

**Seth Bernstein**

**Keene Flint Hall 117**

**T: 11:45AM – 1:40PM; Th: 12:50 – 1:40PM**

**Course Site:** <https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/513620>

**Course Grader:** Alexey Kotelvas ([alexeykotelvas@ufl.edu](mailto:alexeykotelvas@ufl.edu))

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**office hours:**

**W: 10am-1pm**

**(or by appointment)**

HIS 3942: History Practicum  
The Great Patriotic War: History and Memory

**Course Description:**

What is the History Practicum? If you are in the course, you probably know that it is a prerequisite for being a History major. This course has two purposes:

1. To teach the fundamental principles and practices of history.
2. To apply these fundamentals to the case of the Soviet experience of World War II.

Every history is a reconstruction of the past. But not every reconstruction of the past is good history. A good history starts with reliable sources. We will discuss what are appropriate primary sources (documents from the past) and secondary sources (works about the past), how to find them, and how to use them in ethical ways. A good historian thinks about problems and biases these sources pose. Then a good historian brings these sources together in a narrative, ideally one that makes a broader point about how the past unfolded or what it meant. Finally, academic historians think a lot about where their work fits in the historiography, which is a fancy way of saying “how does my paper agree or disagree with what other historians have said in the past.”

We are using as our case study the Great Patriotic War. This is the name the people of the Soviet Union gave to World War II. It is a rich and vibrant event to study, filled with many fascinating accounts and disagreements over its representation in history. It is also a useful case study because it is impossible to write the history of the Great Patriotic War without thinking about how people have remembered the war.

**Course Assignments:**

*Class Participation* (15%): Engagement in discussions that demonstrate a student’s having read and understood assigned materials. I will not take attendance but always have a sense of who is attending and who is not. Additionally, participation is not possible without attendance, but attendance does not guarantee full participation points.

*Weekly Assignments* (~60%, 13x4.6%): Most weeks there will be a short assignment, involving no more than a page of writing usually. Some will involve short answers or composing bibliographies. Unless otherwise noted, weekly assignments are due on Canvas before the beginning of the Thursday class.

*Final Proposal (25%):* The final project will be a 1000-word (~four pages, double-spaced) proposal of a larger history research project. Students should identify a problem related to the history of the USSR in World War II.

**Required Text:**

Rampolla, Mary Lynn. *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History* 9<sup>th</sup> ed. Bedford St. Martin's, 2018. (Other editions may work.)

Alexievich, Svetlana. *The Unwomanly Face of War: An Oral History of Women in World War II*. New York: Random House, 2017.

Other materials will be available on our Canvas page as PDFs or links.

**Academic Integrity:** The University of Florida holds its students to the highest standards, and we encourage students to read the University of Florida Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code (Regulation 4.040), so they are aware of our standards. Any violation of the Student Honor Code will result in a referral the Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution and may result in academic sanctions and further student conduct action. The two greatest threats to the academic integrity of the University of Florida are cheating and plagiarism. Students should be aware of their faculty's policy on collaboration, should understand how to properly cite sources, and should not give nor receive an improper academic advantage in any manner through any medium.

**Lateness Policy:** An important part of students' work is meeting deadlines. Late assignments will be docked three percentage points per day overdue. Under extraordinary circumstances extensions will be granted but every effort should be made to avoid the need to take an extension.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

**Online Evaluations:** Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <http://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via [ufl.bluera.com/ufl/](http://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <http://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

## Grading Policy:

You can find University of Florida's grading policies here:

<http://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-gradingpolicies/>

<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62

## Course Schedule:

- Aug. 22: Course Introduction
- Aug. 27: What Is History?  
The Great Patriotic War, An Overview  
Reading:  
Rampolla, *Pocket Guide*, 1-7 (Introduction)  
Carr, *What Is History?* (excerpt, on Canvas)  
Alexievich, *Unwomanly Face*, xi-xliii
- Aug. 29: What is a Historian?  
Reading:  
Alexievich, *Unwomanly Face*, 3-18  
Assignment:  
Listen/Read: Billy Joel, “We Didn’t Start the Fire”  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFTLKWw542g>)  
(<https://genius.com/1002308>)  
Respond: How are Billy Joel and Svetlana Alexievich different or similar as historians? (300 words)
- Sep. 3: Sources of History I  
Sources of World War II History  
Reading:  
Rampolla, *Pocket Guide*, 8-12  
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- Sep. 5: Sources of History II  
Assignment:  
Identify the type of source from a list of primary and secondary sources and justify your conclusion.
- Sep. 10: The Great Patriotic War as Gender History I  
Primary Sources  
Reading:  
Alexievich, *Unwomanly Face*, 19-70  
Rampolla, *Pocket Guide*, 33-42
- Sep. 12: Evaluating Sources  
Reading:  
Alexievich, *Unwomanly Face*, 71-112

Rampolla, *Pocket Guide*, 12-25

Assignment:

Choose one of the three chapters from the Alexievich reading. In a paragraph or two (300 words), describe the source. Is the woman's story reliable? How would the story sound different coming from a different kind of person? What biases does she have? How would you verify her story?

- Sep. 17: Library Trip (11:45am at Library West Instructional Lab)  
Artifacts as Sources (Keene-Flint 117)  
Reading:  
Schechter, "The Thing-Bag: A Public Private Place," *The Stuff of Soldiers* (Canvas)
- Sep. 19: Stalingrad  
Assignment:  
Library hunt (due after library trip on Tuesday)
- Sep. 24: Occupation and Collaboration  
Secondary Sources I: Reliable Sources  
Reading:  
Rampolla, *Pocket Guide*, 42-48  
Bernstein, "Rural Russia on the Edges of Authority" (Canvas)
- Sep. 26: Secondary Sources II: The Internet and Sources  
Assignment:  
Find five secondary sources about World War II. At least one should be an article. For each, write briefly why it is a reliable source. Find one questionable source about the history of World War II and explain why it is not reliable.
- Oct. 1: The Great Patriotic War as Gender History II  
Notetaking I: The Start of Learning  
Reading:  
Rampallo, *Pocket Guide*, 26-32  
Alexievich, *Unwomanly Face*, 185-210, 281-302  
Assignment pt. 1:  
We will have a quiz on the reading from *Unwomanly Face*. You can use one handwritten page of notes. The quiz is pass/fail. Turn in your notes with the quiz.
- Oct. 3: Notetaking II: The Start of Research  
Assignment pt. 2:

Take your notes from the previous class on Alexievich. Now, instead of writing notes as preparation for a quiz, make notes as preparation to write an essay to answer the question: “Did traditional gender roles persist during World War II in the Soviet Union?” Turn in a short explanation of how the strategy changed (100 words) alongside the new notes.

Oct. 8: The Holocaust in the USSR and the “Extraordinary Commission”  
What Is an Argument?

Reading:

Black, “Foot Soldiers of the Final Solution” (Canvas)

Rampolla, *Pocket Guide*, 54-62

Oct. 10: Historiography

Assignment:

Choose one of the following articles from the list of secondary sources. Look through the text and footnotes of the introduction in particular.

1. What is the main argument of the article?

2. What is a historical article/book that the article cites that is related to this argument?

3. How does the author's argument relate to the cited article? Is it making an opposing argument? Making a concurring argument? Agreeing but taking the field in a new direction?

Oct. 15: Liberation or Soviet Occupation?  
Formulating a Research Topic

Reading:

Alexievich, *Unwomanly Face*, 303-331

Rampolla, *Pocket Guide*, 83-103

Oct. 17: Research Topic Workshop

Assignment:

Take the same article from the previous assignment. What is the research topic in the article? What question does the author ask? What kind of research topic could you propose that would be related to this article but would not be the same?

Oct. 22: Postwar Trials: The First Draft of History  
Writing Like a Historian

Reading:

Hirsch, "The Soviets at Nuremberg"  
Rampolla, *Pocket Guide*, 62-82

- Oct. 24: Writing Workshop  
Assignment:  
Return to the assignment of September 17 about one of the women from *Unwomanly Face*. Find a source (newspaper article or photograph) in an online database we have explored in class such as *New York Times* archive or the Harvard Project Interviews that intersects with part of that chapter from *Unwomanly Face* (for example, about a specific battle). In three paragraphs (~500 words), summarize: 1. The content of the passage from the *Unwomanly Face* interview. 2. The content of the new source. 3. How these two sources intersect.
- Oct. 29: Archival Revolutions and the Politics of WWII  
Citations: Why?  
Reading:  
Rampolla, *Pocket Guide*, 112-150
- Oct. 31: Citations: How?  
Assignment:  
Based on a list of works provided, produce footnotes and bibliographic entries for all the works.
- Nov. 5: Plagiarism and LLMs  
Postwar Mythmaking and the Soviet Empire  
Reading:  
Rampolla, *Pocket Guide*, 104-111  
Viewing:  
*Panfilov's 28 Men* (Druzhinin, 2016)
- Nov. 7: Plagiarism/LLM Workshop  
Assignment:  
Take a section from an article (we will use several, I will put students in groups). Write a paragraph (~100 words) summarizing this section using your own words and providing a footnote at the end. Ask a chatbot (e.g., <https://chatgpt.com/>) to summarize the same article. In 250 words, discuss how the process of summarizing the article with a chatbot was productive and in what ways it was problematic. What were the benefits of summarizing the article yourself? Did you come to different conclusions than the chatbot? Or was the process itself important?

- Nov. 12: Soviet World War II Films  
Film and Fiction as Sources  
Viewing:  
*Ivan's Childhood* (Tarkovskii, 1962)
- Nov. 14: Memory and Oral History  
Assignment:  
Submit a preliminary topic for the final paper. Failure to turn in a topic will result in an automatic 10% deduction to the final project.
- Nov. 19: Digital History  
Digital History Workshop  
Reading:  
Cohen and Rosenzweig, "Introduction" *Digital History*  
(<http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/introduction/>)  
*Programming Historian* (<http://programminghistorian.org>, review briefly)
- Nov. 21: Revising and Rethinking  
Assignment:  
Record yourself reading the October 27 writing assignment aloud with your smart phone or computer. After you read the assignment to yourself, revise the assignment on your own. Use an LLM (e.g., ChatGPT) to revise the writing (the original, not the revised). Compare the two revisions. Turn in both revisions and the audio file.
- Dec. 3: Contemporary History  
Conclusions  
Reading:  
Edele, "Fighting Russia's History Wars" (Canvas)

\*\*\*Final project due no later than December 12, 9:30AM