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RUSS 494.01: The Russian Novel in the 20th Century

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Recommended Citation

Walker, Clint, "RUSS 494.01: The Russian Novel in the 20th Century" (2016). *University of Montana Course Syllabi*. 7312.

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The Russian Novel in the 20th Century: Moscow and the Russian Revolution

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Seminar in Russian Studies: The Russian Novel
MCLG/RUSS 494, spring 2016
M 3:10-6pm in LA 420

Office Hours: M 10-11am, 12-1pm in LA 330 W 10-11am and by appointment in LA 330

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

RUSS 494 Seminar in Russian Studies Variable cr. (3 cr.) Offered intermittently. Same as MCLG 494. Advanced studies in major topics in Russian literature and culture. Topics include: The Russian Novel, Women and Gender in Russian Culture, Dostoevsky and World Culture. All readings and discussion will be conducted in English, but Russian majors will be expected to do selected readings in the original. Honors College Students will be expected to read supplementary texts (as specified in the syllabus below) and to incorporate these texts into the final seminar paper. All students taking the course will be expected to complete a preliminary research assignment, an outline, a draft with a working bibliography, and final version of the seminar paper (15-20 pp.) as part of the course requirements. Honors Students will be expected to write a longer final version of the seminar paper (minimum length: 20 pages) as well as to incorporate one additional short text. Russian Studies majors will be expected to cite from one novel in the Russian original (and to discuss such citations in more detail in the body of the paper).

This course serves as a seminar and a capstone for Russian majors as well as an opportunity for serious literature and history students from other disciplines to immerse themselves more deeply in the Russian cultural tradition than they could in the regular literature-in-translation courses offered by the Russian Section at UM. The seminar offerings will synthesize many of the topics and themes spread throughout our other course offerings. While the seminar will be taught in English in order to cover a substantially greater amount of material and to analyze it in more detail, it will provide a perfect opportunity for UM Russian majors to work with select texts and secondary sources in the Russian original. Another major purpose of this seminar is to allow students to fine-tune their writing skills in English on a topic relevant to their major. Therefore, the Seminar in Russian Studies will serve as an excellent foundational course for majors intending to pursue graduate study in Russian language, literature and history or graduate work in comparative literature and cultural studies.

GENERAL COURSE OUTLINE:

This seminar focuses on one of the richest literary legacies in all of world literature, the Russian novel. Rather than attempt to survey the form, which would be virtually impossible even in a year-long course, we will limit our scope to four masterpieces of the genre that are set in approximately the same historical period (1917-1940). The novels are all linked by the presence of a strong central heroine that drives much of the plot and who is central to understanding the novel's deepest themes. All four works are set primarily in Soviet Moscow, and considerable attention will be devoted to analyzing Moscow as a cultural space in these works. Short background lectures and carefully chosen supplementary texts and critical scholarship will further enhance our understanding of the novels included in the course. We will come to see just why Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*, Andrei Platonov's *Happy Moscow*, and Mikhail Bulgakov's novella *Heart of a Dog* and his novel *The Master and Margarita* have all been hailed as masterpieces of twentieth-century literature.

GOALS and OUTCOMES:

In this course we will gain a deeper understanding of the complexity of the novel as a literary form. We will increase our familiarity with Russian literature and come to appreciate the vital link of all great literary works to a specific cultural and historical context. We will likewise gain insight into the multifaceted dialogue of Russian literature with world culture as a whole.

This seminar satisfies the upper division writing requirement for Russian at the University of Montana. Students will work on improving, expanding and polishing their writing skills throughout the semester by completing a wide range of reading and writing tasks and assignments. Not every task will receive a formal grade, nor will each task necessarily lead directly towards the course's culminating assignment, a seminar paper on one of the major novels included in the course curriculum, but every writing task has been designed with the overarching aim of making you more successful, more confident and better equipped writers—in the field of Russian Studies in particular as well as in your daily lives. Of all the skills you acquire at the University of Montana, none will be so intimately connected with who you are and who you will become as your ability to write and to think critically through your writing.

The capstone of this course will be your individual seminar papers on one of the novels covered in the course. Each of you will conduct independent research for this project that you will eventually integrate into a final paper. An outline and bibliography and a rough draft of the paper will be due as specified on the syllabus. The final version of your paper should: incorporate at least six academic secondary sources; use appropriate citations and style; be well-argued and supported with evidence from the text and its various contexts; and be clearly organized and elegantly written. The final paper will provide Russian majors in particular with a perfect opportunity to synthesize the knowledge and skills they have acquired throughout their coursework at UM. A number of you will undoubtedly choose to use this seminar paper as a writing sample for graduate school applications.

GENERAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- Regular attendance and active participation in class discussion
- Timely reading of assigned works and adequate preparation for discussion
- Class Presentation (15-20 minutes during one class period – there will be a sign-up sheet)
- Seminar paper (15-20 pages; NB -- for honors credit, the minimum is 20 pages)

Students in this class will complete an analytical academic research paper (15-20 pp.) that draws from at least six secondary sources. Early in the semester each of you will need to research at least one of the major works covered in the syllabus using academic research databases for literature (e.g. MLA). Later in the semester you will need to integrate similar information into the seminar paper.

NB -- Russian majors are expected to work with at least one of the above novels in the original. Therefore, you are strongly encouraged to consider purchasing, downloading, or borrowing a Russian-language copy of the novel that you intend to make the focus of your seminar paper. I would be happy to direct you to sites that sell Russian books. I also have a limited number of Russian copies of each of the novels that we will be reading.

By conducting preliminary research on one of the novels, you will be forced to address the idea of conflicting interpretations of the same text before you are actually required to integrate such contradictory sources into your own arguments in a formal paper. You will also be introduced to MLA-style academic discourse. Subsequently, each of you will be required to incorporate evidence from at least six academic sources into your final seminar paper. At this stage you will necessarily grapple with a wide range of approaches to the same text, using them to augment and enhance your own arguments. I am hopeful that you will draw from your research experience early in the semester for your later work on the seminar paper. My feedback on your outline and draft will help you refine and polish your ideas before you begin work on the final version of the seminar paper.

Some 70% of your final course grade will be based on the 15-20 page seminar paper [A two-page outline, bibliography and draft will account for 20% of your final course grade, while the final draft of the seminar paper will constitute 50% of your final course grade].

***HONORS COLLEGE STUDENTS:** If you are taking this course as part of the Honors College curriculum, you are required to read a minimum of one additional short work by the author who will be the focus of your seminar paper. In addition, you must incorporate this second work into the body of your seminar paper. The minimum length of the seminar paper for Honors College Students is 20 pages. I will suggest some works that would pair well with the major novels of the course below. Honors College students will be expected to incorporate both works (the novel and the shorter work) by the author of their choice in the draft as well. This means that you will need to begin reading the additional shorter work **early in the semester** in order to see how it will fit into the arguments advanced in your seminar paper. NB – the additional work should NOT be the focus of your seminar paper, but it should instead be used to supplement, augment and/or expand your discussion of the primary text. For example, if you choose to focus on Tolstoy, this would mean that

Anna Karenina should be the focus of your seminar paper and your chosen supplementary work should only be used to strengthen arguments you are making about *Anna Karenina*.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Available in the bookstore: Boris Pasternak, *Doctor Zhivago*

Available from your instructor: Andrey Platonov, *Happy Moscow*
Mikhail Bulgakov, *Heart of a Dog*
Mikhail Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita*
Moscow: A Cultural History. Caroline Brooke.
Oxford Univ Press, 2006
The Russian Revolution

You are welcome to use any translation of the above novels that you wish and are free to purchase them from any source, but I have tried very hard to find the cheapest copies available to save you money and time.

the Russian majors need to have a personal copy of at least one of the three big novels in original Russian. You will be expected to cite from the original Russian version for your seminar paper. I have Russian language copies of all three novels (ask me for details).

Recommended secondary work:

Stalinism as a Way of Life (Abridged Ed). L Seigelbaum and A. Sokolov. Yale UP, 2004.

Supplementary Texts for Honors College Students (pick ONE only):

Honors College students taking this course need to read only ONE of the following short supplementary texts and incorporate it into their 20 page seminar paper (see above).

Platonov: "Moscow Violin" or "The Potudan River"

Bulgakov: any additional Bulgakov short story or novella besides *Heart of a Dog*

Pasternak: an additional short work of Pasternak's that you wish to pair with *Dr. Zhivago*

GRADING:

20% Attendance and General Class Participation
10% Class Presentation (10 min presentation based on your seminar paper)
20% Library Research Assignment, Outline, Bibliography and
Draft (minimum of 10 pages, 2 outside sources) of the Seminar Paper
50% Seminar Paper* (15-20 pages, minimum of six academic outside sources)

GRADING SCALE

A = 93-100	B- = 80-82	D+ = 68-69
A- = 90-92	C+ = 78-79	D = 64-67
B+ = 88-89	C = 77-73	F = 63 and below
B = 83-87	C- = 70-72	

PAPER GUIDELINES:

The seminar paper should be typed or done on a computer and conform to MLA standards for citation of secondary sources. Use a standard 12 point font and double-space. Proofread each assignment for typos, poor wording, mechanics, etc. Late work will be penalized one letter grade per class day (except for in-class writing, which cannot be made up). Plagiarism will not be tolerated in any form. Please ask if you have a question about what constitutes plagiarism, but on the whole, if you consult another work for ideas, copy or paraphrase from another source, etc., then you need to acknowledge the source (including the work you consulted, the publication information, and the page number/s) in your paper with a footnote.

WRITING ASSESSMENT CRITERIA for SEMINAR IN RUSSIAN STUDIES

(Note that the comments for each letter below are intended to be general in nature and may not correspond exactly to your particular paper. These comments are merely guidelines and points of orientation. I suggest that you read through the material below and think about the rubrics (and my comments for each one) while you are working on the outline, draft/s, and final version of your seminar paper.)

	A	B	C	D
	EXCELLENT	ABOVE COMPETENT	DEVELOPING	NOVICE
1) GRAMMAR and MECHANICS	Correct grammar, punctuation and syntax, etc.	Some mistakes and/or awkwardness, but generally does not distract the reader or interfere with meaning	Some more serious errors in mechanics that distract and interfere with meaning	Serious problems with mechanics. Grammar mistakes prevent understanding at the sentence and paragraph level
2) MAIN ARGUMENT/ THESIS	Strong, clearly stated main argument or thesis that is	Perhaps a less clearly stated thesis and may not always contain	Paper points in the direction of a main argument, but the thesis has	No thesis statement present. The paper appears to lack a main

	developed in subsequent parts of the paper	adequate development for its defense in the body of the paper	not been clearly defined. OR -- A weakly defined thesis in need of more development	thrust or direction. Ideas that just jump around and do not cohere
3) SUPPORTING EVIDENCE	Abundant use of strong evidence from the main text/s and secondary sources to support the main arguments made in the paper	Some good supporting evidence, but may not be convincing in places. Fails to support secondary arguments or to bring in counter arguments and opposing points of view, but the main argument is relatively well supported	Paper makes an effort to cite from the main text and support some arguments, but on the whole the paper lacks enough evidence to convince the reader of its claims. Often a failure to address opposing points of view or varying interpretations	Very weak supporting evidence that is unconvincing. Poor use of the main text/s to support arguments
4) BASE CONTENT of SEMINAR PAPER	Generally a strong, well-balanced paper that covers its material adequately and in a convincing manner	Relatively solid but with some gaps in content or isolated areas where the argument fails to convince due to inadequate content	Paper does not contain enough base content to support its main arguments adequately. Paper may be slightly too short or poorly organized, etc	Most likely, the paper is simply below the recommended length for a seminar paper.
5) STYLE	Very well written and flows naturally. Arguments build and are linked from sentence to	Good flow but may have awkward spots or areas where the flow is interrupted by broken syntax, inappropriate	Flow is broken by bad diction, poor word choice, broken syntax, many spelling errors, etc. Sentence structure and	Major problems with style. It is highly recommended that you visit the writing center and

	<p>sentence & paragraph to paragraph. Nice variety in sentence length.</p>	<p>word choice, etc. Sentence structure and paragraph length may not contain enough variation.</p>	<p>paragraph length may need more attention. Breaks in the flow interfere with meaning and detract from your arguments.</p>	<p>work on your writing with a tutor.</p>
<p>6) USE OF SECONDARY SOURCE MATERIAL</p>	<p>Very good use of secondary source material. You bring in ample supporting evidence and also address secondary source material that appears at odds with some of your arguments. You offer convincing counter arguments.</p>	<p>You may have met the formal minimum of secondary sources, but you do not always use them in a convincing way in your paper. You may fail to bring in secondary sources that offer counter arguments to your own.</p>	<p>You may not quite use enough secondary source material or you may use several secondary sources rather unconvincingly.</p>	<p>Clearly unacceptable use of secondary sources. Most likely you only used a few, and even those that you did use were not very well incorporated into your paper.</p>

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE:

It is essential to the learning process that students treat each other and the instructor with respect. Under the Student Conduct Code, students who are found to be disruptive may be asked to leave the classroom. Disruptive behaviors may include but are not limited to:

- Using electronic communication devices, including cell phones and laptops for purposes unrelated to ongoing class activities.
- Carrying on side conversations that are distracting to the instructor and other students.
- Verbally interrupting the class with comments or questions not relevant to the course or to the current discussion.

- Failure to participate in assigned group activities.
 - Significantly interfering with instructor's work activities during or outside of class.
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The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance and you have not already registered with DSS, please contact DSS in Lommasson 154. I will be glad to work with you and DSS to provide an appropriate accommodation.