This course is designed to introduce students to the history of East German society and culture from the foundation of the German Democratic Republic through the velvet revolution of 1989 and the demise of the regime. While the course will focus predominantly on the period 1949-1989, a brief exploration of postwar conditions and the Soviet Occupation, 1945-1949, will provide the students with sufficient historical background to better evaluate the main period under investigation.

From its first meeting onward, this course will identify leading theories and questions useful for analyzing this historic era. Scholars on both sides of the Atlantic have struggled to understand East German power dynamics, the regime’s ability to retain power over the course of four decades despite popular dissatisfaction with numerous aspects of East German society and culture. Should we categorize the GDR as a totalitarian state with strong similarities to the Nazi regime in terms of the regime’s attempts to control the social and cultural sphere, or should we define East Germany as an idealistic, albeit flawed, experiment to construct a socialist society? Can the GDR best be described as a “modern dictatorship” ala Jürgen Kocka, or as a “welfare dictatorship,” a term preferred by Jarausch and Klessman. What difficulties did politicians and administrators first encounter as they attempted to form an antifascist cultural climate and a classless society? Under the communist system, are traditional notions of elite and popular culture appropriate? How rigid was the separation between the government-controlled schools, organizational life and cultural venues on the one hand and the private sphere, which according to some scholars allowed for a unique “niche-society?” To what extent did the state realize its changing plans for the development of East German culture and society? Which cultural and social campaigns met with the most support from the populace? Which policies or indeed lack of action or initiative engendered the strongest levels of dissatisfaction? To what degree did cultural and social actors on different levels find the necessary space to critique and comment on the state and its policies within the communist system?

Finally, at the end of the course, we will question whether one can best define the social and cultural changes that accompanied the Wende as a sort of “reunification” or more accurately as an “Anschluß” -- the takeover of E. German social and cultural spheres by West Germans and their value systems. To what extent did social and cultural trends and traditions that evolved under the East German regime have an enduring impact on the new federal states in the first few years after reunification? How can we understand the importance many Ossis (former GDR citizens) place in the relics of East German consumer society – its Trabis, rock music, Kampflieder (fighting songs) and kitchen utensils? How did specific societal groups such as adolescents and women fare in the chaos of these defining years?

Requirements:

Quizzes (5%) Participation (15%), first paper (15%), midterm (20%), second paper (20%) and a final exam (25%).

Class Policies:
**Attendance & Participation:**

Students are expected to attend all class sessions. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class period, so it is important that students arrive before class begins. If you are going to be more than 15 minutes late do not bother coming to class. A student may have three absences over the course of the semester. Additional absences will result in a lower grade for attendance and participation. Please be sure to turn off your cell phone before class begins. If you have to leave class early for any reason, let me know before class.

Lectures will expand upon topics in the textbook and introduce additional information and materials. This class will provide you with a forum to express your own views on the course reading and lecture material. So keep up with the reading, come prepared and speak up! Asking questions and making comments are equally important to the quality of our discussion. Remember that any question you have is an important question. Any relevant comment you want to make is an important comment. Similar to your overall grade, when I determine your grade for participation, I will take into consideration improvement over the course of the semester. If you are a shy person by nature, take advantage of this course as an opportunity to speak up with confidence. The best discussions are normally those in which a variety of different people take part.

**Communication:**

If a serious matter keeps you from attending class, keep me informed about your situation and progress. Communicating with me via email is generally the best.

**Requirements & Grading:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Grade Point</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95-100</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>93-94</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>83-84</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>2.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>75-79</td>
<td>2.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>1.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 60</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tbody>
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Essays will be graded on content (including argument and evidence), organization, style and grammar. Essays should be submitted on time at the beginning of class. The grade of any late paper will drop by one letter grade for each day that the paper is late.

No student will receive a passing grade for the course without submitting all of the required exams and paper.

Absences from exams will only be accepted under extreme circumstances and prior notification is essential.
Quizzes on reading assignments will be used to make sure that students are keeping up with the reading.

**Course Objectives and Assessment:**

The educational objectives and testing methods used in this course are categorized below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Form of assessment:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stronger understanding of the historian’s craft</td>
<td>Discussions, reading assignments, essay and exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancement of critical thinking skills</td>
<td>Discussions, reading assignments, essay and exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Evaluation of sources, judgment of evidence)</td>
<td>Discussions, map quizzes, essay and exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stronger grasp of the history of East German society and culture</td>
<td>Discussions, reading assignments, essay and exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toning writing skills and the construction of historical arguments.</td>
<td>Essay and exams</td>
</tr>
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**WNEC Policy on Academic Integrity:**

According to the WNEC catalog: “Honesty in all academic work is expected of every student. This means giving one’s own answers in all class work, quizzes, and examinations without help from any sources not approved by the instructor. Written material is to be the student’s original composition. Appropriate credit must be given for outside sources from which ideas, language or quotations are derived.”

All students have been given information concerning plagiarism. Please be familiar with WNEC policies with respect to intellectual property. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, please consult me or your academic advisor.

**Texts:**


A course reader will be available for purchase

A copy of all readings, including the course reader, will be available via e-reserves.
Course Outline:

Week 1:

January 21: Course Overview

January 23: Postwar Reconstruction in the Soviet Occupation Zone
Film clip of post-war Berlin from The Murderers are Among Us (DEFA, 1946).

Week 2:

January 26: Culture and Society in the Soviet Occupation Zone Continued

January 28: The Foundation of East Germany

January 30: Foundations & Applications of Socialist Policy I

Week 3:

February 2: Foundations & Applications of Socialist Policy II
Read: Chapters 1-3 in Dictatorship as Experience, 17-72.

February 4: Stalinism
Read: Chapters 5-6 in Dictatorship as Experience 91-121.

February 6: Socialist Realism & the Arts in the Early Years of the Regime
First paper due.

Week 4:

February 9: East German Work Culture
Read: Chapters 15 and 16 in Dictatorship as Experience, 285-324.

February 11: Education- Creating the Socialist School

February 13: Youth Organization Life and Youth Cultures
Week 5:

February 16: The Berlin Wall, Social and Cultural Repercussions of the E/W Divide

February 18: Wirtschaftswunder in the East? Consumer Culture in the 60s and 70s

February 20: Consumer Culture Continued
Read: Burghard Ciesla and Patrice Poutrus, “Food Supply in a Planned Economy: SED Nutrition Policy between Crisis Response and Popular Needs” in Dictatorship as Experience, 143-162.

Week 6:

February 23: Developments in Mass Media
Read: Chapters 12 and 13 in Dictatorship as Experience, 213-264.

February 25: Mid-semester Review

February 27: In-class Midterm Exam

Week 7:

March 1: Socialist Policy vs. Daily Reality: the Experiences of Women in the GDR

March 3: Women in the GDR Continued

March 5: Sport Culture: From the Local to the National and International Arena

Week 8:
March 8: From Ulbricht to Honecker: Social and Cultural Policy
Read: Kaiser, “Reforming Socialism? The Changing of the Guard from Ulbricht to Honecker during the 1960s” and Jessen, “Mobility and Blockage during the 1970s” in Dictatorship as Experience, 325-360.

March 10: Finding a Voice: Writers and Artists in the 70s and 80s

March 12: Finding a Voice Continued
Read: Christa Wolf, Quest for Christa T, 3-84.

Week 9 Spring Break

Week 10:

March 22: Discussion of Wolf\'s Quest for Christa T.
Finish reading: Quest for Christa T, 85-185.

March 24: Policemen, Stasi and their Spitzel: Citizen Surveillance

March 26: Citizen Surveillance Continued
Read: Chapter 7 in Dictatorship as Experience, 126-141.

Week 11:

March 29: The GDR: A Militarized Society?

March 31: The Built Environment: Socialist Architecture and Housing

April 2: Memory Culture: Interpreting the Past through a Socialist Lens

Week 12:

April 5: Travel and Tourism

April 7: Consumer Culture in the 1980s
Second paper assignment due.
April 9: No class

Week 13:

April 12: **Foreigners and Homosexuals in the Land of Volkerfreundschaft**

April 14: **Religious Minorities in East Germany**

April 16: **Religious Movements and other Protest Groups**

Week 14:

April 19: **The Social and Cultural Wende & its Immediate Aftermath Part I**
Read: Documents 1-5, pages 30-41, Jarausch and Gransow book of documents.

April 21: **The Social and Cultural Wende & its Aftermath Part II**

April 23: **Berdahl and Borderlands**

Week 15:

April 26: **Reactions to the Wende**
Read: Berdahl, 72-183.

April 28: **Neonazis in the GDR and the New Bundesländer**

April 30: **Society and Culture in the new Bundesländer**
View the film *Goodbye Lenin!*

Week 16:

May 3: **Society and Culture in the new Bundesländer II**
View the conclusion to *Goodbye Lenin!*
Read: The remainder of Berdahl, 184-233.
May 5: Ostalgie? (Nostalgie for the former GDR)

May 7: Review

Sunday May 9: Final Exam 12:25; Place TBA