SOAN 30152/60152: AFTERLIVES OF SOVIET SOCIALISM
Semester: TWO

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Lectures: Wednesday 10.00-1.00 Simon 3 (3.40)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURSE DETAILS</th>
<th>UNDERGRADUATE</th>
<th>POSTGRADUATE</th>
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<tr>
<td>NUMBER OF CREDITS</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>MODE OF ASSESSMENT</td>
<td>10% - 4 x 400 word Seminar Tasks 20% - 1000 word Two-Book Review 70% - 3000 word Final Essay</td>
<td>20% - 1000 word Two-Book Review 80% - 3000 word Final Essay</td>
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There are no pre-requisites for this course. However, students should consider whether it is advisable to take an advanced level course, without any prior knowledge of the subject, at this crucial stage in their academic career.

**PENALTIES FOR LATE SUBMISSION OF ASSESSED WORK**
There is an absolute deadline of 2.00 pm on all hand-ins. Late submission of essays and other coursework will be penalised. The penalty is 10 points per day for up to 10 days (including weekends) for any assessed work submitted after the specified submission deadline. Social Sciences students should contact the Social Sciences Undergraduate Office (G.001 Arthur Lewis Building) or Postgraduate Office (as appropriate), if they feel they have mitigating circumstances. All other students should follow the procedures of their Home Schools. A "day" is 24 hours, i.e. the clock starts ticking as soon as the submission deadline (2.00 pm) has passed. Unless a student has an authorised extension, any assessed work that is submitted late will be penalised.

**WORD LIMITS**
All pieces of assessed work are subject to prescribed word limits. Students exceeding the maximum word limits on assessed work will be penalised. There is no formal minimum word limit, but students should consider whether essays that fall substantially below the maximum have adequately covered the topic. An automated word-count must be printed on each piece of assessed work – failure to do this will result in an automatic deduction of 2%. Word limits include the body text of the piece of work, plus footnotes, but exclude the bibliography.
Description of the Module
This course unit brings the tools of anthropological analysis to the study of Soviet socialism and its afterlives through critical exploration of five themes: personhood and subjectivity; place-making and home; money and networks; infrastructure, and nationhood. The course has three broad aims: first, it seeks to enable students to think anthropologically about a distinct social, political and cultural project: that of Soviet socialism. Rather than examining the Soviet past merely as a prelude to a “post-socialist” present – a past that is often treated as homogenous and self-evidently polarised between ideological conformity and popular resistance – this course encourages students to focus substantively on the Soviet socialism as an object of anthropological enquiry. We will draw on a variety of materials to explore the way in which the socialist project was translated into everyday worlds: through material objects and spatial arrangements; in relationships and the production of dependencies; through consumption and in the imagination; and through the production of boundaries between selves and others. We will also consider the way in which this project was appropriated, challenged, ignored and transformed through everyday practices in diverse cultural settings.

Second, the course provides students with the theoretical tools and empirical resources to think critically about the variety of transformations that have occurred over the last two decades in the former Soviet space. Drawing on material from across this vast region, including metropolitan Russia, Siberia, the Caucasus, the Baltic states and Central Asia, we will think about the diversity of Soviet “afterlives” and the utility of postsocialism and neoliberalism as tools of theoretical analysis. We will consider the particular contribution that an ethnographic approach can make to a critical analysis of postsocialist “transition”, through a focus on issues such as personhood and place-making; the shifting meanings of money; and the relationship between dramatic political transformation and the (often violent) articulation of national belonging.

Third, through this empirical exploration we will think broadly and comparatively about 20th century projects of industrial modernisation. The region that we focus on here has been the object of multiple projects aimed at specifying and overcoming “backwardness”, whether in the form of early Soviet attempts to overcome private property, or more recent, World Bank sponsored initiatives to introduce a competitive market economy in agriculture, industry and the management of natural resources. Throughout the course we will ask what is at stake in such projects; what kinds of accounts of time they mobilise, and how they are potentially disrupted by the intransigent materiality of the worlds they try to remake.

Organisation of the Module
The Module is organised around individual study and a 3-hour weekly contact session (Wednesday, 10am-1pm). Students are also welcome to use office hours (2nd floor ALB 2.054) for further questions, clarification and feedback on written work and oral presentations. The contact sessions will include a variety of activities including weekly lectures, film screenings, seminars and student presentations. The contact sessions for this
course are compulsory and seminar participation (through presentation of allocated readings, discussion of the key texts and collective analysis of primary source materials) forms an integral part of the assessment of this course. A full schedule of the contact sessions is included in this course outline, together with a detailed list of key and further readings and allocated readings for each seminar session from weeks 3-10. This is a heavy-reading course, and the more reading you put in, the more you’ll get out of it.

The readings for this course are organized into three kinds. Key readings are essential for everyone taking the course (including auditors). You should read them *before* the contact session for which they are allocated, since they will be referenced in the lecture and they will form the basis for the seminar discussion. Further reading is optional. It is intended to enable you to pursue topics in more depth (for the review essay and/or final essay), and to give you pointers to the theoretical debates that will be referenced in the lectures.

From weeks 3-10, four texts each week will also be allocated to students to summarise to the rest of the group and introduce in class in the form of brief (7 minute) seminar presentations. These are listed below in the reading list under “seminar reports”. These readings will be allocated in the first week of classes and you should anticipate writing a summary report and/or introducing the text you have been allocated to the rest of the class on 4 occasions during the course of the semester. For undergraduates, these reports constitute 10% of your overall grade and for all students seminar participation will be taken into consideration in those cases where your overall grade is borderline between classes. Your summary of the allocated text should be one page long and can either be in free form, note form or bullet points – whatever you find most useful to recall and present the text. It should provide a clear statement of the overall argument of the piece, suitable for understanding by someone who has not read the text. It should also give an indication of questions arising in relation to the text; contradictions in the argument (or disagreements with the arguments raised in the key texts) and your evaluation of the text. You should submit your report via Blackboard before the relevant class, where it will be put into the relevant week’s folder for other students to consult. If, for any reason you are unable to present on your allocated week (due to illness etc.) it is your responsibility to swap with another student and to confirm this with the convener.

**Learning outcomes**

By the end of this course you should be able to:

• Draw on a range of relevant empirical case studies to evaluate different theoretical approaches to the study of Soviet socialism from within and beyond anthropology

• Demonstrate an appreciation for the diversity of experiences of Soviet socialism in different historical periods and geographical settings, using relevant empirical examples;

• Understand and evaluate some of the major theoretical approaches that have been developed to understand post-socialist change in the former Soviet space, and to be aware of the distinctive contribution of an ethnographic approach;

• Critically evaluate the validity of “post-socialism”, “neoliberalism”, “globalization” and other theoretical vocabularies to explain the dynamics of social and political change in the former Soviet Union;
• Synthesise and critically evaluate book-length ethnographic arguments in the form of written and oral reports;

• Creatively deploy a wide range of ethnographic and other sources in the writing of a substantial research paper.

Assessment
Assessment for this Module will differ slightly for undergraduates and post-graduates:

For undergraduates, the assessment will be based on the following:

1. 4 X 400 word written seminar reports (10% of overall mark); for details of what’s entailed see above under Organisation of the module.
2. 1 X 1000 word Review Essay (Critically comparing and contrasting at 2 book-length ethnographies) (20% of overall mark), details below.
3. 1 X 3000 word Final Essay (70% of overall mark), details to be provided in class.

For post-graduates, the assessment will be based on the following:

1. 1 X 1000 word Review Essay (critically comparing and contrasting 2 book-length ethnographies) (20% of overall mark), details below.
2. 1 X 3000 word Final Essay (80% of overall mark), details to be provided in class.

Review Essay
20% of your mark, for both UGs and PGs, will be based on a 1000 word Review Essay, which is due for submission via Blackboard by 2pm on 11.03.2014. Your review essay should summarise, compare and critically discuss 2 ethnographic monographs exploring some aspect of socialism and/or postsocialism in the former Soviet space. These should be chosen so as to enable comparative reflection on either (a) the nature of postsocialist transformation in two contrasting regions of the former Soviet Union; or (b) the way in which a particular thematic issue discussed in the course (such as personhood, money, consumption, nationhood, the nature of home etc.) is treated by different authors; or (c) to identify some of the key issues that arise in the ethnography of a particular region of the former Soviet Union (such as the Baltic states or Central Asia) through a detailed analysis of two ethnographies of that region. An indicative list of suitable ethnographic monographs is included at the end of this course outline. Other texts can be chosen upon consultation with the convener – please use the office hours to talk through your ideas.

Final Essay
Both under-graduates and post-graduates are expected to produce a 3000 word Final Essay. Essay questions will be circulated in advance and will reflect the themes and debates discussed in the lectures, readings and seminars. A good essay shows a sophisticated grasp of a wide range of material; is argumentative rather than descriptive; and is well-written and referenced. Essay questions and detailed criteria for assessment will be provided in class.

Feedback
There are 4 ways of getting feedback during the course this module:

1. In person, by coming to MR’s office hours, Monday 3-4pm, or Tuesday 1-2pm in ALB 2.054.
2. In writing, on your written seminar contributions and the review essay.
3. Through dedicated seminar sessions (separate for BA and MA students) to discuss the review essays.
4. By email to Madeleine.Reeves@manchester.ac.uk. Before emailing, please check that your query is not answered anywhere in this outline or on the Blackboard site. **Please ensure that your email message always contains a subject line indicating the nature of the query, and that you sign off in full, even if you are sending it from your phone**.

**Link2Lists & Blackboard**

There are 2 electronic resources to help you with your studies for this course:

1. The electronic reading list associated with this course (Link2Lists). This can be accessed here http://www.readinglists.manchester.ac.uk/index.html (put Afterlives in the search box) NB – this will allow you to access most readings for the course, including scanned chapters, electronically.

2. The Blackboard learning zone.

Blackboard can be accessed via your University portal. SOAN 30152/60152 should be listed once you are registered for the course. Readings for this course can be accessed in one of the following ways.

Books and chapters from books are available in the JRUL. Those that are key readings have been ordered in multiple copies for the library and/or put on High Demand. Some of these key readings have also been digitized. However, copyright regulations mean that only one chapter (or 5%) of a book can be digitized, so you should not rely on chapters being available electronically. Find yourself a quiet nook and use the library! Most journal articles for this course are available electronically. In most cases searching by title/author in Google Scholar will bring up the full text version on a campus computer, or use the links in the electronic reading list.

In the rare cases where a text is not in the JRUL and not available electronically I will make a copy available on the Blackboard site for this course. You should not assume that all readings for any given week will automatically be uploaded to Blackboard. Check with the reading list on the syllabus for each week, and use the library reading list. That should be your first port of call for accessing readings.

You should log-in regularly to the Blackboard site for this course. This is where announcements will be posted, additional material made available, and where you can download copies of the course outline and texts not available through the JRUL or electronically. You will also need to submit your seminar reports via Blackboard, as well as your review essay by March 11th.

**Background Reading**

This isn’t a history course, but to make the most of what we’ll be covering you need a grasp of the basic contours of Russian/Soviet history over the 20th Century. A good place to start with this is the excellent and engaging Radio 4 series presented by Martin Sixsmith (the BBC journalist who was there when the Soviet Union collapsed) now available on CD.


There’s a vast literature on Soviet socialism and its afterlives. A good place to get an overview of the contours of Soviet history is Ronald Suny’s very readable textbook:

An updated version has recently been released. If you want a good reference work on the contours of Soviet history this is a good (though pricey) resource to buy.

An interesting new take on the Soviet project by a theoretically informed anthropologist is:


A wonderfully readable (and now classic) collection of essays on postsocialist transformations in Russia and Mongolia is:


A useful set of primary texts relating to the whole history of the Soviet Union is the following reader:


A theoretically rich meditation on the conjoined modernist projects of socialism and capitalism, see:


There has been a profusion of recent writing on everyday life in the Stalin period by historians as new archives have been opened. For a flavour of this check out:


Writing on the post-Stalin era – the era of Khrushchev (commonly known as the “thaw”) and Brezhnev (traditionally – and problematically – referred to as an era of “stagnation”) have garnered far less attention. Two exceptions are:


An easy, curl-up-on-the-couch kind of read that gives a real taste of living in the later years of the Soviet Union is the following memoir:


A theoretically sophisticated anthropological exploration of the same period is:


This text will be referred to at several points so is one worth buying. Several copies will be available for purchase in Blackwells.

Most discussion of the collapse of the Soviet Union has been colonized by political science. Two useful texts, the first journalistic, the second more scholarly, which discuss the sequence of events that led to Soviet collapse (particularly in the non-Russian republics) are:


The Soviet Union was largely off-limits to western anthropologists until the very last years of its existence, and the vast majority of the (considerable) Soviet ethnographic scholarship is not published in English. For a pioneering (and now classic) ethnography of a Siberian collective farm, based on research in the 1970s, see:


For an account of the role of ethnographic knowledge in the making of the Soviet Union see:


The following edited collections contain some of the best chapter-length ethnographic accounts of postsocialism. The collection edited by Chris Hann (Postsocialism) is particularly recommended for purchase, since several chapters from it are assigned for this course.

The following book-length ethnographies, although written after the end of the Soviet Union, draw on archives, oral histories and interviews to explore aspects of lived Soviet socialism. Pesmen’s book, Russia and Soul, is particularly recommended for purchase since we’ll be reading several chapters of it.


## THEME 1: SOCIALISM, POSTSOCIALISM AND ANTHROPOLOGY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>29.01.14 (wk 1)</th>
<th>Orientations</th>
<th>Activity due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Lecture: Anthropology and “really existing socialism”</td>
<td>Key reading</td>
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<td>2. Film: <em>Born in the USSR: 28 Up</em> (extracts, 40 mins)</td>
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<td>3. Overview of the course; practicalities, deadlines, questions, assigning readings.</td>
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<tr>
<th>05.02.14 (wk 2)</th>
<th>Anthropology, “transition”, and turmoil</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Lecture: Anthropology and post-socialist “transition”</td>
<td>Key readings</td>
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<td>2. Film: <em>Barzakh</em> (57 mins)</td>
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<td>3. Seminar discussion: key readings and film</td>
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## THEME 2: PERSONS

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<tr>
<th>12.02.14 (wk 3)</th>
<th>Fashioning a Soviet self</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Lecture: fashioning a Soviet self</td>
<td>Key readings &amp; Sources Seminar reports</td>
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<td>3. Seminar</td>
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<th>19.02.14 (wk 4)</th>
<th>Crisis and coming of age</th>
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<td></td>
<td>1. Lecture: crisis and self-refashioning</td>
<td>Key readings Watch Old Peter Seminar reports</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. Film: <em>Love and Broken Glass</em> (35 mins)</td>
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<td>3. Seminar</td>
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## THEME 3: MONEY

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<th>26.02.14 (wk 5)</th>
<th>Better a hundred friends than a hundred roubles?</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Lecture: better a hundred friends than a hundred roubles?</td>
<td>Key readings Seminar reports</td>
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<td>2. Film: <em>Interval</em> (20 mins)</td>
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<td>3. Seminar</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
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<td>05.03.14 (wk 6)</td>
<td>Consuming capitalism?</td>
<td>1. Lecture: consuming capitalism? 2. UG Seminar/ review essay consultation 3. PG Seminar</td>
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<td>REVIEW ESSAY DUE 11.03.14 VIA BLACKBOARD</td>
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<td>19.03.14 (wk 8)</td>
<td>Transforming place</td>
<td>1. Lecture: Reconstruction, decay and the intransigence of infrastructure 2. Film: <em>This is Astana</em> (8 mins) 3. Feedback session on review essay (BA students) 4. Feedback session on review essay (MA students)</td>
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SOAN 30152/60152: AFTERLIVES OF SOVIET
SOCIALISM DETAILS OF READINGS
AND SCREENINGS

THEME 1: SOCIALISM, POSTSOCIALISM AND
ANTHROPOLOGY

Week 1: 29.01.14. Doing an anthropology of Soviet socialism

Key texts

* Yurchak, Alexei. 2003. “Soviet hegemony of form: everything was forever until it was no more”. Comparative Studies in Society and History, 45 (3), 480-510

Film (in class) Born in the USSR: 28 Up, dir. Sergei Miroshnichenko (2012). Extracts 40 minutes

Further reading


Yurchak, Alexei. 2006. Everything was forever until it was no more: the last Soviet generation. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, chapter 1.
Week 2: 05.02.14. Anthropology and post-Soviet transformation

Key texts


Further reading

THEME 2: PERSONS

Week 3: 12.02.14. Fashioning a Soviet self

Key texts

12

**Seminar sources**


Soviet poster art: http://sovietposter.blogspot.com/

**Films (in class):**

* Teacher, dir. N. Ataullaeva, Uzbekfil’m, 1962 (10’)*

**Seminar reports:**


**Further reading**

(a) **General**


Yurchak, Alexei. 2006. Everything was Forever until it was no more: the last Soviet generation. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

(b) **Debating “Soviet subjectivity”**


**Week 4: 19.02.14. Crisis and coming of age**

**Key texts**


**Watch:** *Old Peter*, dir. Ivan Golovnev (Russia, 2007) : [http://www.cultureunplugged.com/play/1705/Old-Peter](http://www.cultureunplugged.com/play/1705/Old-Peter) (8’10)

**Film in class:** *Love and Broken Glass*, dir. Suvi Andrea Helminen. Nordlys Films, 2006  (35’)

**Seminar reports:**


**Further reading**


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**THEME 3: MONEY**

** Week 5: 26.02.14. Better a hundred friends than a hundred roubles?**

**Key texts**


**Film (in class):** Sergei Azimov (dir.) Interval. Kazakhfil’m, 1982, (20’).

**Seminar reports**


Consumption in the Soviet Union

Anthropological approaches to money and barter


**Week 6: 05.03.14. Consuming capitalism?**

**Key texts**

**Seminar reports**
Further reading


THEME 4: INFRASTRUCTURE

Week 7: 12.03.14. Making a home for socialism

Key texts


Primary sources (specific readings TBC)
Explore: [http://kommunalka.colgate.edu/index.cfm](http://kommunalka.colgate.edu/index.cfm)

Film (in class): Extracts from Strange Grownups, dir. Ayan Shakhmalieva. Lenfilm, 1974 (’7’)

Seminar Reports

Further reading
Week 8: 19.03.14. Transforming place. Reconstruction, decay and the intransigence of infrastructure

Key texts


Film (in class):  *This is Astana* (2008) (8’)

Seminar Reports


Further reading


THEME 5: NATIONHOOD AND NATIONALISM

Week 9: 26.03.14. Everyday ethnicity under state socialism

Key texts


Seminar reports


Film: Sand Castles, dir. Yakov Bronshtein, Algis Vidurgiris, Kirgizfil'm, 1967 (20’)

Further reading:

(a) Soviet nationalities policy and its legacies


Key texts


Film (in class): Stolen Brides, dir. Lucy Ash, BBC Productions (60 minutes)

Seminar reports

Further reading
Indicative list of ethnographic monographs for the review essay

~ Please note: this list is not exhaustive. If there is another ethnographic study of Soviet socialism/postsocialism that is not listed here and which you would like to review, please contact MR ~


