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CDIPS Final Project  
2022-2023

### **“New Soviet Women:” History, Art, Fiction, and Film (1917-1940)**

*Comparing State-Sponsored Propaganda Models with Complexity of Life Experiences Analyzed through the Prism of Compassion and Suspension of the Culturally Biased Judgment*



Natalia Danko (1892-1942). *Discussing Stalin's Constitution at an Uzbek Collective Farm, 1937. Self-portrait. At Work, 1920s.* Porcelain. State Porcelain Factory @ The Russian Museum, St. Petersburg.

### **Part I: Executive Summary**

The purpose of this interdisciplinary online (both synchronous and asynchronous) course at the Newberry Library for adult learners is to provide an examination of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Soviet feminism, gender policies, as well as the political, economic, social, and cultural implications of gender stereotypes, against the real-life experiences and changing roles of Soviet women from the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 up to WWII. We will examine propaganda models of “a new Soviet woman,” constructed by the Soviet authorities to determine how they influenced social change and affected the lives of women not only in the capitals (Moscow and Leningrad), but throughout the vast multiethnic and diverse areas of the Soviet Union: the frontiers of the Far East and the recently colonized Central Asia; the villages of Buryatia, Tatarstan, and the Urals; and the new factory towns in Siberia. Intercultural global learning and a pedagogy of compassion, as delineated by Ben Rifkin and in VALUE Rubrics, particularly in Foundations and Skills for Lifelong Learning, Global Learning, and Intercultural Knowledge and Competence VALUE Rubrics (see Reference List below), will guide the teaching of this course. Examining the lives of Soviet women of various social, geographical, ethnic backgrounds, occupations, political and religious convictions through art, individual stories, film, and fiction against the state-determined roles will require course participants to debunk stereotypes, reassess new challenging evidence

through the filter of their experiences, reflect on the value of new knowledge in their own lives, and develop and enhance their sense of compassion for diverse and multicultural world. The course will allow self-directed adult learners with various learning preferences to take an active role during live discussions and online, offering new ideas and various strategies to become better global citizens. I plan to teach this course in the fall of 2023.

## Reference List

The following resources inform my approach to this project and provide me with background materials to support student learning:

Brookfield, Stephen D., and Stephen Preskill. *Discussion as a Way of Teaching: Tools and Techniques for Democratic Classrooms*. 2nd ed, Wiley, 2012.

Herman, Jennifer H., and Linda Burzotta Nilson, editors. *Creating Engaging Discussions Strategies for "Avoiding Crickets" in Any Size Classroom and Online*. Stylus Publishing, LLC, 2018.

Ladson-Billings, G. *Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy*. American Educational Research Association, 32(3), 1995, pp. 465-491.

Paris, Django, and H. Samy Alim, editors. *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies: Teaching and Learning for Justice in a Changing World*. Teachers College Press, 2017.

Plungian, Nadezhda. *Rozhdenie Sovetskoi Zhenshchiny: Rabotnitsa, Krest'ianka, Letchietsa, "Byvshaia" i Drugie v Iskusstve 1917-1939 Godov*. Muzei sovremennogo iskusstva "Garazh," 2022.

Rifkin, Benjamin. "Teaching Compassion in the Russian Language and Literature Curriculum: An Essential Learning Outcome." *Russian Language Journal / Русский Язык*, vol. 69, 2019, pp. 45–60.

"Adult Learning Theory: Methods and Techniques of Teaching Adults." *Research.Com*, 12 Jan. 2021, <https://research.com/education/adult-learning-theory>.

"The Andragogy Approach: Knowles' Adult Learning Theory Principles." *Research.Com*, 24 Jan. 2021, <https://research.com/education/the-andragogy-approach>.

*Newberry Library*, <https://www.newberry.org/about>. Accessed 2 June 2023.

"VALUE Rubrics - Global Learning." *AAC&U*, <https://www.aacu.org/initiatives/value-initiative/value-rubrics/value-rubrics-global-learning>. Accessed 31 May 2023.

## **Part II: Analysis**

The Russian revolution led to devastating civil war and famines; horrors of collectivization and industrialization; the creation of an unprecedentedly repressive police state; and a Gulag system. It also produced an eruption of social experimentation in the name of class, gender, and ethnic egalitarianism; an explosion of a huge-scale production; a cultural revolution; and practices of euphoric collectivity and altruistic self-sacrifice unknown in capitalist cultures. Soviet women went through a wide range of experiences in the revolution and two first decades of the Soviet power, and the course will give the participants a chance to analyze a wide variety of meanings Soviet women attached to gender and problems they experienced connected to it. I hope that comparing the predictable propaganda models of the Soviet women with their life stories, analyzing historical documents, looking at art, watching films, and reading fiction will not only introduce the participants to the everyday life of women of diverse communities, ethnicities, and culture, but will relate to their own experiences, leading them to reconsider fixed cultural assumptions, stereotypes, and biases in order to build empathy.

The course is intended for adult learners who take classes at the Newberry Library at Chicago. Founded in 1887, the Newberry is one of Chicago's most historic cultural institutions, a research library, and a pioneer of adult education for more than fifty years. The Newberry Library mission encompasses fostering "a sense of belonging among all ... by being intentional about connecting people, building trust across groups, and inviting multiple perspectives" (*Newberry Library*). The Newberry Library's adult courses are conducted as discussion-based seminars in "a warm, friendly, intellectually stimulating learning environment" facilitated by instructors, who are experts in their fields (*Newberry Library*). Through a lively exchange of knowledge, participants learn from each other as well as from the instructor.

I expect a class size of 20-25 adult learners. Though some participants are well-read and have some basic knowledge of the Soviet culture, the course is open to everyone, including those with no previous exposure to the subject. Since we meet online, the adult learners come from all over the US and abroad. Besides, the class will consist of people of different ages, skills, and backgrounds, and not all participants may have familiarity and experience navigating Canvas, our learning management system (LMS). To make the course affordable for low-income participants, only one book will be required; it is available for under \$20.

To be responsive to the needs of the course participants, I will use practical insights from several adult learning theories, including the andragogy theory (tapping into prior experience and internal motivation) and transformational learning (revealing various perspectives and creating "aha" moments). Finally, I will bear in mind that adult learners are self-directed, independent, have various learning preferences and challenges, and want to feel in control of their learning journey.

### *Proposed Content:*

Who were "New Soviet Women"? We will explore the rapid volcanic changes in the lives

of the women in the former Soviet Union in the first two decades after the 1917 revolution, comparing the Soviet state's approaches to women's liberation and gender policies with the diverse real-life experiences of the Soviet women of different ethnicity, class, religion, social status, and geographical background. We will try to separate myth from reality examining women's personal stories, visual art, film, and fiction.

The synchronous part of course will consist of ten two-hour long live Zoom sessions and will include short interactive lectures and longer group discussion. I will also create an extensive asynchronous Canvas LMS, which will be available a couple weeks before the course starts, which will contain all required (except for one book), recommended, and optional readings; an orientation video and instructions; short lectures; visual images to analyze; songs and films with English subtitles; supplemented by short, accessible theoretical historical, visual, and critical information. The course will be organized not chronologically but by ten models of women's roles in Soviet society.

Each Zoom session and Canvas unit will correspond to one of the officially prioritized roles of Soviet women (the last unit will focus on women artists), which we will explore through life stories, art, fiction, and film to separate myth from reality:

- 1) Woman as Gendered Allegory of Revolution;
- 2) Brave Daughter of the Civil War: Red Army Soldier, Commissar, Pilot;
- 3) Woman as a Worker and a Peasant;
- 4) "*Vostochnitsa*" (Easterner): Colonial Dimension of Soviet Feminism;
- 5) "*Dalnevostochnitsa*" (Far Easterner): Building Socialism on the Frontiers;
- 6) Woman as an Athlete and Heroine;
- 7) "Engineers' Wives" of the second half of the 1930s;
- 8) Woman as Mother and Consumer: Totalitarian Body;
- 9) "Former Women" and Gulag Women;
- 10) Women Artists: Self-Description; Female Soviet Sculptors.

In addition to 10 units for the above models, I will also design an Introductory Unit with the necessary orientation and background information, which will include historical timelines, maps, documents, web resources, as well as primary and secondary material on feminism, history, culture, art, film and religion.

We will use the following "tools" to analyze the above generalized women's models through diverse case studies:

Fiction: A variety of poems, songs, and short stories will be available on Canvas. We will read and discuss the following short stories: "Viper" by Alexei Tolstoy; "Three Generations" and "Sisters" by Alexandra Kollontai. The only required book is Yakhina, Guzel. *Zuleikha*. Translated by Lisa C. Hayden, Oneworld, 2019, a novel about a peasant woman from a small village in Tatarstan, exiled in Siberia in 1930.

Visual Art: Instead of focusing exclusively on well-known avant-garde artists and famous Bolshevik mass-produced posters, the course will challenge our assumptions about Soviet art and revolution itself by combining known and unknown artists and various mediums – photomontage

and graphic work in women's magazines, photography, advertisements, fine art from small watercolors to monumental panels, sculpture, and porcelain. All images will be available on Canvas; PowerPoint slides will be posted after each Zoom session.

Personal Stories: Participants will have a chance to explore literary memoirs, oral interviews, personal files, public speeches, letters, official documents, newspaper and magazine articles, and documentaries. Special attention will be given to articles in women's magazines. The main sources of the autobiographies and interviews with Soviet women will be: Fitzpatrick, Sheila, and Yuri Slezkine, editors. *In the Shadow of Revolution: Life Stories of Russian Women from 1917 to the Second World War*. Princeton University Press, 2000; and Engel, Barbara Alpern, et al., editors. *A Revolution of Their Own: Voices of Women in Soviet History*. Westview Press, 1998. Simeon Vilensky, editor. *Till My Tale Is Told*. Indiana University Press, 1999.

Film: The following films will be available on Canvas: *Bed and Sofa* (1927) dir. by Abram Room, *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) dir. by Dziga Vertov, *Three Songs about Lenin* (1934) dir. by Dziga Vertov, *Three Heroines* (1938) by Dziga Vertov, *A Girl with a Temper* (1939) dir. by Konstantin Yudin.

After the first two sessions, to allow participants to take a more active role in their learning, I plan to create a short survey to find out which topics and case studies are of most interest and will adjust the course content to their interests when possible.

Our discussions will take place both on Zoom and on Canvas. Zoom discussions in small and larger groups will follow short interactive lectures. Each asynchronous unit on Canvas will provide the adult learners with a chance to participate in written discussions on several suggested topics, exploring a topic of interest in depth. They will be able to start their own discussions, applying rich reserves of experience that form the foundations of their own learning and motivating others. The discussion-based, seminar style of the course will nurture a supportive learning community where the participants will discuss culturally-sensitive, ambiguous topics in a safe place.

My *main objectives* for adult participants in this course are:

- 1) To expand and deepen their understanding of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Soviet feminism and gender policies and compare state propaganda models with the real-life experience of the Soviet women from multiethnic and geographically diverse areas of the Soviet Union.
- 2) To sharpen critical and analytical skills examining a wide variety of Soviet women's personal stories, historical documents, journal articles, visual art, film, and fiction through the filter of their own experience and ideas.
- 3) To demonstrate intercultural awareness, learn to suspend culturally biased judgment and assumptions, consider various perspectives, and exercise empathy for people of diverse backgrounds.
- 4) To identify meaningful topics and questions of personal relevance and interest for further inquiry and independent research.

### **Part III: Design**

*Performance Objectives: In this course, adult learners will*

- Expand and deepen their understanding of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Soviet feminism and gender policies and compare state propaganda models with the real-life experience of the Soviet women from multiethnic and geographically diverse areas of the Soviet Union.
- Think critically about complex, ambiguous issues and case studies, understanding their own biases and fixed ideas, identifying gaps and unjust perspectives, and developing a diverse and inclusive intercultural perspective of compassion.
- Discuss and communicate ideas effectively, envisioning the results of their efforts and building cultural bridges collaboratively with other course participants in an environment of acceptance and trust.
- Take charge of their learning, understanding its immediate value and applying new knowledge critically and creatively to their own lives outside the course.

*Learning Assessments*

- This is a discussion-based no-grade seminar course for adults. Participants will complete one short survey to determine their immediate needs after the first session and a longer written survey at the end of the course as an evaluation.
- Participants will engage in pair and group discussions on Zoom and post optional weekly posts and reflections on Canvas discussion boards.

*Strategies, Activities, Methods*

- In addition to reading assignments and an extensive library of course materials, each unit on Canvas will include a short quiz and thought-provoking discussion topics for weekly written reflections to engage the adult learners in collaborative communication. In particular, each unit will start with a couple of works of art for the course participants to conduct a close visual analysis in the form of an interactive discussion.
- Discussion questions for our Zoom meetings will be available ahead of time. We will experiment with various types of discussions: in pairs, small groups, and larger groups. I will do my best to create a collaborative, inclusive, bias-free, and equitable learning environment for all participants. Nadya Plungian, an art historian from Russia and author of *Rozhdenie Sovetskoi Zhenshchiny: Rabotnitsa, Kristianka, Letchietsa, "Byvshaia" i Drugie v Iskusstve 1917-1939 Godov* (see Reference List above) will come to talk to us and answer our questions during the last session.
- After the first session, I will conduct a short survey to assess the adult learners' specific needs, skill levels, and interests and make adjustments for the rest of the course accordingly. At the end of the course, a longer survey will be offered to assess how the course objectives and their implementation meet the expectations and needs of the participants.

- Course participants will be encouraged to start their own discussions to exchange ideas, recommendations, and resources with their peers and help one another. The Canvas space will stay available for the participants for at least 12 months after the end of the course, and discussions may continue. I will create a list of further resources (books, films, articles, etc.) to foster their continuing self-directed learning and self-study.

*Alignment*

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Assessments</b>	<b>Strategies/Activities/Methods</b>
Expand and deepen their understanding of the early 20 <sup>th</sup> century Soviet feminism and gender policies and compare state propaganda models with the real-life experience of the Soviet women from multiethnic and geographically diverse areas of the Soviet Union	Weekly reflection posts and visual analyses; weekly pair and group discussions	Short interactive video lectures; extensive handouts and resources on Canvas classroom; weekly oral and written discussions
Think critically about complex, ambiguous issues and case studies, understanding their own biases and fixed ideas, identifying gaps and unjust perspectives, and developing a diverse and inclusive intercultural perspective of compassion	Weekly reflection posts and weekly pair and group discussions; visual and film analyses	Short interactive video lectures; extensive handouts and resources on Canvas classroom; weekly oral and written discussions; Zoom discussion with the guest speaker
Discuss and communicate ideas effectively, envisioning the results of their efforts and building cultural bridges collaboratively with other course participants in an environment of acceptance and trust	Weekly reflection posts and weekly pair and group discussions; visual and film analyses	Self-directed weekly written reflections; surveys and self-assessments; weekly Zoom discussions in pairs and groups; Zoom discussion with the guest speaker

Take charge of their learning, understanding its immediate value and applying new knowledge critically and creatively to their own lives outside the course	A short survey after the first class and an end of the course survey; Final discussion reflections	Canvas classroom will stay open and discussions will be continuing after the end of the course for a year; appropriate resources and methods will be suggested for further learning and exploration
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#### **Part IV: Development**

##### *Resources for Course Participants:*

- Participants will have access to an extensive, easy-to-use Canvas LMS, containing all the materials, including a short introduction unit, video lectures, assigned reading (except for *Zuleikha*), films, art, songs, maps, background information, and digital resources they will need to self-direct their digital-age learning. Topics for discussions and close visual analyses, unit quizzes, and self-assessment surveys will be also available on Canvas. All materials will be in English or will contain English subtitles.
- Available resources will be divided into required, recommended, and optional to meet the needs of adult learners of various life experiences, learning styles, skills, and motivation levels.

##### *Teaching Resources:*

- Intercultural performance and a pedagogy of compassion, as delineated by Ben Rifkin and in VALUE Rubrics (see Reference List above), will guide the teaching of this course. Global learning and lifelong learning require an ability to engage and learn from perspectives and experiences different from your own and to practice “suspension of judgment and tolerance of ambiguity” (Rifkin 53) and develop an ability “to respond with compassion to a new situation” (Rifkin 48). These ideas of inclusivity, equity, and diversity have provided inspiration to my theoretical approach for the course. The lives of Soviet women have been examined through the prism of totalitarian ideology and “otherness,” and advocating compassion for intercultural understanding will enlarge our framework and encourage the participants to reconsider fixed ideas.
- In addition to the course resources listed above (see Reference List and Proposed Content), I would like to mention other resources I have consulted and will be using for the course:

Attwood, Lynne. *Creating the New Soviet Woman: Women’s Magazines as Engineers of Female Identity, 1922-53*. Palgrave Macmillan, 1999.

Barkhatova, E. V., et al. *Defining Russian Graphic Arts: From Diaghilev to Stalin, 1898-1934*. Edited by Alla Rosenfeld, First Edition, Rutgers University Press, 1999.



- Bird, Robert, et al., editors. *Revolution Every Day: A Calendar: 1917-2017*. Mousse Publishing, 2017.
- Chatterjee, Choi. *Celebrating Women: Gender, Festival Culture, and Bolshevik Ideology, 1910-1939*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 2002.
- Clements, Barbara Evans, et al., editors. *Russia's Women: Accommodation, Resistance, Transformation*. University of California Press, 1991.
- Goldman, Wendy Z. *Women at the Gates: Gender and Industry in Stalin's Russia*. Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Goldman, Wendy Z. *Women, the State and Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917-1936*. First Paperback Edition, Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Goscilo, Helena, and Beth Holmgren, editors. *Russia--Women--Culture*. Indiana University Press, 1996.
- Engel, Barbara Alpern. *Women in Russia, 1700-2000*. First Edition, Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Fitzpatrick, Sheila. *Tear off the Masks! Identity and Imposture in Twentieth-Century Russia*. Princeton University Press, 2005.
- Ilić, Melanie, editor. *The Palgrave Handbook of Women and Gender in Twentieth-Century Russia and the Soviet Union*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.
- Ilić, Melanie, editor. *Women in the Stalin Era*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2001.
- Northrop, Douglas Taylor. *Veiled Empire: Gender & Power in Stalinist Central Asia*. 1st ed, Cornell University Press, 2004.
- Lavery, Rena, et al. *Soviet Women and Their Art: The Spirit of Equality*. Unicorn, 2019.
- Shulman, Elena. *Stalinism on the Frontier of Empire: Women and State Formation in the Soviet Far East*. Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Stites, Richard. *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia: Feminism, Nihilism, and Bolshevism, 1860-1930*. Princeton University Press, 1978.

Svetliakov, Kirill, editor. *The State Tretyakov Gallery at Krymsky Val. A Guide to Russian Art of the 20th Century*. Paulsen, 2015.

Tsivian, Yuri, editor. *Lines of Resistance: Dziga Vertov and the Twenties*. Le Giornate del cinema muto, 2004.

Vertov, Dziga, and Annette Michelson. *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*. University of California Press, 1984.

Vilenskii, S. S., et al., editors. *Till My Tale Is Told: Women's Memoirs of the Gulag*. English ed. prepared by Simeon Vilensky, John Crowfoot, and Zayara Vesvolaya, Indiana University Press, 1999.

Vinogradov, A. V., and Albert Jan Pleysier. *The Women of Izmaelovka: A Soviet Union Collective Farm in Siberia*. University Press of America, 2007.

- The Newberry Library commits to diversity, equity, and inclusion as essential to its mission. If my course proposal is accepted, I expect the assistance and support of the Adult Education staff if any problems arise. The goal of the course is to consider some controversial topics of gender policies, feminism, and totalitarianism, and I will make it explicit in the course description and syllabus that we will address such topics from a variety of perspectives and alternative viewpoints.

## **Part V: Implementation**

### *Policies, Procedures, and Logistical Considerations:*

- The course participants will be expected to follow the Newberry Library's rules of conduct and the library's policy of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Adult Education staff is dedicated to these principles and provides the course participants with these resources.
- My experience in the CDIPS program will guide me in implementing the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion during the course. I've been particularly impressed that CDIPS program managers respond immediately and warmly to our questions and adjust the program to the needs and interests of the CDIPS participants. I will be receptive to any questions and needs the course participants may have and will be available through e-mail, Canvas messaging, and our Q&A forum on Canvas on a daily basis.
- Our Canvas LMS will be designed according to the best standards of LMS accessibility and functionality. It will be accessible to course participants of all ages, learning styles, ethnicities, socioeconomic status, and computer skills, no matter their ability or location. Beyond being user-friendly, our online classroom will be designed to accommodate most needs of those with visual, auditory, or mobility disabilities.
- A number of course participants experience technical difficulties enrolling into Canvas

classroom and navigating the classroom, as well as during our weekly Zoom sessions. The Newberry Library provides assistance to all course participants to access Zoom, and the Adult Education staff records the sessions (all recordings and PowerPoint slides will be available the same day). Our Canvas LMS is my responsibility, and I plan to ameliorate any technical difficulties or problems adult participants may encounter with Canvas, guiding them step by step when needed. Short introductory video orientation, short video lectures for each unit, and multiple opportunities to participate in discussions and create their own discussions will hopefully allow the participants to feel more comfortable soon.

- All assigned readings and other materials will be easy to access on Canvas. I will put myself in the shoes of my learners while designing visually attractive but readable materials and web pages. I will use design best practices to avoid distraction and barriers to learning: bullets and lists; legible fonts; proper contrasts; clean, simple page layouts; and a lot of images. Navigation will be limited to a couple of clicks.
- Technology is allowed on Zoom to facilitate learners who may need accommodations (resources to support learning disabilities or ESL learners). Because of my Russian accent, some participants may prefer voice recognition automated live transcriptions on Zoom during my interactive lecture. Note-taking in any form is welcome.

### **Part VI: Evaluation**

- Since my course will be open to any adult with or without previous exposure to the subject and with different interests, needs, and backgrounds, after the first session I will conduct a short optional informal formative survey with open-end questions about their experience in the course, their needs, and the relevance of the assigned materials. I will ask the participants to suggest changes and/or additions. I will try to improve the course immediately as much as possible based on their feedback.
- I will also encourage adult participants to share their reflections with me at any time during the course. Adult participants are motivated and independent self-directed learners who want to feel in control of their learning and are eager to make suggestions and express their needs.
- At the end of the course, I will conduct a longer summative survey to assess whether the course met the learning needs of the adult participants, was relevant to them, and challenged their pre-existent assumptions and biases. This feedback is very important and will be used to resolve larger issues and adjust strategies and approaches to the course when required. Both surveys will be conducted online anonymously to ensure confidentiality.
- I will take written notes after each session to assess whether the assigned materials, interactive lectures, online activities and resources, and, particularly, our discussions and conversational strategies match the learning goals and needs. I will document what worked well, what didn't work, and what needs adjustment.
- Since the course content is fairly flexible, I will use the results of both surveys, my

discussions with the course participants, and my personal notes and observations to rework my course and incorporate different approaches and case studies next time I will teach it. I plan to teach the course in the fall of 2023 and would like to share my experience with my CDIPS colleagues.

### **“New Soviet Women:” History, Art, Fiction, and Film (1917-1940)**

*Comparing State-Sponsored Propaganda Models with Complexity of Life Experiences Analyzed through the Prism of Compassion and Suspension of the Culturally Biased Judgment*

Course Outline – 10 sessions on Saturdays, September 30 – December 9; 10 am – noon CST

Session 1: Saturday, Sept 30                      No required reading.

Woman as Gendered Allegory of Revolution. We will discuss the women’s liberation movement in different parts of the Soviet Union (Russia, Tatarstan, and Buryatia) before and at the time of the Bolshevik revolution and will determine the main models of the Soviet women we will discuss during the course. Turning to art, we will also examine women as the allegory of revolution and justice in posters, agitation trains’ design, porcelain and sculpture, which preferred classical models to new avant-garde forms.

Session 2: Saturday, Oct 7                      Reading Assignment: Alexei Tolstoy’s story *Viper*; Ekaterina Olitskaia “My Reminiscences”; Zinaida Patrikeeva “Cavalry Boy”; (available on Canvas)

Brave Daughter of the Civil War: Red Army Soldier, Commissar, Pilot. Drafting women into the army during the Civil War, which followed the Bolshevik revolution, became an integral part of the Soviet gender reform. Military skills and readiness to defend the country will be an important paradigm during the first two decades of the Soviet state. Our focus will be on female masculinity and the relationship between feminism, militarism, and gender roles seen in art, fiction, and personal stories. We will also explore the reasons for Women’s Day celebration to become central to Soviet women’s history.

Session 3: Saturday, Oct 14                      Reading Assignment: Alexandra Kollontai’s short stories; Agrippina Korevanova “My Life”; Nenila Bazeleva and Efrosinia Kislova “Peasant Narratives”; *Bed and Sofa* dir. by Abram Room (available on Canvas)

Woman as a Worker and a Peasant. In the 1920s, the working women became critical to the country’s well-being. Campaigns to introduce women into production began in the second half of the 1920s. We will explore the ways the roles of new Soviet women were presented in the women’s magazines, particular in *Rabotnitsa* (The Woman Worker) and *Krestyanka* (The Peasant Woman): the Soviet women were expected to be exemplary workers; yet they were to find a balance between production and reproduction, between work and family.

Session 4: Saturday, Oct 21                      Reading Assignment: “Hajum, 1927” and “Embodying Uzbekistan”; *Three Songs about Lenin* dir. by Dziga Vertov (available on Canvas)  
“Vostochnitsa” (Easterner): Colonial Dimension of Soviet Feminism. We will reconstruct the turbulent history of a Soviet campaign that sought to end the seclusion of Muslim women, focusing on Uzbekistan’s massive effort to eliminate the heavy horsehair-and-cotton veils. The discussion will examine the life of Uzbek women in the context of colonization, indigenous practices, and liberation of the social order seen as “primitive and backward.”

Session 5: Saturday, Oct 28                      Reading Assignment: Vera Malakhova “Four Years as a Frontline Physician” and “Our Famous Valia: The Rise of a Soviet Notable” by Elena Shulman; *A Girl with a Temper* dir. by Konstantin Yudin and *Three Heroines* dir. by Dziga Vertov (available on Canvas)  
“Dalnevostochnitsa” (Far Easterner): Building Socialism on the Frontiers. We will travel to the world of the frontier, examining history of a campaign started by Valentina Khetagurova, a youth league activist, in 1937 to attract female settlers to the Soviet Far East. 25,000 volunteer female frontier builders, sparked by optimism and adventure, became instrumental in extension of Soviet power across Eurasia, struggling to survive in hostile environment.

Session 6: Saturday, Nov 4                      Reading Assignments: Pasha Angelina “The Most Important Thing”; Slavnikova “Speeches by Stakhanovites”; *Man with a Movie Camera* dir. by Dziga Vertov (available on Canvas)  
Woman as an Athlete and Heroine. The 1930s witnessed the unprecedented elevation and celebration of selected Soviet heroines and athletes in the public sphere. We will investigate how the state needed examples of heroic and modern Soviet women to justify Stalinist policies of industrialization and collectivization. Discussing memoirs and articles from women’s magazines, we will look at eminent women in sports and various professions coming from various parts of the Soviet Union, commended for their services publicly.

Session 7: Saturday, Nov 11                      Reading Assignment: *Zuleikha*, pp. 1-80; Frida Troib “Engineers’ Wives” (available on Canvas)  
“Engineers’ Wives” of the second half of the 1930s. We will examine an initiative from below, which was eventually channeled, directed, monitored, and controlled from above. The movement of “engineers’ wives,” thousands of public-spirited female activists, married to managers, engineers, and members of the armed forces, who labored without pay in factories, canteens, hostels, nurseries, kindergartens, and schools, especially in Central Russia, the Urals, and Western Siberia, is an example of a complexity of the 1930s social patterns of gender roles.

Session 8: Saturday, Nov 18                      Reading Assignment: *Zuleikha*, pp. 81-171.  
Woman as Mother and Consumer: Totalitarian Body. The cult of motherhood and maternity became a defining feature for women in the 1930s. The first Five Year Plan resulted in turmoil, leading to an alarming drop in the birthrate, and the family and state reproductive policies

acquired a new symbolic significance. We will examine how motherhood was added to the ideal of a new Soviet woman, in addition to her involvement in the production process, including her propensity for hard work and self-sacrifice.

Session 9: Saturday, Dec 2                      Reading Assignment: *Zuleikha*, pp. 172-343. Anna Iankovskaia “A Belomor Confession” (available on Canvas)

“Former Women” and Gulag Women. We will discuss the negative models of those women who were not allowed to fit into the world of new Soviet women, including those who ended up in the cruel Stalin’s penal system and Gulag camps. We will turn to the women’s memoirs, personal testimonials, art, and fictional accounts to examine the living conditions, motherhood, sexual relations, and everyday life of women prisoners, who created mechanisms of self-defense, self-preservation, camaraderie, hope, and survival.

Session 10: Saturday, Dec 9                      Reading Assignment: *Zuleikha*, pp. 344-482.

Women Artists: Self-Description. We will examine the emergence of prominent female artists and sculptors in the 1920s and 1930s and their artistic practices. Nadya Plungyan will be our guest speaker. Though a handful of outstanding women artists, like Vera Mukhina, rose to the top of the cultural elite, most of them were driven into obscurity, working as graphic designers, book illustrators, and stage designers. We will try to deconstruct the term “Socialist Realism,” which doesn’t reflect the personal, intimate, and poetic chamber art of these artists, set apart from official demands. Our focus will be on their self-portraits and representation of Soviet women.

Reading List and Handouts: The instructor will provide all required reading materials, visual images, songs, and films that are not part of the text list, and supplementing background handouts for the participants through the Canvas LMS classroom specially developed for the course. The instructor will make access to all the handouts and a wealth of optional readings, visual art, and online resources easy to navigate even for those with very limited computer skills.

#### **Required Text:**

Yakhina, Guzel. *Zuleikha*. Translated by Lisa C. Hayden, Oneworld, 2019.

#### **Recommended Texts:**

Fitzpatrick, Sheila, and Yuri Slezkine, editors. *In the Shadow of Revolution: Life Stories of Russian Women from 1917 to the Second World War*. Princeton University Press, 2000.

Engel, Barbara Alpern, et al., editors. *A Revolution of Their Own: Voices of Women in Soviet History*. Westview Press, 1998.