FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

COURSE UNIT OUTLINE 2010-2011

SOAN 30152/60152: AFTERLIVES OF SOVIET SOCIALISM

Semester: TWO

Lecturer(s): Dr Madeleine Reeves
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Email: Madeleine.Reeves@manchester.ac.uk
Office Hours: Monday 15.00-16:00 and Thursday 13.00-15.00

Administrator: Lynn.Dignan@manchester.ac.uk

Lectures: Thursday 9.00-12.00 – Roscoe 1.008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COURSE CODE</th>
<th>UNDERGRADUATE</th>
<th>POSTGRADUATE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOAN30152</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>NUMBER OF CREDITS</td>
<td>4 Seminar Tasks – 10%</td>
<td>3000 word Essay – 70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>MODE OF ASSESSMENT</td>
<td>1000 word Book Review – 20%</td>
<td>1000 word Book Review – 20%</td>
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There are no pre-requisites for this course. However, students should consider whether it is advisable to take an advanced level course, without any prior knowledge of the subject, at this crucial stage in their academic career.

Book Review: 17th March 2011
Essay: 19th May 2011
Resit Period: 22nd August-2nd September 2011
Description of the Module
This course unit brings the tools of anthropological analysis to the study of Soviet socialism and its afterlives through critical exploration of five themes: personhood and subjectivity; place-making and home; money and networks; belonging and nationhood; and modernity, futurity and the idea of “transition”. The course has three broad aims: firstly, it seeks to enable students to think anthropologically about a distinct social, political and cultural project: that of Soviet socialism. Rather than examining the Soviet past merely as a prelude to a “post-socialist” present – a past that is often treated as homogenous and self-evidently polarised between ideological conformity and popular resistance – this course encourages students to focus substantively on the Soviet socialism as an object of anthropological enquiry. We will draw on a variety of materials to explore the way in which the socialist project was translated into everyday worlds: through material objects and spatial arrangements; in relationships and the production of dependencies; through consumption and in the imagination; and through the production of boundaries between selves and others. We will also consider the way in which this project was appropriated, challenged, ignored and transformed through everyday practices in diverse cultural settings.

Secondly, the course provides students with the theoretical tools and empirical resources to think critically about the variety of “postsocialist” transformations that have occurred over the last two decades in the former Soviet space. Drawing on material from across this vast region, including metropolitan Russia, Siberia, the Caucasus, the Baltic states and Central Asia, we will think about the diversity of Soviet “afterlives” and the utility of postsocialism and neoliberalism as tools of theoretical analysis. We will consider the particular contribution that an ethnographic approach can make to a critical analysis of postsocialist “transition”, through a focus on issues such as personhood and place-making; the shifting meanings of money; and the relationship between dramatic political transformation and the (often violent) articulation of national belonging.

Thirdly, and through this empirical exploration, we will think broadly and comparatively about 20th century projects of industrial modernisation. The region that we focus on here has been the object of multiple projects aimed at specifying and overcoming “backwardness”, whether in the form of early Soviet attempts to overcome private property, or more recent, World Bank sponsored initiatives to introduce a competitive market economy in agriculture, industry and the management of natural resources. Throughout the course we will ask what is at stake in such projects; what kinds of accounts of time they mobilise, and how they are potentially disrupted by the intransigent materiality of the worlds they try to remake.

Organisation of the Module
The Module is organised around individual study and a 3-hour weekly contact session (Thursday, 9am-12pm). Students are also welcome to use office hours for further questions, clarification and feedback on written work. The contact sessions will include a variety of activities including weekly lectures, film screenings, seminars and student presentations. The contact sessions for this course are compulsory and seminar participation (through presentation of allocated readings and discussion of the key texts) forms an integral part of the assessment of this course. A full schedule of the contact sessions is included in this course outline (p. 6), together with a detailed list of key and further readings and allocated readings for each seminar session from weeks 3-10 (p. 8). This is a heavy-reading course, and (hopefully) the more reading you put in, the more you’ll get out of it.

The readings for this course are organized into three kinds. Key readings are essential for everyone taking the course (including auditors). You should read them *before* the contact session for which they are allocated, since they will be referenced in the lecture and they will form the basis for the
seminar discussion. **Further reading** is optional. It is intended to enable you to pursue topics in more depth (for the review essay and/or final essay), and to give you pointers to the theoretical debates that will be referenced in the lectures.

From weeks 3-10, four texts each week will also be allocated to students to summarise to the rest of the group and introduce in class. These are listed below in the reading list under "seminar reports". These readings will be allocated in the first week of classes and you should anticipate writing a summary report and introducing the text you have been allocated to the rest of the class at least 4 times during the course of the semester. For undergraduates, these reports constitute 10% of your overall grade and for all students seminar participation will be taken into consideration in those cases where your overall grade is borderline between classes. Your summary of the allocated text should be c. 400 words long and can either be in free form, note form or bullet points – whatever you find most useful to recall and present the text. It should provide a clear statement of the overall argument of the piece, suitable for understanding by someone who has not read the text. It should also give an indication of questions arising in relation to the text; contradictions in the argument (or disagreements with the arguments raised in the key texts) and your evaluation of the text. Your summary should be handed in at the class where you present. It will be returned with feedback in the following week’s class. If, for any reason you are unable to present on your allocated week (due to illness etc.) it is your responsibility to swap with another student and to confirm this with the convener.

**Learning outcomes**

By the end of this course you should be able to:

- **Draw on a range of relevant empirical case studies to evaluate different theoretical approaches to the study of Soviet socialism from within and beyond anthropology;**
- **Demonstrate an appreciation for the diversity of experiences of Soviet socialism in different historical periods and geographical settings, using relevant empirical examples;**
- **Understand and evaluate some of the major theoretical approaches that have been developed to understand post-socialist change in the former Soviet space, and to be aware of the distinctive contribution of an ethnographic approach**
- **Critically evaluate the validity of “post-socialism”, “neoliberalism”, “globalization” and other theoretical vocabularies to explain the dynamics of social and political change in the former Soviet Union;**
- **Synthesise and critically evaluate book-length ethnographic arguments in the form of written and oral reports;**
- **Creatively deploy a wide range of ethnographic and other sources in the writing of a substantial research paper.**

**Assessment**

Assessment for this Module will differ slightly for under-graduates and post-graduates:

For **under-graduates**, the assessment will be based on the following:

1. 4 X 400 word written seminar reports (10% of overall mark); for details of what’s entailed see above under **Organisation of the module.**
2. 1 X 1000 word Review Essay (summarizing and comparing at least 2 book-length ethnographies) (20% of overall mark), details below.
3. 1 X 3000 word Final Essay (70% of overall mark), details to be provided in class.

For **post-graduates**, the assessment will be based on the following:

1. 1 X 1000 word Review Essay (summarizing and comparing at least 2 book-length ethnographies) (20% of overall mark), details below.
2. 1 X 3000 word Final Essay (80% of overall mark), details to be provided in class.
Review Essay
20% of your mark, for both UGs and PGs, will be based on a 1000 word Review Essay, which is due for submission via Blackboard on 17.03.2011. Your review essay should summarise, compare and critically discuss at least 2 ethnographic monographs exploring some aspect of socialism and/or postsocialism in the former Soviet space. These should be chosen so as to enable comparative reflection on either (a) the nature of postsocialist transformation in two contrasting regions of the former Soviet Union; (b) the way in which a particular thematic issue discussed in the course (such as personhood, money, consumption, nationhood, the nature of home etc.) is treated by different authors; or (c) to identify some of the key issues that arise in the ethnography of a particular region of the former Soviet Union (such as the Baltic states or Central Asia) through a detailed analysis of two or more ethnographies of that region. An indicative list of suitable ethnographic monographs is included at the end of this course outline (see below, p. 17). Other texts can be chosen upon consultation with the convener – please use the office hours to talk through your ideas.

Final Essay
Both under-graduates and post-graduates are expected to produce a 3000 word Final Essay. This should be submitted by 2pm on 19.05.2011 in the Undergraduate Office, G.001 in the Arthur Lewis Building. Essay questions will be circulated in advance and will reflect the themes and debates discussed in the lectures, readings and seminars. A good essay shows a sophisticated grasp of a wide range of material; is argumentative rather than descriptive; and is well-written and referenced. Essay questions and detailed criteria for assessment will be provided in class.

Feedback
There are 4 ways of getting feedback during the course this module:
1. In person, by coming to MR’s office hours in CRESC, 178 Waterloo Place (38 on the campus map). Office hours are Monday 3-4 pm & Thursday 1-3 pm during term time.
2. In class, through designated feedback sessions (separate for BA and MA students) weeks 8 & 9.
3. In writing, on your written seminar contributions and the review essay.
4. By email to Madeleine.reeves@manchester.ac.uk. Before emailing, please check that your query is not answered anywhere on the Blackboard site.

Link2Lists & Blackboard
There are 2 electronic resources to help you with your studies for this course:
1. The electronic reading list associated with this course (Link2Lists)
2. The Blackboard learning zone.
The electronic reading list can be accessed here: http://www.readinglists.manchester.ac.uk/index.html (put Afterlives in the search box)
Blackboard can be accessed via your University portal. SOAN 30152/60152 should be listed once you are registered for the course.

Readings for this course can be accessed in one of the following ways.
Books and chapters from books are available in the JRUL. Those that are key readings have been ordered in multiple copies for the library and/or put on High Demand. Some of these key readings have also been digitized. However, copyright regulations mean that only one chapter (or 5%) of a book can be digitized, so you should not rely on chapters being available electronically. Find yourself a quiet nook and use the library! Most journal articles for this course are available electronically. In most cases searching by title/author in Google Scholar will bring up the full text version on a campus computer, or use the links in the electronic reading list. Several of the key texts for this course (indicated below), have been ordered in to Blackwells. These should be available in the “Russia” section of the bookshop.

A word of warning! The library has moved to a new system of reading lists, which means that previews of many of the books for the course are available through Google Books. This is convenient but confusing, since the “previews” are dictated by the publishers (and their marketing departments) and bear no relation to the chapters/sections set for the course. Use with caution!
In the rare cases where a text is not in the JRUL and not available electronically I will make a copy available on the Blackboard site for this course.

You should log-in regularly to the Blackboard site for this course. This is where announcements will be posted, additional material made available, and where you can download copies of the course outline and texts not available through the JRUL or electronically. You will also need to submit your review essay via Blackboard in week 7.

**Background Reading** (* indicates that copies have been requested for purchase from Blackwells)

There’s a vast literature on Soviet socialism and its afterlives. A good place to get an overview of the contours of Soviet history is Ronald Suny’s very readable textbook:


An updated version has just been released. If you want a good reference work on the contours of Soviet history this is a good (though pricey) resource to buy.

A useful set of primary texts relating to the whole history of the Soviet Union is the following reader:


A theoretically rich meditation on the conjoined modernist projects of socialism and capitalism, see:


There has been a profusion of recent writing on everyday life in the Stalin period by historians as new archives have been opened. For a flavour of this check out:


Writing on the post-Stalin era – the era of Khrushchev (commonly known as the “thaw”) and Brezhnev (traditionally – and problematically – referred to as an era of “stagnation”) have garnered far less attention. Two exceptions are


An easy, curl-up-on-the-couch kind of read that gives a real taste of living in the later years of the Soviet Union is the following memoir:


A theoretically sophisticated anthropological exploration of the same period is:


This text will be referred to at several points so is one worth buying. Several copies will be available for purchase in Blackwells.
Most discussion of the **collapse of the Soviet Union** has been colonized by political science. 2 useful texts, the first journalistic, the second more scholarly, which discuss the sequence of events that led to Soviet collapse (particularly in the non-Russian republics) are:


The Soviet Union was largely off-limits to western anthropologists until the very last years of its existence, and the vast majority of the (considerable) Soviet ethnographic scholarship is not published in English. For a **pioneering (and now classic) ethnography** of a Siberian collective farm, based on research in the 1970s, see:


For an account of the role of ethnographic knowledge in the making of the Soviet Union see


The following **edited collections** contain some of the best chapter-length ethnographic accounts of postsocialism. The collection edited by Chris Hann (*Postsocialism*) is particularly recommended for purchase, since several chapters from it are assigned for this course.


The following **book-length ethnographies**, although written after the end of the Soviet Union, draw on archives, oral histories and interviews to explore aspects of lived Soviet socialism. Pesmen’s book, *Russia and Soul*, is particularly recommended for purchase since we’ll be reading several chapters of it.


### THEME 1: SOCIALISM, POSTSOCIALISM AND ANTHROPOLOGY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>03.02.11 (wk 1)</th>
<th>Late socialism: an eternal state?</th>
<th>Activity due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lecture: Anthropology and “really existing socialism”</td>
<td>Key reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Overview of the course; practicalities, deadlines, questions, assigning readings</td>
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<tr>
<th>10.02.11 (wk 2)</th>
<th>Anthropology and post-socialist “transition”</th>
<th>Key readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lecture: Anthropology and post-socialist “transition”</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Film: <em>New Penelope</em> (26 mins)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Joint seminar (BA &amp; MA students together)</td>
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### THEME 2: PERSONS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>17.02.11 (wk 3)</th>
<th>Fashioning a Soviet self</th>
<th>Key readings &amp; Sources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lecture: fashioning a Soviet self</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Joint seminar</td>
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<tr>
<th>24.02.11 (wk 4)</th>
<th>Crisis and coming of age</th>
<th>Key readings</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Lecture: crisis and self-refashioning</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Film: <em>Love and Broken Glass</em> (35 mins)</td>
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<td>3. Joint seminar</td>
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### THEME 3: MONEY

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>03.03.11 (wk 5)</th>
<th>Better a hundred friends than a hundred roubles?</th>
<th>Key readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lecture: better a hundred friends than a hundred roubles?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Film: <em>Interval</em> (20 mins)</td>
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<td>3. Seminar for BA students</td>
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<tr>
<th>10.03.11 (wk 6)</th>
<th>Consuming capitalism?</th>
<th>Key readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lecture: consuming capitalism?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Film: <em>Business Trip</em> (40 mins)</td>
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<td>3. Seminar for MA students</td>
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### THEME 4: INFRASTRUCTURE

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<tr>
<th>17.03.11 (wk 7)</th>
<th>Making a home for socialism</th>
<th>Key readings &amp; sources</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lecture: making a home for socialism</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Film: <em>Strange grownups</em> (extracts) (7 mins)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Joint seminar</td>
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<tr>
<th>24.03.11 (wk 8)</th>
<th>Transforming place</th>
<th>Key readings</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Lecture: Reconstruction, decay and the intransigence of infrastructure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reports for hand-out and discussion</td>
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Reports for hand-out and discussion.
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<tr>
<th>2. Film: <em>This is Astana</em> (8 mins)</th>
<th>discussion</th>
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<tr>
<td>3. Joint seminar</td>
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<td>4. Feedback session on book reviews for BA students (30 mins)</td>
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**THEME 5: NATION**

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<tr>
<th>31.03.11 (wk 9)</th>
<th>Everyday ethnicity under state socialism</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lecture: Everyday ethnicity under state socialism</td>
<td>Key readings Reports for hand-out and discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Film: <em>Sand Castles</em> (20 mins)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Joint seminar</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Feedback session on book reviews for MA students</td>
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**Date & location**

TBC

Optional screening of *A Sixth Part of the World*, dir. Dziga Vertov. 1926 (73’)

**07.04.11 (wk 10)**

Of patriotism and patriarchy: theorising post-soviet nationalisms

| 1. Lecture: Theorising post-Soviet nationalisms | Key readings Reports for hand-out and discussion |
| 2. Film: *Stolen Brides* (60 mins) |            |
| 3. Joint seminar |            |

Spring break—no classes

**THEME 6: BEYOND ‘POSTSOCIALISM’?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>05.05.11 (wk 11)</th>
<th>Beyond postsocialism? Theories, concepts, debates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lecture: Beyond postsocialism</td>
<td>Key readings Reports for hand-out and discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Seminar for BA students</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Seminar for MA students</td>
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<tr>
<th>12.05.11 (wk 12)</th>
<th>Wrap up/discussion (theme to be decided in class) Questions for discussion</th>
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<tr>
<td>19.05.11</td>
<td>No class: essays due by 2pm, 19.05.11 in the Undergraduate office, G.001, Arthur Lewis Building</td>
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</table>
SOAN 30152/60152: AFTERLIVES OF SOVIET SOCIALISM

DETAILS OF READINGS AND SCREENINGS

THEME 1: SOCIALISM, POSTSOCIALISM AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Week 1: 03.02.11. Late socialism: an eternal state?

**Key texts**


**Further reading**


Week 2: 10.02.11. Anthropology and postsocialist “transition”

**Key texts**


**Further reading**


THEME 2: PERSONS

Week 3: 17.02.11. Fashioning a Soviet self

Key texts

*Yurchak, Alexei. 2006. “Hegemony of Form: Stalin’s Uncanny Paradigm Shift” and “Ideology Inside Out”. In Everything was Forever, Until it was no More: The Last Soviet Generation. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 36-125

Explore:

Soviet poster art: http://sovietposter.blogspot.com/

Films (in class): Teacher, dir. N. Ataullaeva, Uzbekfil’m, 1962 (10’)

Seminar reports:

Further reading
(a) General
Yurchak, Alexei. 2006. Everything was Forever until it was no more: the last Soviet generation. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

(b) Debating “Soviet subjectivity”
**Week 4: 24.02.11 Crisis and coming of age**

**Key texts**


**Watch:**

Old Peter, dir. Ivan Golovnev (Russia, 2007): [http://www.cultureunplugged.com/play/1705/Old-Peter](http://www.cultureunplugged.com/play/1705/Old-Peter) (8’10)

**Film (in class):** *Love and Broken Glass*, dir. Suvi Andrea Helminen. Nordlys Films, 2006 (35’)

**Seminar reports:**


**Further reading**


THEME 3: MONEY

Week 5: 03.03.11. Better a hundred friends than a hundred rubles?

Key texts

Film (in class): Sergei Azimov (dir.) Interval. Kazakhfil’m, 1982, (20’).

Seminar reports

Further reading
(a) general on consumption in the Soviet Union
(b) anthropological approaches to money and barter

Week 6: 10.03.11. Consuming capitalism?

Key texts

Seminar reports
1. Humphrey, Caroline. 2002. “Creating a culture of disillusionment: consumption in Moscow, a
culture of changing times” In The Unmaking of Soviet Life: Everyday Economies After
Socialism. Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, pp. 175-201 [Also available in Daniel
2. Patico, Jennifer. 2005. “To be happy in a Mercedes: Tropes of value and ambivalent visions of
Organization 59(1), pp. 11-22.
pp. 22-37.

Further reading
Alexander, Catherine. 2009. “Privatization: jokes, scandal and absurdity in a time of rapid change”, In
Ethnographies of moral reason: living paradoxes of a global age, ed. Karen Sykes. Basingstoke :
in Kazakhstan”. In Katherine Verdery and Caroline Humphrey (eds), Property in Question.
identity in Post-Soviet landscapes”. In The Unmaking of Soviet Life: Everyday Economies After
Oushakine, Serguei. 2009. “Repatriating capitalism: fragmented society and global connections Chapter
1 of The Patriotism of Despair: Nation, War ad Loss in Russia. Ithaca: Cornell University Press,
pp. 15-78.
Patico, Jennifer. 2008. Consumption and Change in a Post-Soviet Middle Class. Washington, DC:
Woodrow Wilson Center Press.
Russia”. Critique of Anthropology 29(2), pp. 205-224.
181-212
Rivkin-Fish, Michele. 2005. "Bribes, Gifts, and Unofficial Payments: Towards an Anthropology of
University Press.
Wanner, Catherine. 2005. “Money, morality and new forms of exchange in postsocialist Ukraine”.
Werner, Cynthia. 1998. “Household Networks and the Security of Mutual Indebtedness in Rural
Kazakhstan” Central Asian Survey 17(4), pp. 597-612.
**THEME 4: INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Week 7: 17.03.11. Making a home for socialism**

**Key texts**


**Explore:** [http://kommunalka.colgate.edu/index.cfm](http://kommunalka.colgate.edu/index.cfm)

**Film (in class):** Extracts from *Strange Grownups*, dir. Ayan Shakhmalieva. Lenfilm, 1974 (7’)

**Seminar reports**

**Further reading**


Optional Film: *Irony of Fate*, dir. Eldar Ryazanov. 1975 (185’) (available via YouTube)

**Week 8: 24.03.11. Transforming place. Reconstruction, decay and the intransigence of infrastructure**

**Key texts**


Film (in class): *This is Astana* (2008)

Seminar reports


Further reading


Laszczkowski Mateusz, “Other times: temporalities, identities and change in Astana”. Unpublished MS (will be made available on Blackboard).


THEME 5: NATION

Week 9: 31.03.11. Everyday ethnicity under state socialism

Key texts


Reports


Film: Sand Castles, dir. Yakov Bronshtein, Algis Vidurgiris, Kirgizfil’m, 1967 (20’)

Further reading
(a) Soviet nationalities policy
(b) Anthropological approaches to studying ethnicity and nationalism

Optional extra screening: A Sixth Part of the World, dir. Dziga Vertov. 1926 (73’)

Week 10: 07.04.11. Of patriotism and patriarchy. Theorising post-Soviet nationalisms

Key texts
Film (in class): Stolen Brides, dir. Lucy Ash. BBC productions, 2010 (59’)

Seminar reports

Further reading
Reeves, Madeleine. Forthcoming “Fixing the border: on the affective life of the state in southern Kyrgyzstan”. Environment and Planning D: Society and Space.

THEME 6: BEYOND THE POSTS?

Week 11: 05.05.11. Beyond postsocialism? Theories, concepts, debates

Key texts

Further reading

Week 12: 12.05.11. Wrap-up, questions and concluding discussion
No readings for this week. The focus and format will be discussed in class.
Indicative list of ethnographic monographs for the review essay

~ Please note: this list is not exhaustive. If there is another ethnographic study of socialism/postsocialism that is not listed here and which you would like to review, please contact MR ~


