The Soviet Experience: Stalinism Through the Eyes of the Individual
Course Tutor: Professor Orlando Figes

In this course we will focus on the inner world of ordinary Soviet citizens living under the Stalinist regime from the 1920s to the 1950s. Using published diaries, memoirs, and oral history interviews, we will try to understand what 'Stalinism' really meant in terms of the values by which people lived. How deep was the influence of Soviet public culture on the private lives of individuals and families? What enabled people to believe in the system, and to maintain that belief against the evidence of their own eyes? How did the terror affect intimate relationships? What was the impact of fighting in the war or labouring in the Gulag on the way that people viewed their role in Soviet history? And how many people concealed dissenting views behind the mask of political conformity?

1. Introduction
2. Fashioning the Soviet Personality: Family, School, Clubs and Communal Living
3. The Nature of Belief in the Soviet Union
4. Private Life in Stalin's Terror
5. Perpetrators and Collaborators in the Stalinist Regime
6. The War Years: For What Did the Soviet People Fight?
7. The Experience of the Gulag
8. Dissent and Opposition
9. Soviet and Concealed Identities
10. Memory and History

Introductory Reading
www.orlandofiges.com (contains interview transcripts and sound recordings in English)