

SEMINAR In Ukrainian Women's History

Date: Monday, **March 30, 2026**

Time: **11:00 - 18:30**

Format: in person

Venue: Imre Kertész Kolleg Jena, Am Planetarium 7, 07743 Jena

Participants: Students of Friedrich Schiller University Jena & Göttingen University

Organizers: [Prof. Joachim von Puttkamer](#), [Dr. Immo Rebitschek](#), [Prof. Oksana Kis](#)

Coordinator: Daniela Gruber

Living through Historical Calamities in the 20th century: Ukrainian Women's Experiences

This one-day seminar will explore the most extreme historical events in Ukraine during the 20th century through the lens of the gendered experiences of Ukrainian women. Based on a close reading of selected primary sources (in English), we will discuss the Holodomor, World War II, the Ukrainian nationalist underground struggle, and the Gulag.

Through women's memoirs of surviving these events, students will explore the human dimension of major historical developments from a gender perspective. Firsthand accounts of women will serve as a window into how ordinary people responded to extraordinary historical circumstances. Students will gain insight into women's survival strategies, coping practices, resistance and accommodation in situations where their rights, opportunities, and resources were limited or nonexistent. By examining women's testimonies, students will analyze power dynamics, identify gendered vulnerabilities and sources of resilience, and trace manifestations of women's agency in the face of prevailing disempowerment and violence.

Participants are expected to prepare the readings, provide an introduction to one of the sessions, and contribute to the general discussion.

The seminar will be held in English. Accepted participants will receive further instructions and the reading package by the end of February. Accommodation for students from Göttingen will be provided by the Imre Kertész Kolleg (1 night/hotel in Jena). All participating students will receive vouchers for a free lunch at the university dining hall.

Participants will receive formal certificates acknowledging their attendance and contribution to the seminar.

Applications are to be submitted online via [Google Form](#) by **February 20, 2026**.

Notification of acceptance letters will be sent out by February 28, 2006.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for further information (Daniela.Gruber@uni-jena.de).

Background reading: Plokhy Serhii: *The Gates of Europe. A History of Ukraine*. New York, 2015, pp. [...]

Programme

Arrival

11:00 Welcome

11:15 -12:30 **The Holodomor 1932-1933**

Primary source: (a line or two why this source was selected, hints to what we expect them to do with the source)

- Lysyvets, Anastasia. Speak of the Happy Life [memoir], In: *The Holodomor and the Origins of the Soviet Man: Reading the Testimony of Anastasia Lysyvets* (Ukrainian Voices), ed. by Vitalii Ogienko. Ibidem Press, 2022 ([excerpt](#))

Further Reading: [...]

12:30 Lunch (Mensa Philosophenweg)

13:15 – 14:30 **World War II**

Primary sources:

- Pavlichenko, Lyudmila. *Lady Death: The Memoirs of Stalin's Sniper*. Greenhill Books, 2018 ([a chapter or a shorter excerpt](#))

Further Reading [...]

14:30 – 15:00 Coffee break

15:00 – 16:15 **Nationalist Underground (OUN-UPA), 1940-50s**

Primary source:

- Savchyn Pyskir, Maria. *Thousands of Roads: A Memoir of a Young Woman's Life in the Ukrainian Underground During and After World War II* / trans. by A. Savage. London: McFarland & Company, 2001. 243 p.

Further Reading [...]

16:15 – 16:45 Coffee break

16:45 – 18:00 **The Gulag**

Primary sources:

- Volovich, Hava. My Past, in: Vilensky S. (ed.) *Till my Tale is Told: Women's Memoirs of the Gulag* / transl. by J. Crowfoot et al. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1999 ([an excerpt](#))

- Surovtseva, Nadezhda. Vladivostok Transit, in: Vilensky S. (ed.) *Till my Tale is Told: Women's Memoirs of the Gulag* / transl. by J. Crowfoot et al. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1999 ([an excerpt](#))
- **OR** Meshko, Oksana. *Between Death and Life* / transl. by George Moshinsky. New York ; Toronto ; London ; Sydney : Women's Association for the Defense of Four Freedoms for Ukraine, 1981 ([an excerpt](#))

Further Reading [...]

18:00 – 18:30 Concluding Session

19:00 Dinner (self-paid)