

Fall 9-1-2018

RUSS 105H.01M: Introduction to Russian Culture

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Recommended Citation

Renner-Fahey, Ona, "RUSS 105H.01M: Introduction to Russian Culture" (2018). *Syllabi*. 8259.
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RUSS105HY: INTRODUCTION TO RUSSIAN CULTURE

**Honors students: Please note your requirements differ slightly.*

Course Information:

Autumn 2018
Blended course: Meets face-to-face W 10-10:50
Location: Natural Sciences 307
Credits: 3

Instructor Information:

Professor: Ona Renner-Fahey
Office Hours: M 1-1:50, W 11-11:50,
F 11-11:50; and by appointment.
Office: 329 Liberal Arts
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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. The course structure includes one face-to-face meeting per week, with the rest of the course content on-line. Reading assignments will be assigned for most class periods. 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.

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.

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 and classroom rules:

- **Attendance/ Class engagement:** Attendance, preparation, and active engagement (on-line and in the classroom) are required. At times, an attendance sheet will be passed around; at other times, attendance will be taken by the professor. Answering questions—as well as asking relevant questions—is encouraged. If you use a laptop in class you must only be on the class Moodle page. If you have to leave class early, be sure to let me know at the start of class. Finally, in order to get to know you as well as possible, I may ask for your name when you volunteer to speak or I may even call your name from a list and ask a question of you. If possible, post a recognizable photo of yourself on Moodle.
- **“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 in class on the reading, it will be based on those same questions. (In addition, some of the same questions will appear on the midterm and final exams.)
- **Film:** Students will be required to watch two films outside of class time. We will hold two film screenings (Dates and times can be found on schedule below). If any students can't attend these, they will need to arrange to watch the film on their own and then talk to the instructor about it during an office hour and before the film is discussed in class.
- **Midterm exam:** This will be taken in class, not on-line. The midterm will be based on material from: the readings, lectures, films, slides, and music. It will be a multiple choice exam and students will need to bring a (“little red”) Scantron sheet and pencils, which can be easily purchased at the University Bookstore.
- **Final exam:** This will be taken in class, not on-line. The final exam will have a similar structure to the midterm and will be cumulative, although weighted more on the material from the second half of the semester. It will be a multiple-choice exam and students will need again to bring a (“little red”) Scantron sheet and pencils.

Course grade breakdown:

In-Class Attendance/Participation: 28 points
On-line Forums: 26 points
“Pop” reading quizzes: 56 points
Films: 20 points
Midterm exam: 80 points
Cumulative final exam: 120 points
Total points: 330

Honors' section course grade breakdown:

In-Class Attendance/Participation: 28 points
On-line Forums 26 points
“Pop” reading quizzes: 56 points
Films: 20 points
Written responses: 20 points
Attendance at Honors Presentation: 10 points
Midterm exam: 80 points
Cumulative final exam: 120 points
Total points: 36

Required reading:

Books (Available at the university bookstore):

- 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 midterm and final exams. They can be read on-line or printed. It is suggested that you take some notes about them, so you can review them and be able to discuss them in class.

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. Rzhnevsky)
- 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 SCHEDULE:

*This schedule is subject to change. The texts are to have been read before class on the day they are listed.

- **Unit One: Medieval Rus'**

Monday, August 27th – Friday, August 31st:

Intro and Historical contexts: Beginnings through the “Mongol Yoke”
(Wednesday, August 29th Face-to-Face)

Monday, September 3rd – Friday, September 7th :

Geography
(Wednesday, September 5th Face-to-Face)

Monday, September 10th – Friday, September 14th :

Religion and language
(Wednesday, September 12th Face-to-Face)

Monday, September 17th – Friday, September 21st :

Folk traditions and dvoeverie
(Wednesday, September 19th Face-to-Face)

- Unit Two: Secularization

Monday, September 24th – Friday, September 28th:
Historical contexts: Time of Troubles through Westernization
(Wednesday, September 26th Face-to-Face)

Monday, October 1st – Friday, October 5th:
The Rise of literature
(Wednesday, October 3rd Face-to-Face)
*Friday, October 5th: First screening of Russian Ark @ 5 pm

Monday, October 8th – Friday, October 12th:
St. Petersburg (and film Russian Ark)
*Monday, October 8th: Second and last screening of Russian Ark @ 3 pm
*(Wednesday, October 10th Face-to-Face Review for Midterm)

- Face-to-face Midterm:
Wednesday, October 17th Face-to-Face

- Unit Three: 19th Century

Monday, October 15th – Friday, October 19th:
Historical Contexts: Napoleon's Invasion through Emancipation

Monday, October 22nd – Friday, October 26th:
The Golden Age of Literature
(Wednesday, October 24th Face-to-Face)

Monday, October 29th – Friday, November 2nd:
The Arts in the 19th century
(Wednesday, October 31st Face-to-Face)

- Unit Four: 20th and 21st Centuries

Monday, November 5th – Friday, November 9th:
Historical Contexts: The fin de siècle through Putin
(Wednesday, November 7th Face-to-Face)

Monday, November 12th – Friday, November 16th:
Moscow
(Wednesday, November 14th Face-to-Face)

Monday, November 19th – Tuesday, November 20th:
The Arts in the Soviet Union Part I
(Wednesday, November 21st Face-to-Face)

Monday, November 26th – Friday, November 30th:
The Arts in the Soviet Union Part II
*Monday, November 26th: First screening of My Perestroika @ 4 pm
*Tuesday, November 27th: Second and last screening of My Perestroika @ 6pm
(Wednesday, November 28th Face-to-Face)

Monday, December 3rd – Friday, December 7th:
Politics and Journalism (and film My Perestroika)
(Wednesday, December 5th Face-to-Face Review for Cumulative Final Exam)

- Face-to-Face Final Exam:
Thursday, December 13th at 8:00 am in our classroom