

RUS 320. Russian Culture and Civilization

Class Schedule: T/F 12:30-1:45 p.m. Meeting Room: Ettinger 105

Instructor: Dr. Luba Iskold Office: Ettinger, 102A

Phone: (484) 664-3516 (leave a voice-mail) E-mail: iskold@muhlenberg.edu

Office Hours: M/TR 10:30-11:30 a.m. T/F 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Required Texts:

Billington, J. H. (1999). The face of Russia. New York, NY: TV Books. ISBN # 1-57500-089-X. Further referred as FR.

Rzevsky, N. (1998). The Cambridge companion to modern

Russian culture. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. ISBN # 0-521-4779-9. Further referred as CC.

Packet: Russian Cultural Studies: An Introduction.

Films and Video:

The Face of Russia

Homage to Chagall

The Mighty Fistful

The Secret Life of Sergey Eisenstein

Stanislavsky Maker of the Modern Theater

My Name is Ivan

Burnt by the Sun

Soviet TV

Recommended Literature:

Auty, R., & D. Obolensky (1980). Introduction to Russian art and architecture

Cambridge ; New York : Cambridge University. Companion to Russian studies; v. 3.

ISBN # 0521208955.

Brumfield, W. C. (1983). *Gold in azure : one thousand years of Russian architecture* Boston, Mass. : D.R. Godine. ISBN # n/a.

Bushnell, J. (1990). *Moscow graffiti : language and subculture*. Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman, ISBN # 0-044-45168-7.

Gerhart, G. (1995). *The Russian's world, life and language*. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers. ISBN # 0-15-501053-0.

Guerman, M. (1979). [translation from the Russian, W. Freeman, D. Saunders, and

C. Binns]. *Art of the October Revolution*. New York: Abrams. ISBN # 0-810-90675-9.

Kelly, K. (1998). *Russian cultural studies: An introduction*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. ISBN # 0-19-871511-0.

ISBN 0520065778

Mally, L. (1990). *Culture of the future: the Proletkult movement in revolutionary Russia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

ISBN 0-520-06577-8

McDaniel, T. (1996). *The agony of the Russian idea* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. ISBN # 0-691-02786-2

Milner, J. (1993). *A dictionary of Russian and Soviet artists, 1420-1970*.

Woodbridge, Suffolk : Antique Collectors' Club. ISBN # 1-851-49182-1.

Roose-Evans, J. (1970). *Experimental theatre from Stanislavsky to today*. New York, NY: Universe Books (Stanislavsky's life in art.--The school of Realism. Meyerhold

and the Russian avant-garde.--Tairov and the synthetic theatre.--Vakhtangov's achievement). New York, Universe Books. ISBN # 0-876-63119-7.

Williams, R (1997). *Russia imagined: Art, culture, and national identity, 1840-1995*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing. ISBN # 0-820-43470-1.

Rosenberg, W.G. (1984). *Bolshevik visions: first phase of the cultural revolution*

in Soviet Russia. Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis ISBN # 0-882-33650-9.

Complete list of titles available at TREXLER LIBRARY (125 books relevant to this course) may be obtained from the instructor.

Guidelines to remember:

Attendance and Participation:

Attendance will be taken and is expected at each scheduled class meeting. Students who are absent more than four times without justification will be penalized on the final grade. Comply with Muhlenberg's Academic Behavior Code in all work for this course (consult the Student Handbook for details). Your active presence in class is one of the requirements for this course. Be prepared to participate in class discussion and answer questions on assigned topics.

Depending on how well you prepare the material for class discussion, there may be short quizzes of a "convince me" nature. Those will consist of multiple choice, true/false, or brief essay questions and will count as points for class participation.

Why study Russian culture?

For many centuries Russia has been enigmatic for the West. Twice this century this area of the world has witnessed revolutionary changes that have not only profoundly affected the lives of its citizens, but have also influenced the course of world history. With the fall of communism and the end of the Cold War, it is now very important to understand this vital region. A study of culture is one of the best ways of learning to understand

"the soul" of the Russian people.

What are we going to do in this class?

We are going to learn about and discuss selected topics in Russian intellectual thought, art, architecture, literature, music, theater, and film from the Empire to contemporary Russia. We will focus on the origins and evolution of the Russian culture as a result of the countries political, social, and regional dynamics. In the course of the semester, you will write three papers (library research) and prepare one 15-minute in-class presentation as part of your team research project. Further details will be discussed in class.

Major Project Topics:

- The elements of old Russian culture: customs and beliefs in art.

- Imperial Russia: material culture in the 17-19 centuries; the best-known names in literature, music and art.

- Russia in the 20th century: from tsars to commissars. What's next?

Your Papers:

Each of the three papers listed in the syllabus should be a 3-4 page (typed, double-spaced) essay in MLA or APA format (make sure that the format is consistent across the entire paper, i.e. the title page, bibliography, etc.) The topics for those projects will be discussed and finalized in class. In your essays, present an argument (or thesis) in response to the topic question. It's a good idea to introduce your reader to that argument in the paper's introductory paragraph. In other words, you need to present a thesis statement early in the paper.

The papers will be graded with by the following criteria:

1. Title page - 5 pts.
2. Description of research (limited to 300 words) - 25 pts.
3. Introductory paragraph - 15 pts.
4. Body: describe the subject -- 30 pts.
5. Concluding paragraph: describe what you have learned from doing this project-- 15 pts.
6. Bibliography (not less than five entries) -- 10 pts.

Your Presentation:

Your final presentation for this class will be a team project. You will work in groups of four on topics of your choice. Confirm the topic, the group of your classmates, and the date of your presentation by March 3. Your oral in-class presentations will be graded by the following criteria:

1. Visual aids: your choice of pictures, multimedia, posters, etc. -- 25 pts.
2. Ability to manage given time (around 10 min. per student; total time of team presentation should not exceed 20 min). -- 10 pts.

3. Interesting form of presentation -- 20 pts.

4. Ability to demonstrate how the content of your presentation ties in with the project of the team -- 30 pts.

5. Ability to keep the audience interested in the subject -- 15 pts.

Submit a paper on the topic of your oral presentation no later than May, 8.

The paper will be graded according to the guidelines listed in "Your Papers" section of the syllabus.

Grading: Paper I 15%

Paper II 15%

Paper III 15%

Film review 10%

Research project/presentation 25%

Participation in class 20%

Topic Outline

Date

Subject

Assignment

Jan. 18

Course goals and objectives. Introduction: a brief historical overview. Russia and the Soviet Union. Western vs. Russian approaches to Russian culture.

Class notes. Define the terms "culture" and "cultural identity"

Jan. 21

Folklore and culture: Icon as a base for Russian Arts.

Andrey Rublev.

FR pp. 31-48

pp. 49-69

Jan. 25

Moscow and the Kremlin. Gold in azure: The architecture of churches and towers.

FR pp. 25, 40-43,
55-57, 108.

Jan. 28

A "Window to Europe"-- St. Petersburg as the Capital of Russia. Peter the Great.

Read: Pushkin, A.S.

The Bronze Horseman

Feb. 1

Glorifying the power of the tsars: Russian architecture of the 18th century.

Western influence on style in architecture: Bartolomeo Rastrelli

FR pp. 80-90

Feb. 4

Emerging from darkness into light: Anna, Elithabeth, and Katherine the Great.

FR pp. 91-102

Feb. 8

Literature: influences and themes; genres, periods, and themes. Golden age of Russian poetry: Pushkin.

CC pp. 174-200

Paper I

(first draft due for peer review)

Feb. 11

Human faces behind the facades of power: The literature of Gogol.

Read: Gogol, N.V.

Dead Souls

FR pp. 11-140

Feb. 15

The neo-Russian style in art. The Society of Wandering Exhibitions.

Class notes.

WWW resources

Paper I

(second draft due for teacher review)

Feb. 18

The symbolist aesthetics: Vasily Kandinsky

The Russian avant-garde: Kazimir Malevich
CC pp. 208-218

Feb. 22

Marc Chagall: Paintings, murals, and stained glass windows.
Class notes

Paper I

(final copy due)

Feb. 25

Music: Musorgsky, M.P.
FR pp. 151-178

Feb. 29

The mighty fistful (handful)
Class notes

March 3

Work on Research projects
Spring Recess begins at the conclusion of classes
Team research/
Outline due
Mid-semester grades due

March 7

<<< Spring Recess >>>

March 10

<<< Spring Recess >>>

March 14

Bolshevik Views of culture: Cultural Revolution
Packet

March 17

Authority vs. autonomy: Socialist realism in literature
Packet

March 21

The origins of Russian Theater: Stanislavsky, K.D.
Post-revolutionary theater in Russia.
Packet
CC pp.137-156

March 24

Soviet music: Dmitry Shostakovich and
Valentin Prokofiev

Note: Course withdrawals with grade of W till Monday,

March 27.

FR pp. 178-184

CC pp. 258-263

Field trip:

Prokofiev's Ballet Romeo and Juliet

March 28

Cinema: October revolution in the Soviet film. Sergey Eisenstein: Bronenosets
Potemkin.

FR pp. 186-208

Paper II

(first draft due)

March 31

Building a new reality: The visual arts in 1921-1953

The art of political poster.

Packet

April 4

World War II in the Soviet Art

Class notes

Paper II

(final copy due)

April 7

The retreat from dogmatism. Film: My name is Ivan

April 11

Media as social engineer. Soviet TV: news, sports, entertainment, and children's
programs.

Class Notes

April 14

Populism under Khrushchev and Brezhnev. Russian culture in the Gorbachev's
era.

Packet

Film review due

(My name is Ivan)

April 18

Towards the new pluralistic consensus.
Packet

April 21

<<< Easter Recess >>>

April 25

Student Presentations

April 28

Student Presentations

May 2

Burned by the Sun

Film

May 6-13

Final Exams

Paper III

Due no later than May, 8.