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Spring 2-1-2018

### **RUSS 494.01: Seminar - Women and Gender in Russian Literature**

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# MCLG 494

## Seminar in Russian Studies:

### *Women and Gender in Russian Culture*

Spring 2018  
Time: M 3:00-5:40 pm  
Location: Liberal Arts 243  
Credits: 3

Professor: Ona Renner-Fahey  
Office: Liberal Arts 316  
E-mail: Ona.Renner@mso.umt.edu  
Office Hours: T 1:00-1:50,  
F 10:00-10:50 and 1:00-1:50,  
and by appt.

#### Course description:

This course examines issues related to women and gender in Russian and Soviet society through the reading/discussing numerous primary sources written by and about women, the reading/discussing of critical essays about feminist and gender theory, and through watching/discussing films related to the subjects of the course. Throughout the semester we address certain core questions, such as: What have been the predominant gender stereotypes throughout various stages of Russian culture? To what extent does the Russian literary tradition denigrate Russian women? Whom does Russian culture elevate to hero/heroine status and why? What might all of this tell us about Russian national identity? What are the general attitudes toward feminism and sexuality in Russia?

This seminar serves as a capstone for Russian majors, as well as an opportunity for advanced liberal arts students to familiarize themselves more with the Russian cultural tradition than they could in the regular literature-in-translation courses offered by UM's Russian Program. While the course has no prerequisites, it is recommended that students who take this course have strong writing skills and, ideally, would have taken a 300-level course-in-translation through the Russian program. While the seminar will be conducted in English, Russian majors will be required to do selected readings in the original Russian, as well as incorporate Russian primary sources into their seminar paper. This may require that the Russian students meet for 10-15 minutes separately from the rest of the students a few times. Honors College students will be expected to read a couple supplementary texts, and to incorporate these texts into the final seminar paper, so that their research will be more extensive. Russian majors and Honors students should meet with the professor to discuss their specific requirements. This course is required for Russian majors and satisfies the upper-division writing requirement for Russian majors.

## Goals and outcomes:

In this course students will develop critical awareness through: reading widely (texts from diverse time periods, genres, and perspectives) and closely; through class discussion; and through engaging in research and various stages of the writing process. Students will come away from this course with an understanding of gender issues in Russian culture. Ultimately, each student should end the course having produced a solid and unique piece of scholarship. For Russian majors in particular, this seminar allows students to fine tune writing skills in English on a topic relevant to their major, as well as to synthesize the knowledge and skills they have acquired throughout their coursework at UM. In the past, students have submitted as a writing sample to graduate school the paper they have written in this seminar.

## Classroom expectations:

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.
- Arguing about elements of the syllabus, such as course structure and grading methods.
- Significantly interfering with instructor's work activities during or outside of class.

## Disability accommodations:

If you are a student with a disability who will require reasonable accommodation in this course, please meet with Disability Services for Students in Lommasson 154 for assistance in developing a plan to address program accommodations. If you are already working with Disability Services, then you should arrange to meet with your instructor during her office hours to discuss accommodations that may be necessary.

## Assessment:

✓ Attendance, preparation, and active participation are required. Students will receive participation grades of 0-3: 0 for being absent, 1 for present without contributing to the

discussion (letter grade of C), 2 for adequate participation (letter grade of B), 3 for high quality (not just quantity) of participation (letter grade of A). Each day students should be prepared to *begin* the discussion about the assigned reading; they will not always be asked specific questions and so should arrive having reflected on the texts and being prepared to initiate the discussion. In other words, it is up to the students to attempt to determine what is important or interesting about the readings. Other factors figured into the daily participation grade are: 1.) arriving to class late and 2.) being unprepared or unwilling to contribute when called upon. Each student may be absent one time without his/her grade being affected. (Each seminar period is equivalent to a week's worth of a 3-credit course.) With a second absence a student's final course grade will be dropped by 3 points for each missed class.

✓ Students will also be required to prepare short reading reflections and present them. These will be based on additional readings that the rest of the class will not have read. The written reflection should consist of one typed paragraph that includes a very brief synopsis of the story, followed by a discussion of how the story relates (or fails to relate) to issues of women and gender. Very brief comparisons may be made to other readings discussed in class.

✓ The work we do with our readings, films, and reading reflections will all ultimately culminate in informing a 15-20 page analytical academic research paper on a topic relating to women and gender in Russian culture. The paper will focus on one or more primary texts and relevant published research. Students will need to integrate evidence from at least four academic resources ("secondary texts"). An outline of the paper, as well as a bibliography and first draft will be due first and will be worth 20% of the final grade. The final draft will be worth 40% of the final grade. Students are required to hand in the outline, bib, and first draft together with the final draft. More specific information regarding the seminar paper will be provided separately.

### Percentage distribution of final course grade:

- ✓ Participation: 30%
- ✓ Reading reflections/presentations: 10%
- ✓ Outline, bibliography: 10%
- ✓ first draft of final paper: 20%
- ✓ Final draft of paper: 30%

### Grading scale:

93-100 A	88-89 B+	78-79 C+	68-69 D+
90-92 A-	83-87 B	73-77 C	65-67 D
	80-82 B-	70-72 C-	64 & below E

### Required reading:

#### I. Books (Available at the University Bookstore):

- 1.) Durova, Nadezhda. THE CAVALRY MAIDEN.

- 2.) Petrushevskaja, Liudmila. THERE ONCE LIVED A WOMAN WHO TRIED TO KILL HER NEIGHBOR'S BABY: SCARY STORIES.
- 3.) Ratushinskaia, Irina. GREY IS THE COLOUR OF HOPE.

## II. Texts on Moodle:

All readings other than the three books listed above will be made available through Moodle or handed out to you in class. Be sure always to bring copies of the assigned readings with you to class, either in hard copies or on your laptop. While printing them off does cost you some money, it will be significantly less expensive than having to buy a course-pack. We engage in very close reading in this class and it is imperative that you have the readings with you for every class and, moreover, that you are able to quickly access the sections of the readings that you have marked as important or otherwise commented upon. This is the kind of class in which you read with a pencil in hand and mark as you go through the readings.

## COURSE SCHEDULE:

\*This schedule is subject to change. If a student is absent, he or she should contact the professor or classmate to find out about changes or additions to the homework. Readings are due on the days they are listed.

M 1/22	Introduction Intro to feminism and theory Core cultural values: heroes/heroines Op-Ed "#MeToo, Russian-Style" Close reading (Nabokov)
M 1/29	CLASS IS CANCELLED: Early Russian Culture and Folk beliefs <i>Due through email:</i> Two reading responses: "Olga's Revenge" (hagiography) "Sister Alyonushka, Brother Ivanushka" (magic folktale)
M 2/5	Enlightened Women <i>Due:</i> Excerpts from Catherine's memoirs Kuxhausen, "The Modern Miracles of Mother's Milk"
M 2/12	Physical Appearances and Constraints in the 19 <sup>th</sup> century <i>Due:</i> Durova, <i>The Cavalry Maiden</i> Renner-Fahey, "Diary of a Devoted Child: Nadezhda Durova's
Self-	Presentation in <i>The Cavalry Maiden</i> Goscilo, "Keeping A-breast of the Waist-land"
M 2/19	NO CLASS: Presidents' Day
M 2/26	The Russian Literary Heroine in the 19 <sup>th</sup> Century <i>Due:</i> Excerpts from 19 <sup>th</sup> -c. male-authored texts Clayton, "Towards a Feminist Reading of <i>Evgenii Onegin</i> " Reading reflection ( <u>Texts TBA, due through email on Sunday</u> )
M 3/5	The Woman Question and Early Russian Feminism <i>Due:</i> Petrushevskaja's Scary Stories

Novikov, "Requiems: Liudmila Petrushevskaja's World of Death"

- M 3/12 Gender in Soviet Visual Culture (and Library Resources)  
**\*Meet in the library Student Learning Center, MLIB 283.**  
*Due:* Possible paper topics  
"The Return: Postwar Masculinity and the Domestic Space in Stalinist Visual Culture, 1945–53"
- M 3/19 The Soviet Woman  
*Due:* Baranskaia's "A Week Like Any Other"  
Wills, "Women: The Statusless Sex" (from *Klass*)  
Reading reflection (from Voznesenskaia due by email on Sunday)
- M 3/26 SPRING BREAK
- M 4/2 Women and Gender in Russian Film: *A Driver for Vera*  
*Due:* Outline of seminar paper  
Short presentation on paper topic
- M 4/9 Russian Studies Guest Lecture  
*Due:* TBA
- M 4/16 Women and Gender in Russian Film: *TBA*  
*Due:* First draft of seminar paper
- M 4/23 Dissidence and Dissent  
*Due:* Ratushinskaia, Grey is the Color of Hope  
Kuntsman, " 'With a Shade of Disgust': Affective Politics of Sexuality and Class in Memoirs of the Stalinist Gulag."
- M 4/30 Women and Gender in Russian Film: *Inadequate People*
- "Exam": W 5/9 @ 3:10 *Papers due at start of class*, short presentations on papers during class