



HISTORY 1404E (670)
Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini: The Totalitarian Age
Fall/Winter 2026 - 2027

Instructor: Dr. Oleksa Drachewych
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Course Information

Mode of Instruction: online asynchronous with an in-person final

Calendar Description:

An introduction to the theory and practice of totalitarianism through a comparative study of regimes established by Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini. Topics include the seizure of power, personality cults, culture, education and propaganda, bio-politics, terror, war, the Holocaust, resistance movements.

Prerequisite(s):

Antirequisite(s): [History 2147A/B](#).

Extra Information: 3 hours.

Course Weight: 1.00

Breadth: Category A

Subject Code: History

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

King's University College
History 1404E (670) – Hitler, Stalin & Mussolini: The Totalitarian Age

F/W 2026-27

Course information:

Course Name, Number, Section: History 1404E 670
Instructor(s): Oleksa Drachewych
Contact Information: odrachew@uwo.ca
Office hours: TBA

Course description: An introduction to the theory and practice of totalitarianism through a comparative study of regimes established by Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini. Topics include the seizure of power, personality cults, culture, education and propaganda, bio-politics, terror, war, the Holocaust, resistance movements.

Antirequisites: History 2147A/B

Prerequisites: N/A

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course learning outcomes:

In a time where concerns over the rise of what is popularly viewed as totalitarianism underpin discussions on the polarization of today's political landscape, it is important to look back at the history of the regimes focused on in this course to understand how they came to be, how they operated, and the leading figures behind them, whether Joseph Stalin, Benito Mussolini or Adolf Hitler.

In this class, students will come to understand how these regimes became established and gain a general comprehension of what made these regimes "totalitarian" and to understand the totalitarian paradigm as an analytic tool, including evaluating its strengths and weaknesses. By looking at society, culture, economics, politics, diplomacy and war, students should come to appreciate the nature of these regimes. Furthermore, through a wide variety of sources, students will learn important techniques to evaluating documents, diaries, articles and books as historians. A prominent theme in this course will be teaching students how to read historical sources, including full academic monographs, to provide a foundation for later classes after first-year, whether in history or in another discipline in the humanities. In addition, by looking at three different regimes, with differences in starting points, execution and ideology, comparison will be a prominent feature of this course, as will be an examination at the legacies of Stalinism, Nazism and Fascism after their demise, including how this history influences current events today.

By the end of this class, students will:

- Be able to define totalitarianism, use the term to analyze certain regimes, discovering the strengths and limitations of the paradigm
- Understand the key events, causes, ideas, and concepts in the history of Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and the Soviet Union 1917-1953
- Learn how to analyze primary and secondary sources
- Learn to read historical monographs, including how to identify a book's thesis and how a historian develops their argument
- Appreciate and understand historical writing and research
- Develop their own arguments through short analytical pieces and larger assignments
- Interact and discuss course readings and historical concepts with other students through online forum discussions
- Be introduced and practice proper sourcing and citations
- Enhance their writing skills through a variety of different assignments

Mode of Instruction: Online asynchronous; Please note the final exam for this class is synchronous and IN-PERSON.

Course textbooks/materials:

The following books are available for purchase through the Bookstore at Western. Some of these books are available digitally through King's Libraries at no additional cost.

Required:

- Lydia Chukovskaya, *Sofia Petrovna* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1994)
 - ~\$29.88+ depending on format
- Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, Updated Edition (Oxford University Press, 2017)
 - ~\$25.57+ depending on format

Recommended:

- Bruce F. Pauley, *Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini: Totalitarianism in the Twentieth Century*, 4th ed. (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2015)
 - ~\$49.95+ depending on format

It is highly recommended students use the assigned versions of Fitzpatrick and Pauley.

Additional readings for discussions will be posted on OWL Brightspace.

Students will be expected to have access to a computer and stable internet in order to complete this course.

Method of evaluation:

- 20% - Participation
 - 10% - Literature Analysis (due November 4)
 - 10% - Midterm Reflection (December 4)
 - 10% - Article Analysis (due February 10)
 - 20% - Research Paper (due March 24)
 - 30% - Final Exam (in person exam during April Exam period)
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- **Participation:** A prominent feature of this class will be teaching students how to read academic monographs. Students should expect, on average, to read roughly 20-25 pages for each week for their weekly participation. Students will be given a goal each week and will be expected to complete the task, often also responding to some of their classmates.

Students will be given five participation marks, reflecting their efforts to complete the assigned goals across several weeks of the course. An average of the top FOUR marks will be used to determine a student's participation mark. This serves a couple of purposes – firstly, it rewards students who are engaged throughout by allowing them to maximize their mark. Secondly, this provides some built-in leniency for students should they have a period where they fall behind for whatever reason, and still allow the student to be able to earn a strong mark. *As a result, there will be no "late" penalty and with the built-in flexibility, the professor reserves the right to refuse to deny academic accommodation as relates to the participation mark.*

- **Midterm Reflection:** In lieu of a midterm, students will complete a reflection of material covered in the course by the end of the Fall term. This assignment will be roughly 500 words in length and will require students to think about the themes of the course to this point. This assignment will be marked on a pass/fail basis. More information will be provided on the course Brightspace.
- **Final Exam:** An IN-PERSON final exam will take place during the April exam period. It will cover the entirety of the course. The exam will include both short answer and essay questions. More information will be provided early in the Winter term. The exam will take place as scheduled by the King's Registrar's Office.

Please note, Friday Make-Up Exams may only be written with the instructor's consent.

Essay Component:

Three separate assignments make up the essay component of this course. Each assignment will focus on one skill important for the development of historical research and analysis. All assignments can be completed fully using course materials and online sources available through King's Libraries.

- **Primary Source Analysis:** Students will write a **750-1000 word (this word count does not include citations)** analytical discussion of *Sofia Petrovna* (this book is available via the bookstore) and the diary of Stepan Podlubny, both which provide an account, one fictionalized, one not, of a person's life during The Great Terror in the Soviet Union. In this review, students will answer a guiding question which will require them to develop an argument using the content of the book and the diary to answer. Students can also use the assigned textbook and lecture material to develop their analysis. This assignment will focus on argumentative skills and analytical skills of primary sources. Further instructions will be posted on OWL Brightspace.
- **Article Analysis:** Students will be assigned an article, made available on OWL Brightspace, and need to analyze its content. In **750-1000 words (this word count does not include citations)**, students will need to identify the article's main arguments, its methodology, and its conclusion. Marks will be given to the quality of the analysis and the clarity and effectiveness of its writing. This assignment will focus on writing skills and analytical skills of secondary sources. Further instructions will be posted on OWL Brightspace.
- **Research Essay:** Students will write a **1,250 to 1,500 word argumentative research paper (this word count does not include citations)**. Students will have a series of questions to choose from; each question will require use of a specific book which will also be partially read in History 1404E. As such, it rewards students who keep up with the readings as they will already have a sense of some of that book's arguments and content and how it can be used in support of their paper! Students will then need to find and cite at least five *additional* academic sources, one of which must be an additional book, in their research paper. Further instructions will be posted on OWL Brightspace.

Information for all assignments: Every assignment will be due at 11:59 pm ET on its due date, submitted electronically via OWL Brightspace.

Students are expected to use Chicago-style citations for **every written assignment**. Footnotes or endnotes are acceptable. In-text citations, unless otherwise stated, are not. *Failure to include citations with accurate page numbers for cited material will result in a failing grade.*

Failure to use the required number of academic sources for an assignment will cap one's mark at a 68. If students are unsure about a source, they are encouraged to contact the professor or their teaching assistant.

Course Specific Policies:

- ***Late Policy:*** As per the King's University College Department of History guidelines – a penalty of five marks will be assessed for essays submitted the first day after deadline, followed by a penalty of one mark per day including weekends.

- **Course Requirements:** Students who fail to **submit** the writing assignments which make up the essay component of the course (primary source analysis, article analysis, and research paper) as specified in the course outline will not receive credit for the course.
- **Email Policy:** Students are welcome to speak to the professor during office hours or by appointment, either in person or via Zoom. Regarding email, he will aim to respond within 24 hours. One exception to this rule will be weekends where he will aim to respond within 48 hours.

Academic Integrity:

Western Scholastic Discipline policy:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

AI Policy: King's is committed to fostering a culture of professionalism, honesty, and academic integrity, and all members of our community—faculty, staff, and students—have a role to play in promoting an ethical learning environment. Furthermore, through the work they submit for academic evaluation, students develop important habits of critical thinking, independent inquiry, and creativity. Thus, it is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor.

Turnitin: This class will use Turnitin on all submitted assignments to check for plagiarism.

Schedule of Classes, Readings, Assessments:

NOTE: In this class, we will discuss antisemitism, racism, genocide, violence and terror. Should students feel uncomfortable discussing these issues, they should speak with the professor.

Fall Term:

CONTEXT

Module 1: September 9 - 19– What is Totalitarianism?; Context: Roots and Trends: 1890 to Versailles

LENINISM

Module 2: September 20 – 26 - The Russian Revolutions: The Bolsheviks Come to Power

Module 3: September 27 - October 3 –The Russian Civil War

STALINISM

Module 4: October 4 – 9 - The Rise of Stalinism: From Lenin to Stalin

READING WEEK – October 10-18

Module 5: October 19-24 - The Revolution from Above: Collectivization, Industrialization and the Cultural Revolution

Module 6: October 25 – 31 – The Great Terror

FIRST PARTICIPATION MARK CUTOFF: October 31

Module 7: November 1 - 7 - Creating a “Soviet” State

PRIMARY SOURCE ANALYSIS DUE November 4

Module 8: November 8-14 - Resistance under Stalinism

Module 9: November 15-21 –Stalinism and the Second World War, 1939-1945

Module 10: November 22-28 – From High Stalinism to Destalinization

Module 11: November 29 to December 9 – Midterm Reflection

MIDTERM REFLECTION DUE December 4

SECOND PARTICIPATION MARK CUTOFF – December 9

Winter Term:

FASCIST ITALY

Module 12: January 4-9 - The Rise of Mussolini

Module 13: January 10-16– Fascist Italy at Home

Module 14: January 17-23 - Fascist Italy Abroad

Module 15: January 24-30 - Biopolitics in Fascist Italy

THIRD PARTICIPATION MARK CUTOFF – January 30

NAZI GERMANY

Module 16: January 31 - February 6 - The Rise of Hitler and the Nazi Seizure of Power

Module 17: February 7-12 –The Nazi Party, Bureaucracy and State

ARTICLE ANALYSIS DUE February 10

READING WEEK – FEBRUARY 13-21

Module 18: February 22-27 - Nazi Cultural and Gender Policies

March 19: February 28 - March 6 – Nazi Racial Policies

FOURTH PARTICIPATION MARK CUTOFF – March 6

Module 20: March 7-13 – The Holocaust

FASCISM AND NAZISM IN COMPARISON

Module 21: March 14-20 – Resistance under Fascism and Nazism

Module 22: March 21-27 - Nazism and Fascism at War

RESEARCH PAPER due March 24

Module 23: March 29 – April 3 – The Aftermath of War: Denazification in Germany and After Fascism in Italy

LEGACIES

Module 24: April 4-9 - The Legacies of Fascism and Totalitarianisms Compared

FIFTH PARTICIPATION MARK CUTOFF – April 9

April Exam period – Final IN-PERSON Exam

**KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
GENERAL COURSE POLICIES
2026-27**

1. Academic Accommodations (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found at [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

2. Academic Consideration for Student Absences

Students must be approved to write a makeup exam or for an extension of the assignment deadline. If you need to miss an exam or the deadline for the assignment, please follow these instructions.

There are two ways to seek academic consideration:

(i) Academic consideration based on medical or compassionate grounds

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate grounds), they should contact the Academic Advising Office. As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration.

For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is the appropriate documentation. The SMC is available at <https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/pdfs/student-medical-certificate.pdf>

- King's students: The Academic Advising Office website is located in DLH 104. The Academic Advising website is <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising>.
- If your home faculty is Huron or at Western, please submit your documentation to your faculty's academic counselling office.
- Requests must be made as soon as possible, and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

You may submit requests for academic consideration through the **Student Absence Portal**, linked on this website: <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising/academic-consideration-requests-and-student-absence-portal>.

(ii) Academic consideration through an undocumented absence

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per half-course (0.5) weight.

- Note that instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline to confirm this which assessment has been designated as requiring documentation for consideration (that is, exempt from undocumented absences).
- Undocumented absences can not be used as the basis for academic consideration for December or April exams.

If an instructor has built flexibility into their assessments (e.g., “complete 8 of 10 quizzes”), this flexibility will already address consideration needs and thus academic consideration may be denied.

For further information on the academic consideration policy, please see https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

c) Absences from Final Exams

If you miss the Final Exam, **contact your Academic Advising Office** as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the “Special Examination” (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a multiple exam situation (i.e., you are scheduled to write more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

d) Religious Accommodations

Students should consult the University’s list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and their Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

3. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King’s University College:
<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/accessibility-services>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King’s University College:
<https://kings.uwo.ca/campus-life/student-supports/>

Good2talk is an online and phone resource for students, available 24/7, with services in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options on how to obtain help:

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental-health/index.html>

Academic Support Services at King's University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/academics/academic-supports/>

4. Statement on Gender-Based Sexual Violence

King's and Western are committed to reducing incidents of gender-based sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: [Mental Health and Wellness at King's](#).

You can reach supports at King's by emailing care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a Social Worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by email (health@uwo.ca) or by calling 519-661-3568. Additional support services can be found <https://www.uwo.ca/health/gbsv/support/index.html>

5. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see https://kings.uwo.ca/sites/2025/assets/files/campus/Kings_Code_of_Student_Conduct.pdf

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

6. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.pdf

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. **Check with you instructor to check which tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in each course.** Note that although some courses may permit the use of such tools, it does not mean use of such tools is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality Reports - TurnItIn.html>.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

7. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

8. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

9. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.