

Literary and Cultural Studies 401.02
Cults of Personality: The Culture of Totalitarianism

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| Instructor: | Tony Anemone | Fall 2001 |
| Office: | Washington 210-211 | MW 3-4:20 Tucker 106 |
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Course Description:

Although usually studied by academic disciplines like History or Political Science, the classic totalitarian dictatorships of Nazi Germany and Bolshevik Russia present interesting and complex problems for students of popular and elite culture as well. In addition to racial or class-based ideological and economic systems, totalitarian societies are characterized by the cult of a charismatic leader, which is created, sustained and, sometimes, subverted by various cultural phenomena. In this class we will study three dictators, Lenin, Hitler and Stalin, and the cults of personality that were created in their names. By examining works of popular and elite culture (e.g., works of literature, films, paintings, posters, popular songs, etc.), we will try to understand not only how these cults were created, but also how average Russians and Germans experienced them. We will also study how forces within German and Russian culture opposed the cult of personality and discredited the charismatic aura of the infallible leader.

Although almost all class readings and films deal with Germany and Russia, students are encouraged to study other cults of personality in their research projects: e.g., Franco's Spain or Mussolini's Italy. Students are highly encouraged to use their knowledge of foreign languages in their research. If you wish to do so, please consult with the instructor.

Course Requirements:

Since this is a seminar, regular class attendance and active (and intelligent!) participation in class discussion is a required and graded part of the course. In addition, each student will be responsible for two oral reports over the course of the semester. Oral reports are brief (5-10 minutes) presentations in which students interpret a literary text, an essay, a film, a work of art, etc. After oral reports, students will answer questions and lead the discussion of the text – your grade for the report will be based on the brief presentation and your ability to handle questions from the audience. Finally, the main requirement of this course is a 10-15 page research paper, the topic of which will be worked out by each student in consultation with the instructor. See the schedule of classes for dates when topics, outlines, bibliographies and drafts of the paper are due.

Required Books (on sale at College Bookstore):

Nina Tumarkin, Lenin Lives! The Lenin Cult in Soviet Russia
Mikhail Bulgakov, The Master and Margarita

Required Course packet (on sale at Staples, Richmond Road and Monticello) (CP in syllabus).

Course Grading:

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| Class attendance and participation | 30% |
| Two oral reports | 30% |
| Classroom presentation of research paper | 10% |
| 10-15 page research paper. | 30% |

Schedule of Classes and Assignments

Week 1 W. Aug 29: Introduction to Course

Part 1: The Cult of Lenin**Week 2 M. Sept 3**

Reading: Tumarkin, chs. 1-2, pp. 1-63.

Igor Golomstock, pp vii-xxxii in Totalitarian Art in the Soviet Union, the Third Reich, Fascist Italy and the people's Republic of China (CP).

W. Sept 5

Reading: Tumarkin, chs. 3-5, pp. 64-164.

Phillip Boobbyer, chapters 1-2, pp. 1-28 in The Stalin Era (CP).

Screening: "October," dir. Sergei Eisenstein

Week 3 M. Sept 10 Oral Reports and discussion

Reading: James Goodwin, "October: history & genesis," pp. 79-97 in Eisenstein, Cinema, & History.

David Bordwell, "October," pp. 79-96 in The Cinema of Eisenstein (both in CP).

W. Sept 12 Oral Reports and discussion

Reading: Tumarkin, chs. 6-7 & Epilogue, pp. 165-268.

Screening: "Three Songs of Lenin," dir. Dziga Vertov

Week 4 M. Sept 17 Oral Reports and discussion

Reading: "Yuri Tsivian, "Dziga Vertov," pp. 92-93 in The Oxford History of World Cinema.

Margarita Tupitsyn, "Lenin's Death and the birth of political photomontage," pp. 9-34 in The Soviet Photograph, 1924-1937 (both in CP).

Part 2: The Cult of Hitler**W. Sept 19 Oral Reports and discussion**

Reading: Thomas Mann, "Mario and the Magician" (CP).

Screening: "The Triumph of the Will," dir. Leni Riefenstahl

Week 5 M. 24 Oral Reports and discussion of “Triumph of the Will”
Reading: Taylor, 162-73 in Film Propaganda: Soviet Russia & Nazi Germany

W. 26 Oral reports and slide show of Riefenstahl’s photos
Reading: Sontag, “Fascinating Fascism” from Under the Sign of Saturn (CP).

Screening: “Mephisto,” dir. Istvan Szabo

Week 6 M. Oct. 1. Oral reports and discussion of Szabo movie

W. Oct. 3 Illustrated Lecture & Discussion: Totalitarian Art, Part 1
Reading: Igor Golomstock, “Function & language,” 169-215 in Totalitarian Art (CP).

Screening: “The Architecture of Doom,” dir. Peter Cohen

Week 7 M. Oct. 8 Oral reports & discussion of “Architecture of Doom”

W. Oct 10 Illustrated Lecture & Discussion: Totalitarian Art, part 2
Reading: Igor Golomstock, “Structure,” pp. 216-65 in Totalitarian Art (CP).

N.B. Topic of research paper due.

Week 8 M. Oct 15 – No Class - Fall Break

Part 3: The Cult of Stalin

W. Oct. 17 Oral reports and discussion
Reading: Bulgakov, Master and Margarita

Week 9 M. Oct. 22 Oral reports and discussion
Reading: Bulgakov, Master and Margarita

N.B. Thesis, outline & preliminary bibliography of research paper due

W. Oct. 24 Oral reports and discussion
Reading: Bulgakov, Master and Margarita

Screening: “East Side Story,” dir. Andrew Horn

Week 10 M. Oct 29 Lecture on Stalinist Musical Comedy & its American Roots

W. Oct. 31 Illustrated Lecture & Discussion: “The Commissar Vanishes”
Reading: Tupitsyn, “The photographer in the service of the collective,” 35-65 (CP).

Screening: “Sideburns,” dir. Yury Mamin

Week 11 M. Nov. 5 Oral Reports and discussion

Readings: Anna Lawton, “The Ghost that Does Return: Exorcising Stalin” (CP).
Yevtushenko, “The Heirs of Stalin” (CP).

W. Nov. 7 Oral reports and discussion

Reading: Bonnell, “The Leader’s Two Bodies: Iconography of the *Vozhd*” (CP).

Screening: “Repentance,” dir. Tengiz Abuladze

Week 12 M. Nov. 12 Oral reports and discussion

Reading: Svetlana Boym, “Stalin is with us: Soviet documentary mythologies of the 1980s” (CP).

N.B. First Draft of Research Paper Due

W. Nov. 14

Reading: Golomstock, “Architecture and style,” pp. 266-306 (CP).

Week 13 M. Nov. 19 – No Class

W. Nov. 21 – No Class: Thanksgiving Break

Week 14

M. Nov. 26 Oral Reports: Summaries of research papers

W. Nov. 28 Oral Reports: Summaries of research papers

Week 15

M. Dec. 3 Oral Reports: Summaries of research papers

W. Dec. 5 Oral Reports: Summaries of research papers

NB. Final Paper due Wednesday, December 12