

University of Montana

ScholarWorks at University of Montana

University of Montana Course Syllabi

Open Educational Resources (OER)

Fall 9-1-2020

RUSS 105HY.80: Introduction to Russian Culture (Honors)

Ona Renner-Fahey

University of Montana, Missoula, Ona.Renner@mso.umt.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi>

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Renner-Fahey, Ona, "RUSS 105HY.80: Introduction to Russian Culture (Honors)" (2020). *University of Montana Course Syllabi*. 11511.

<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi/11511>

This Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the Open Educational Resources (OER) at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of Montana Course Syllabi by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.

RUSS105HY: INTRODUCTION TO RUSSIAN CULTURE

Professor: Ona Renner-Fahey

Office hours, via Zoom: M at 11 and W at 3, and by appointment.

Office: Liberal Arts 329
(This semester I will not hold office hours in my office.)

E-mail: ona.renner@mso.umt.edu

Course description: A survey of Russian culture and civilization from its beginnings to the contemporary period. No language or literature prerequisites. We will cover Russian culture chronologically, considering major historical and political events from each period to establish a context through which we will study the developments of such cultural aspects as the literature, art, and music. Course may be taken for a traditional letter grade only. Course is required for Russian majors and Russian Studies minors.

Goals and Outcomes: In this course students will learn through a variety of contexts about both the “big-C culture” and “little-c culture” of the Russian people and will trace its cause and development to the contemporary period. Through attentive reading, analytical thought, and some active discussion, the students will finish the semester with a foundational knowledge of Russian culture from its birth in the medieval period to the present day.

Disability accommodations: If you are a student with a disability who will require reasonable accommodation in this course, please let your instructor know immediately and, if you have not already done so, consider contacting Disability Services for Students in Lommasson 154 for assistance in developing a plan to address program accommodations.

Requirements:

- **Forum posts:** For the most part, every other week you are required to post a 200-250-word response to the course material (lectures, interviews, music) by Thursday at midnight. Which week depends on the first letter of your last name (A-J and K-Z). These posts should aim for both breadth (across the course material) and depth (meaning, provide some specifics and key points). The most successful responses will demonstrate familiarity with the various required materials but will also point to common themes and core cultural values found across the diverse course material. Forum posts should be written in a mostly academic style, that is, no misspellings or grammatical mistakes. (PLEASE pay attention to how apostrophes are used!) While this is somewhat conversational, we are still in a college course and should be doing our best work always. Additionally, to receive a 100% on a forum, students should go “above and beyond”, by posting a link to some additional research they’ve done or should check back on Sunday and reply to comments they have or give a brief comment themselves to a peer. Students whose last names begin with the other half of the alphabet are then required to comment on at least two of their peers’ posts by Sunday at midnight. Comments should be between two and five sentences and should move beyond “I also wrote about that” or “I also found that interesting.” There will be a couple weeks when everyone will post a main comment—after we’ve finished each of our main books for the course. Beginning in week 6 we will change the forum from being the entire class to being smaller groups. At this point the Honors students will all be in one group together. Even more (!) specifics, along with a grading rubric, can be found on the Moodle page.
- **“Pop” reading quizzes:** Reading assignments from our two main texts will have guided reading questions available on Moodle. Students should answer the questions while they are reading and then study the answers. If there is a multiple choice “pop” quiz on that section, it will be based on those same questions, be 8 questions, and have a 5-minute time limit. (In addition, some of the same questions will appear on the final exam.)
- **Interviews:** Most weeks there will be an interview as part of what I’m calling “The Samovar Series.” While you won’t be tested specifically on material discussed in these, you should be incorporating them into your forum posts. They will also help you “digest” other material, since they tend to have a common focus with the rest of the week’s material.

- **Music:** Most weeks there will be a song to listen to and an accompanying video. These may be discussed in the forums and will also be on the final exam, when you will hear a clip and need to identify the title, artist, gener, or both.
- **Films:** Students will be required to watch two films and write short responses to them. More specifics and a grading rubric can be found on the Moodle page.
- **Cooking project:** This is due toward the end of the semester. The format may be video or photographs (possibly using Prezi or Powerpoint). As some people may not have the experience or software to create videos, a photographic documentation is equally acceptable and could receive full credit. You may use a recipe from a cookbook or one you find online; either way, just be sure to credit your source. Show all of your ingredients, a couple different points of the preparation process, and the dish in its final form. Proof that you were involved in the preparation can be in the form of a visual of you with the final dish or of a note next to the dish with your name written on it. You will not receive a set number of points for this requirement; rather, the entire project will be given a zero if it does not contain this requirement. Comment upon two of your peers' projects by the end of the class. Please be sure you think early on about where and when you can complete this assignment! More specifics and a grading rubric can be found on the Moodle page.
- **Final exam:** This will be based on material from: the readings, lectures, films, slides, and music. It will be a multiple-choice format. (There is no midterm in this course.)
- **WORKLOAD:** I have tried to be as consistent as possible regarding workload; however, there will nonetheless be some weeks that have a lot more work than others. For example, when we have our literature unit, you will need to be reading some short stories. There are three weeks, in particular, that will be heavier than others, because this semester is two weeks short and the first and last week are both only half weeks, which disrupts the units in this course. I recommend you look through everything every Monday morning when the unit opens in order to plan your week accordingly. The weeks that have almost double the workload will be labelled "Two in One!". See the course topics below to plan ahead.
- **HONORS STUDENTS:** Once the all-class discussion group is broken up into smaller groups, you will all be in your own group together. The other way in which your experience in this course will differ somewhat will be that you are required to write two 1-2 page responses to specific readings that will be required of everyone in the course. Specific instructions will be found on Moodle and these will be due in weeks 11 and 15. Some of this information can also be found below in the "Course Topics" section of this syllabus.

Course grade breakdown:

(These are approximate only and will be updated in about a week.)

Forums: (5 + 15 @ 10): 155

"Pop" reading quizzes: 56 points

Film responses (2 @ 10): 20 points

Cooking project: 20 points

Final exam: 80 points

Total points: 331

(*Honors students: Each of your additional responses will be worth 20 points, bringing your total points to 351.)

Required textbooks:

- A MOUNTAIN OF CRUMBS: A MEMOIR (ELENA GOROKHOVA)
- THE TIGER: A TRUE STORY OF VENGEANCE AND SURVIVAL (John Vaillant)

Texts on Moodle:

There will be some additional readings other than the two main books. There will not be any pop quizzes on these but questions about them might appear on the final exam.

Suggestions for further reading:

- GULAG: A HISTORY (Applebaum, Anne)
- THE ICON AND THE AXE (Billington, James)
- RUSSIA IN SEARCH OF ITSELF (Billington, James)
- THE CAMBRIDGE INTRODUCTION TO RUSSIAN LITERATURE (CAMBRIDGE INTROS TO LITERATURE) (Emerson, Caryl)
- THE MAKING OF MODERN RUSSIA (Kochan and Abraham)
- THE LAND OF THE FIREBIRD (Massie, Suzanne)
- AN ANTHOLOGY OF RUSSIAN LIT FROM EARLIEST WRITINGS TO MODERN FICTION: INTRO TO A CULTURE (N. Rzhevsky)
- RUSSIAN POPULAR CULTURE: ENTERTAINMENT AND SOCIETY SINCE 1900 (Stites, Richard)
- A CONCISE HISTORY OF RUSSIAN ART (Talbot Rice, Tamara)
- THE MAGICAL CHORUS: A HISTORY OF RUSSIAN CULTURE FROM TOLSTOY TO SOLZHENITSYN (Volkov, Solomon)

COURSE TOPICS:

- Introductory Short Unit (8/19-8/23): Introductions and What is Culture? (Contains Cooking Project Upload)
- Unit One (8/24-8/30): Historical contexts: Beginnings through the “Mongol Yoke”
- Unit Two (8/31-9/7): TWO IN ONE! Geography, Religion, Language
- Unit Three (9/7-9/13): Folk Traditions and Dvoeverie
- Unit Four (9/14-9/20): Historical Contexts: The Time of Troubles through Westernization
- Unit Five (9/21-9/27): The Development of a Russian Literary Tradition
- Unit Six (9/28-10/4): St. Petersburg (and film with written response)
- Unit Seven (10/5-10/11): Historical Contexts: Napoleon's Invasion through Emancipation
- Unit Eight (10/12-10/18): The "Golden Age" of Literature
- Unit Nine (10/19-10/25): The Arts in the 19th Century
- Units Ten and Eleven (10/26-11/1): TWO IN ONE! Historical Contexts: The fin de siècle through Putin AND Moscow; first Honors' section written response to a text
- Units Twelve and Thirteen (11/2-11/8): TWO IN ONE! The Arts from the fin de siècle through the early Soviet period... and to the 21st century
- Unit 14 (11/9-11/15): Politics and Journalism
- Concluding Short Unit (11/16-18): Film (and written response by everyone); second Honors' section written response to a text