain**” is designed to explore the daily life of the ordinary citizens in the former Soviet Bloc countries from the end of World War II to the collapse of the Communist system. We’ll discuss topics like rebuilding Central and Eastern Europe after the war and various aspects of life, including housing, education, music, fashion, and leisure, shedding light on the tactics and mechanisms that allowed individuals to either conform to or resist the regime. Through weekly readings and visual materials, students will unravel the ways in which people shaped or circumvented societal norms, providing a nuanced understanding of life under Communist rule. The course also points out similarities to “western” societies, as well as the internal differences within the Socialist Bloc (consumerism, protests or immigration). Students gain boarder insight into European history in the 20th century, as well as into different methods of researching the history of everyday life and popular culture.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

The course will be divided into three segments: (1) We will analyze how the leaders of the USSR manipulated the governing and legal system of the Eastern European counties to fit its design. Students will examine the meaning and the mechanism of “control” and its affection of everyday practices of different social groups; (2) Students will learn about different forms of the “resistance”, the success and failure of individual and group struggle (3) Students will understand how communist ideology was “translated” into the language of material objects and rituals of consumption. Topics will include popular culture, celebration, youth subcultures, housing, and fashion.

To examine these periods, we will discuss a variety of primary and secondary sources (memoirs, photographs, films, music, and documentaries). Students are expected to evaluate and analyze the Cold War period in Eastern Europe; recognize and understand the similarities and differences within the socialist bloc and the “western” societies.

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication, and critical thinking:

Content:

- Students will demonstrate comprehensive knowledge of the chronology, narrative, major events, and turning points in the history of Central and Eastern European countries post-WWII.
- Students will understand the structure of the communist party and state, decipher the relationship between Soviet satellite countries and the USSR, interpreting them in a historical context.
- Students will explore the development of the resistance movement and gain insights into the lives of individuals navigating the rules of the system and authorities.

Communication:

- Students will effectively communicate in groups and with diverse audiences, presenting materials individually and collaboratively using appropriate audio-visual aids.
- Students will engage in small group discussions and articulate arguments on specified topics during class time, with participation grades reflecting effective communication skills.

Critical Thinking:

- Develop the ability to sift through diverse types of data and interpretations, forming a well-articulated and defensible understanding of the past.
- Foster skills in organizing, prioritizing, synthesizing, and reporting information through research and writing.
- Demonstrate the capacity to define a problem for historical study, find relevant evidence, and write informed, judicious, and convincing representations of the past.

Textbooks and Course Materials

Instructor’s course materials – all classroom materials (readings, visual materials, worksheets) will be uploaded on Canvas. The virtual or physical location of the materials will be mark in this syllabus, under *Course Schedule*

Required Technology - Zoom, Adobe Reader and Office-word (or other tools for reading pdf files and writing doc files; both Adobe and Office supplied to students by UF software helpdesk), and high-speed internet connection with camera and headset (or speaker and microphone).

Materials and Supplies Fee - n/a

Evaluation of Grades

Assignment	Total Points	Percent of Grade
Class Participation - Attendance	15	10%
Class Participation – Discussions and Projects (6x5)	30	30%
Movie/Book Reflection – 1	25	20%
Movie/Book Reflection – 2	25	20%
Movie/Book Reflection - 3	25	20%
TOTAL	120	100%

Class Participation (15 points - 10%): A good class participation grade depends on regular attendance and active participation in discussions and mini projects. Please come to class prepared! This means that you have read all the assigned materials and are prepared to answer the relevant study questions posted on the course website.

Class Discussions and Projects (30 points - 30%) TBD

Movie/Book Reflection (3) (3x 25 points - 3x20%)

- **Week 3** Schedule a meeting with me to explore and discuss your **first and second movie/book titles** as well as the direction of your reflection paper before you start the project. This meeting is **mandatory**. Your chosen movies and/or books should center around the history of Central-Eastern European history during the Cold War, with a timeframe from 1945-1990.
- **Week 5-10-15** Students are required to submit their three reflection papers*. Students are also required to deliver a 10-15 minutes ppt presentation* about one of your topics by the end of the semester. (Note: presentations may be the part of class projects and discussions - TBD)

***Possible titles for the Reflection Papers will be posted on Canvas in the first week of the semester as well as other details (rubric, length, point redistribution)**

Grading Scale

A = 93.4-100%	B+ = 86.7-89.9%	C+ = 76.7-79.9%	D+ = 66.7-69.9%	E = 59% and below
A- = 90-93.3%	B = 83.4-86.6%	C = 73.4-76.6%	D = 63.4-66.6	
	B- = 80-83.3%	C- = 70-73.3%	D- = 60-63.3	

More information on grades and grading policies is here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Class Attendance and Make-Up Policy

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

Class attendance is expected. If you miss class for medical reasons, religious holiday or for any other reason you consider valid, notify your instructor in advance.

Unexcused absence (each) will be lowered your final grade with one “notch” (ie. from an A to an A-)

Excused absences are consistent with university policies in the undergraduate catalog and require appropriate document(s).

Make-up Exam Policy: Students who have been granted an excused absence and miss a scheduled exam (because of illness, mandatory religious obligations, or other unavoidable circumstances), must reschedule the make-up exam.

Auditors are requested to complete assignments and prepare for class as if they were registered as regular students. If an auditor does not fulfill these requirements, he/she will be asked to withdraw from the course.

Use of Canvas and Netiquette

Canvas Guide <https://elearning.ufl.edu/keep-learning/quickstart-guide-for-students/>

E-mail Policy

University of Florida requires that you use your UF Gatorlink account for university (and class) related

email communication. Please see <http://www.it.ufl.edu/policies/#email> to read more on this policy.

Students Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>

It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/>.

Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/>.

Class Demeanor

Students are expected to arrive to class on time and behave in a manner that is respectful to the instructor and to fellow students. Please avoid the use of cell phones and restrict eating outside of the classroom. Opinions held by other students should be respected in discussion, and conversations that do not contribute to the discussion should be held at a minimum, if at all.

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code

<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>

specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>, 352-392-1575; and the University Police Department: 352-392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Canvas Privacy Policy

Our class sessions may be audio-visually recorded for students in the class to refer back and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image agree to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

The participation portion of your grade for this class will be calculated on the basis of your attendance and your participation in class activities. Normally you will satisfy this requirement through your participation through video and audio presence on Zoom. However, you may also satisfy this requirement through written comments in chat and discussion assignments in Canvas.

Course Schedule

Changes to the syllabus*

Please note that the instructor reserves the right to make changes during the semester to the schedule, assigned readings or activities of the syllabus, if deemed necessary. No changes will be made to the grading scale.

Tuesday classes are asynchronous online classes with reading and/or visual materials followed by homework projects and assignments.*

Week 1: Introduction to course (General Outline and Requierments)

- Review the Course Syllabus
- Key facts and terms; Timeline and Maps;
- Historical, Economic and Cultural Stereotypes of countries on both sides of the Iron Curtain

Reading:

- B.L. Brager: The Iron Curtain – The Cold War in Europe (2004) – selected pages

Documentary: Eastern Europe a Century of Trouble - Part 2: 1939-1953 (1991) - selected clips

Week 2: Rebuilding Central and Eastern Europe after WWII

- Ideology: Meaning of Socialism and the Idea of Communism
- Politics and Economy

Reading:

- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: The Communist Manifesto (1848)– selected pages

- Naimark, Norman. The Sovietization of Eastern Europe, 1944-1953. (2010)

- B.L. Brager: The Iron Curtain – The Cold War in Europe (2004) – selected pages

Documentary: Heaven on Earth: The Rise and Fall of Socialism – Marx&Engels, Eduard Bernstein, Lenin (2005)

Movie: Diary for My Children (1984) – directed by Marta Meszaros

Week 3: People's Democracies

- Police State, Violence and Socialist Legal System

Reading:

- Anne Applebaum: Iron Curtain-The Crushing of Eastern Europe 1944-1956 (2012) – selected p.

Documentary: A Trial in Prague – directed by Zuzana Justman (2000)

Movie: The Confession (L'Aveu) - directed by Costa-Gravas (1970)

Week 4: Propaganda

- The Images of the Imperialist West

Reading:

- Aremy M. Kalinovsky-Craig Dagle: The Routledge Handbook of the Cold War (2014) – selected pages

Documentary: Animated Soviet Propaganda (1997) – selected clips

Movie: TBD

Week 5: The Workers' States

- The Privileged Class - Peasants and Workers – Workplace, working conditions and private lives

Reading:

- Katherine Lebow: Public works, private lives in Nowa Huta (2001)

- Thomas K. Murphy Czechoslovakia Behind the Curtain. Life, Work and Culture in the Communist Era (2018) – selected pages

Movie: Man of Marble (1976) – directed by Andrzej Wajda

Documentary: Nova Huta – The Labyrinth of Memory (2009) – directed by Marcin Kapron

Reflection Paper #1 - Due

Week 6: Women emancipation

- Women at work, at school and at home

Reading:

- Eduard Taborsky Women behind the Iron Curtain (1951)

- Padriac Kenney: The gender of resistance in Communist Poland (1999)

Documentary: Budapest Retro (1999) – directed by Gabor Zsigmond Papp – selected clips

Week 7: Schools and Education

- Textbooks, subjects, and types of schools
- Youth organizations and ideology in schools

Reading:

- Thomas K. Murphy: Czechoslovakia Behind the Curtain. Life, Work and Culture in the Communist Era (2018) – selected pages

- John Rodden: Textbook Reds-Schoolbooks, Ideology and East German Identity (2005) – selected pages

Documentary: My Perestroika (2010) – directed by Robin Hessman – selected clips

Movie: TBD

Week 8 : Intellectuals and their challenges

- Underground literature, music, and art (samizdat)
- Criticism, resistance, and exile (tamizdat)

Reading:

- Eduard Taborsky Women behind the Iron Curtain (1951)

- Padriac Kenney: The gender of resistance in Communist Poland (1999)

Documentary: Budapest Retro (1999) – directed by Gabor Zsigmond Papp – selected clips

Movie: TBD

Week 9: Freedom seekers and Reformers

- Berlin Wall
- Prague Spring

Reading:

- Kieran Williams: The Prague spring and its aftermath (1997) – selected pages

Documentary: Prague Spring (1999) – directed by Gina Kovacs and Christian Vinkeloe

Walled In! (2010) – Deutsche Welle (DW) documentary

Movie: The Tunnel (2001) – directed by Ronald Suso Richter

Week 10: The Elite and their privileges

- State supported Artists and Culture
- State owned Athletes and Sport Clubs

Reading:

- Mervyn Matthews: Privilege in the Soviet Union – A Study of Elite Life-Style under Communism (2011) – selected pages

- Michael Voslensky: Nomenklatura - The Soviet ruling class (1984) – selected pages

- Petr Roubal: Mass Gymnastic Performances under Communism: The Case of Czechoslovak Spartakiads (2008)

Documentary: Doping for Gold (2008) – PBS

Movie: TBD

Reflection Paper #2 - Due

Week 11: Property, Ownership, Leisure Time

- Housing Blocks, Apartments and Vacation Homes
- Socialist Cars

Reading:

- David Crowley and Susan E. Reid: Socialist Spaces: Sites of Everyday Life in the Eastern Bloc (2002) – selected pages

Documentary: Budapest Retro (1999) – directed by Gabor Zsigmond Papp – selected clips

Trabant: The Cool couple from the Cold War (2007) – directed by T. Goffin – selected clips

Movie: TBD

Week 12: Culture and Entertainment - 1

- The Power of the Modern (Western) Music
- Clubs, Talent Shows and Rock'n'Roll
- Subculture

Reading:

- T. Ryback: Rock around the Bloc: A History of Rock Music in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union (1990) – selected pages

Documentary: Beats the Freedom (2010) – directed by L. Gnoinski, W. Slota
Radio Revolution (2009) – directed by N/A
Movie: Stilyagi (2008) – directed by Valery Todorovsky

Week 13: Culture and Entertainment – 2

- Television and Radio Programming
- Humor and Stand-up Comedy

Reading:

- Maruša Pušnik: Flirting with Television in Socialism. Proletarian Morality and the Lust for Abundance (2010)
- Kristin Rot-Ey: Playing for Cultural Authority. Soviet TV Professionals and the Game Shows in the 1950s and 1960s (2010)
- Christie Davis: Humour and Protest: Jokes under Communism - selected pages-
- Ben Lewis - Hammer and Tickle: A History of Communism Told Through Communist Jokes (2006) - selected pages

Documentary:

Hammer and Tickle (2006) – directed by Ben Lewis

Movie: TBA

Week 14: Consumerism

- Planned Economy and Shortage Economy
- The Coca Cola – Western products and the black market

Reading:

- Patrick Hyder Patterson: Risky Business. What Was Really Being Sold in the Department Stores of Socialist Eastern Europe? (2012)
- Katherine Pence: Grounds for Discontent? Coffee from the Black Market to the Kaffeeklatsch in the GDR (2012)

Documentary: TBA

Movie: Goodbye Lenin (2003) – directed by Wolfgang Becker

Week 15: Review

Reading and Discussion:

- Katherine Verdery: What was Socialism and why did it fall?
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Reflection Paper #3 - Due

Movie and Book List for Reflection Paper - TBA