

**University of Pittsburgh**  
**Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures**

Russian 0870: History of Russian Film 1  
Fall 2012 (2131)  
Wednesday 1:00–4:50  
Cathedral of Learning 302

Gerald McCausland  
Office Hours: Tuesday 3:00–4:00  
Thursday 2:00–3:00

email: <gmmst11@pitt.edu>

**Course Overview**

**Required Texts**

Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th ed. New York: MLA, 2003.  
Kenez, Peter. *Cinema and Soviet Society: From the Revolution to the Death of Stalin*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2001.  
Taylor, Richard and Ian Christie, eds. *The Film Factory: Russian and Soviet Cinema in Documents, 1896-1939*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

**Research Resource**

Padunov, Vladimir, maintainer. *University of Pittsburgh: Russian and Soviet Cinema: Bibliography*.  
<[http://www.pitt.edu/~slavic/video/cinema\\_biblio.html](http://www.pitt.edu/~slavic/video/cinema_biblio.html)>

Students will be introduced to several other tools and resources for research on Soviet and Russian cinema throughout the course.

**Requirements**

1. Students are required to attend all class meetings. The instructor should not be expected to make, and will not make, any special effort to accommodate students who are absent from any class meeting. Students who miss a class meeting are responsible for screening the film (and any related clips) on their own and for obtaining all relevant handouts and notes from their fellow students.
2. Students are required to complete all reading assignments before the class meeting for which they are listed on the class schedule. Depending on the nature of the readings, students will be expected to have absorbed the factual information contained therein and/or to be ready to discuss the theoretical, aesthetic, or political issues raised by the author(s). Although the instructor may occasionally review the reading assignment during class, the reading should always be considered prerequisite to rather than a first runthrough of the topic for that particular day.
3. In addition to class discussions, historical documents, theoretical investigations, and interpretive articles will be discussed prior to each class meeting using the Blackboard (Courseweb) online discussion forums. The instructor will pose specific questions to begin these discussions. All students are required to post to the discussion forum at least one time each week in response to the instructor's prompt questions. In order to receive a grade higher than B-, students are expected to respond to the contributions of fellow course participants with regularity. Contributions to the discussion forum, whether in response to the instructor or to fellow students, should be relevant to and reference the assigned readings for that week. Uninformed opinion and irrelevant tangential musings, while perhaps valuable, will not contribute to the grade for this portion of the course. The discussion for each set of assigned readings will be closed after the class for which those readings were assigned. A separate space will be available on the forum for students to continue discussions past the assigned date and/or to start their own topics. To the extent that these student-initiated

discussions remain relevant to the material that we are studying, participation in them *will* be credited to the grade for this portion of the course.

4. There will be seven required formal writing assignments over the course of the semester along with one optional assignment. All writing assignments must be submitted in hard copy by 1:00 pm on the day of class. Papers submitted electronically are not accepted. Late papers are not accepted. Failure to submit an assignment when it is due will result in a grade of "0" (zero) for that assignment.
5. There will be a comprehensive written final examination during the final examination period. Students should not make plans to leave Pittsburgh before the end of the examination period until the time of the Russian 0870 exam has been confirmed.
6. While the instructor will make a good-faith effort to avoid the use of e-mail as the *sole* method of communication of important course information, all students are required to monitor their university e-mail accounts (@pitt.edu) or to forward their university e-mail to another reliable address. Any student choosing to forward their mail to another account bears full responsibility for the reliability of that account, including the proper configuration of spam filters. Failure to receive e-mail from the instructor is not a valid excuse for any resulting disadvantage suffered by a student.

### Evaluation

1. Students are expected to participate in all class discussions and to contribute to the collective work of the group in a thoughtful and informed way. This implies familiarity with the reading assignments and with all films screened to date. Students will receive a grade for their participation in class for each class meeting. The instructor will explain the mechanics of this grading procedure during the first class meeting; students are welcome and encouraged to request feedback from the instructor about their class participation at any time throughout the semester.
2. There will be several unannounced quizzes given during the semester. They will be given at the start of class and will test the students' comprehension of the reading material assigned for that day and the students' detailed familiarity with the film assigned to be screened the previous week. Any student absent for a quiz or late for the start of that class meeting will receive a "0" (zero) for that quiz.
3. There will be 7 mandatory and 1 optional writing assignments over the course of the semester. Each mandatory writing assignment must be submitted in the specified number of hard copies by 1:00 pm on the day it is due. The optional assignment will be accepted in the instructor's mailbox (CL 1417) during the last week of classes, from 1 December until a final deadline of **12 noon** on Monday, 8 December. Each mandatory assignment will receive a letter grade. The grades for all writing assignments will carry equal weight among themselves in the computation of the grade, regardless of differences in the nature and length of each individual writing task.
4. The final course grade will be computed according to the following mathematical schema:
  - Papers: 42%
  - Final Examination: 15%
  - Blackboard Electronic Discussion: 15%
  - In-class Discussion: 18%
  - Quizzes: 10%

## Writing Assignments

This course is designed to fulfill the University of Pittsburgh's undergraduate writing requirement (W). Thus, a significant amount of work in the course will take the form of various writing assignments. Each assignment will be designed to develop the student's ability to formulate ideas critically and clearly, to construct and structure an intellectual argument, and to format his/her writing in conformity with the customs and practices of film studies as an academic field. Attention will be devoted to these customs and practices as well as to the individual student's proficiency and adeptness in written expression.

The first three writing tasks will be on specific assigned topics. They will be relatively short and will thus require a highly disciplined and focused writing style. Regardless of the length, all assignments should be well structured, with a clearly identifiable beginning, middle, and end. Each specific writing assignment will be described by the instructor in class, in oral and written form, one week before the assignment is due. The nature of the assignments will vary each week but will form a progression from simple expository writing to complex argumentation using varied secondary sources. Significant attention will be devoted to the development of good judgment in the use of secondary literature and in the complex issues regarding its attribution, documentation, and representation. The formatting of all papers is to conform strictly to the guidelines of the "Russian 0870 Style Sheet," which will be distributed and discussed at the first class meeting.

The last four writing tasks will consist in four discrete steps in the writing of a short critical research paper (length of final product estimated at 10 pages). The form and content requirements outlined in the previous paragraph apply to each stage of this work as well. Each step along the way of writing this paper will be graded individually and all grades will count equally. In addition, a final grade will be assigned to the research paper as a finished product.

Students will have the opportunity to write an eighth, optional paper, to be handed in during the period 9–14 December. If a student takes this option, the grade for this paper will replace the lowest grade received on the previous seven required papers, regardless of whether such a replacement will raise or lower the student's grade average.

All students bear full responsibility, from the second class meeting on, for understanding the notion of plagiarism and for avoiding even the appearance of passing off another's work as one's own. The penalty for plagiarism in this course, intentional or unintentional, is a grade of "F" **for the course** and/or other administrative action according to University of Pittsburgh policies.

Except for the one document cited above, all students are urged in the strongest possible terms to avoid the use of the internet in the research and writing of their papers during the first seven weeks of this course. In the second half of this course, we will devote some time to a consideration of the many resources available on the internet for cinema studies research and of the way in which judicious use can be made of these resources.

## Academic Integrity

By remaining enrolled in the course, you not only agree to abide by the stipulations of this course overview, but also understand that we will follow rigorously the rules spelled out in the *Handbook on Integrity* regarding cheating, plagiarism, etc. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with these rules and observe them. Any infraction will be penalized accordingly.

## Disability

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union, 412-648-7890 or 412-383-7355 (TTY) as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

Classroom Recording

Students may not use any electronic recording devices in the classroom without written verification from DRS that such recording is a necessary accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## Schedule of Assignments, Film Screenings, and Papers

Assignments from *The Film Factory* [Taylor] are given by reading selection number. All other readings indicate page numbers.

### 29 August 2012

**In-class screening:** Vladimir Romashkov, *Sten'ka Razin* (1908)

### 5 September 2012

- Gibaldi 51–61.
- *The Film Factory* [hereafter: Taylor] #1, #5, #7
- *Cinema and Soviet Society* [hereafter: Kenez] 9–25
- Tsivian, Yuri. “Early Russian Cinema: Some Observations.” *Inside the Film Factory* [hereafter IFF] 7–30.

**In-class screening:** Evgenii Bauer, *A Life for a Life* (1916)

### 12 September 2012

- **Paper #1** due before start of class
- Gibaldi 63–113; 115–118.
- Taylor #10–14, #29, #32
- Christie, Ian. “Down to earth: *Aelita* relocated.” IFF 80–102.
- Youngblood, Denise J. “The return of the native: Yakov Protazanov and Soviet cinema.” IFF 103–123.

**In-class screening:** Iakov Protazanov, *Aelita: Queen of Mars* (1924)

### 19 September 2012

- Gibaldi 123–232. Be prepared for a quiz on this section.
- Kenez 26–46
- Taylor #8–9, #20, #22–23, , #34
- Yampolsky, Mikhail. “Kuleshov’s experiments and the new anthropology of the actor.” IFF 31–50.

**In-class screening:** Lev Kuleshov, *The Extraordinary Adventures of Mr. West in the Land of the Bolsheviks* (1924)

### 26 September 2012

- **Paper #2** due before start of class
- Kepley, Vance Jr. “Intolerance and the Soviets.” IFF 51–59.
- Kepley, Vance Jr. “The origins of Soviet cinema: a study in industry development.” IFF 60–79.
- Kenez 47–67
- **Outside screening:** Sergei Eisenstein, *Battleship Potemkin* (1926)
- Taylor #30, #35, #39, #40, #42, #49, #51–52, #54–55

**In-class screening:** Vsevolod Pudovkin, *Mother* (1926)

3 October 2012

- Eisenstein, from *Film Form* [handout]
  - Pudovkin, from “The Film Director and the Film Material” [handout]
  - Taylor #56, # 59, #61, #65–66, #70, #79, #84–86
- In-class screening:** Sergei Eisenstein, *October* (1928)

10 October 2012

- **Paper #3** due before start of class
  - Kenez 68–87
  - Burns, P.E. “A NEP Moscow Address: Abram Room's Third Meshchanskaia (Bed and Sofa) in historical context.” [handout]
  - Taylor #47, #69
- In-class screening:** Abram Room, *Bed and Sofa* (1927)

17 October 2012

- **Paper #4** due before start of class
  - Petric, Vlada. “Cinematic Abstraction as a Means of Conveying Ideological Messages in The Man With the Movie Camera.” [handout]
  - Taylor #21, #26, #28, #31, #37, #41, #43, #48, #57–60
- In-class screening:** Dziga Vertov, *Man with a Movie-Camera* (1929)

24 October 2012

- Taylor #15, #36, #83, #98, #100–102, #123
- In-class screening:** Grigorii Kozintsev and Leonid Trauberg, *New Babylon* (1929)

31 October 2012

- **Paper #5** due before start of class
  - Kenez 91–113
  - Taylor #110, #112, #114, #117
- In-class screening:** Aleksandr Dovzhenko, *Earth* (1930)

7 November 2012

- **Outside screening:** Nikolai Ekk, *The Road to Life* (1931)
  - Christie, Ian. “Making Sense of Early Soviet Sound” IFF 176–192.
  - Eisenschitz, Bernard. “A fickle man, or portrait of Boris Barnet as a Soviet director.” IFF 151–164.
  - Kenez 114–126
  - Taylor #92, #105, #111
- In-class screening:** Boris Barnet, *Outskirts* (1933)

14 November 2012

- **Paper #6** due before start of class
- Taylor, Richard. "Ideology as mass entertainment: Boris Shumyatsky and Soviet cinema in the 1930s." IFF 193–216.
- Hicks, Jeremy. "Educating Chapaev: from document to myth." [handout]
- Kenez 143–164
- Taylor #127, #132

**In-class screening:** Sergei Vasil'ev and Georgii Vasil'ev, *Chapaev* (1934)

28 November 2012

- Kenez 114–142
- Taylor #131, #133, #135, #140

**In-class screening:** Grigorii Aleksandrov, *Circus* (1936)

5 December 2012

- **Paper #7** due before start of class
- Taylor, #149–152, #154

**In-class screening:** Sergei Eisenstein, *Alexander Nevsky* (1938)

10 December 2012 (not a class meeting day)

- Paper #8 (optional) due in CL 1417 no later than 12 noon

14 December 2012 @ 8:00 am – 9:50 am

- Final Examination in [room to be announced]