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## **HIS 240 S21: The Stalinist Experience**

### **Midterm Project Assignment**

#### **Overview**

The goal of this assignment is to make active use of your understanding of Stalinist social and cultural values while refining your skills in primary source analysis and evidence-based written argumentation. Your task is to write a **1500-word review** of a Stalin Era film, novel, artwork, or piece of music. You must place this primary source in its historical context, provide information about its creation, and make an **argument** about how it either upholds or subverts the norms of Socialist Realism and Stalinist values. You may make any argument you wish, as long as it is directly supported by primary source evidence and critical analysis. Be bold and have fun!

#### **Instructions**

1. Choose one of the **primary sources** from the list below. You may also choose a source of your own, but you must get my approval before you begin!
2. Read, watch, or listen to the source carefully and critically. Research its author and the specific circumstances of its creation. Does it date from the First Five Year Plan? The “Great Retreat” of the mid-1930s? WWII or postwar reconstruction? How might this context have influenced its creator? \*\*\*Keep in mind, you will need to use at least one secondary source for this information. Give yourself time to find a reliable source and ask the Librarians for help!
3. Write your review! Cast yourself in the role of a **Stalin Era critic** and convince your fellow citizens either that your source fulfills the requirements of Socialist Realism and is an excellent example of Soviet culture—or that it violates Socialist Realism and is a shockingly anti-Stalinist piece of hackwork. In making your argument, you should use specific evidence from the source to back up your claims. You do not need to bring in any secondary literature, but you should build on what you have learned from your research.

#### **Mechanics**

- Your review must be **1500 words long**—and I will count! If you write less than 1300 words, you will be penalized.
- Put your **name** and a **headline** on the first page and **number your pages**.
- Use **12-point font, double spacing, and 1-inch margins**.
- Use **internal citations** for all quotations. If you are citing a passage in a film or piece of music, use the time code.
- You must attach a **Bibliography** page. This should be a separate page and include entries for your primary source and any secondary sources you consulted. It must be properly formatted using *The Chicago Manual of Style*. You can access the *CMS* through the Library. (Trust me, this is good practice for the future!)

**DON'T PLAGIARIZE!** I am all-seeing and all-knowing (and I have purpose-built software), so I **will** figure out if you plagiarize. If you have a question about how to avoid plagiarism, please feel free to ask me. I am happy to meet with you in office hours any time before the paper is due.

### **Writing Resources**

Please check out the **Writing Resources Page** on the website. It includes a Writing Handout (with links to the Purdue Owl resource) and Dr. G's Patented Guide to Good Paper Writing.

### **Due Date**

This assignment must be submitted on **Sakai** and is due **Sunday, March 14 at 10pm**. Late papers will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade per day.

**Good luck!!!**

**Stalinist Primary Sources** (Choose one of these or select your own, with my approval).

### **Literature (pdfs or linked on the course website)**

- Alexander Serafimovich, *The Iron Flood*
- Fyodor Gladkov, *Cement*
- Mikhail Sholokhov, *The Fate of a Man*
- Uzbek poetry by Shukur Sa'dulla, Oydin, and Zulfiya
- Mikhail Zoshchenko, *Adventures of a Monkey*

### **Films (linked to YouTube on the course website)**

- *Volga-Volga* (dir. Grigorii Aleksandrov)
- *Three Songs of Lenin* (dir. Dziga Vertov)
- *Ivan the Terrible, Part I* (dir. Sergei Eisenstein)
- *The Fall of Berlin* (dir. Mikhail Chiaureli)

### **Visual Artworks (embedded in the Midterm Slideshow on the course website)**

- Vera Mukhina, *Peasant Woman* (1934)
- Sergei Gerasimov, *A Collective Farm Celebration* (1937)
- Aleksandr Samokhvalov, *Female Metro Builder with a Drill* (1937)
- Aleksandr Laktionov, *A Letter from the Front* (1947)
- Moscow State University building (1953)

**Musical Works (Linked to Spotify or YouTube on the course website)**

- Nikolai Myaskovsky, *Symphony no. 12* (“*The Collective Farm*”)
- Fikret Amirov, *Shur* (*Symphonic Mugam*)
- Isaak Dunaevsky and Vasily Lebedev-Kumach, “March of the Jolly Fellows”
- Dmitrii Shostakovich, *Symphony no. 7* (Fourth Movement)
- Sergei Prokofiev, *Lieutenant Kijé Suite*