

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

Russian 2621: Russian Drama  
Fall Semester 2012  
Wednesdays 4:00 — 6:30  
CL 1218

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:00—11:00; Thursdays 11:00—12:00, and Fridays 12:00—1:00;  
and by appointment

**ABSENCE AND ATTENDANCE:**

Students are expected to attend all classes. Absence due to personal illness, as well as illness or death in the family, must be documented. Absent students are required to obtain all in-class handouts and class notes for the session missed from another student in the class; all missing assignments must be made up. All unexcused absences will receive a grade of “UA” for that session. Three such unexcused absences will result in an “F” for the course.

**ESSENTIAL ENGLISH-LANGUAGE STUDIES OF THE HISTORY OF THEATER IN PRE-REVOLUTIONARY RUSSIA:**

Leach, Robert and Victor Borovsky, eds. *A history of Russian theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999.

Schuler, Catherine A. *Theatre & Identity in Imperial Russia*. Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 2009.

Stites, Richard. *Serfdom, Society, and the Arts in Imperial Russia: The Pleasure and the Power*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2005. [Part Three: “Empire of Performance,” 129-280]

**PRESENTATIONS:**

Each student in the course will be responsible for two presentations during the seminar. Each presentation will last a maximum of 15-minutes and consist of two parts, either two aesthetic biographies of minor playwrights (Kniazhnin and Kapnist, Sukhovo-Kobylin and Pisemskii), or one aesthetic biography of a major playwright, or an aesthetic biography linked to an aesthetic movement/tradition (Sumarkov and Neo-Classicism, Fonvizin and Satire, Ostrovskii and Realism, Gor’kii and Naturalism). Handouts are mandatory for each of the presentations:

- a. aesthetic biographies: a chronology of the life of the playwright including all works for the theater; a summary of influences and the importance/relevance of the playwright’s contribution to the development of drama in Russia; a list of all sources consulted and major studies
- b. aesthetic movement/tradition: a definition that situates the movement/tradition in relation to the past (the movement/tradition to which it was opposed or grew out of), the historical present (its implementation during the years of its dominance of the Russian stage), and the future (to what it will lead—including what will be rejected and maintained); a list of all sources consulted and major studies.

## **PERFORMANCES:**

At the start of the second meeting of the course (week 2: Wednesday 5 September) all students must sign up for three performances (Griboedov, Pushkin, Gogol', Turgenev, Tolstoi, Tolstoi, or Chekhov). Students should use the time between today's meeting and the next to consult with each other about the specific plays (not scenes!) they want to perform. Students must notify the instructor no later than the Monday before the proposed Wednesday performance of the specific scene they will be performing. Performances are to be walk-throughs, not dramatic readings: while students will read their lines, emphasis will be placed on blocking the stage (placement of props, location of bodies and movements on stage, background—foreground relations, etc.). The instructor will arrange to move the performance to a larger space (with luck CL 1228).

## **RESEARCH PAPER:**

All students must submit a final research paper (20-30 pages) on Wednesday 12 December. Topics for the research paper must be discussed with the instructor before beginning work on the project. Students are encouraged to speak with the instructor as soon as possible to begin work in choosing and researching a topic. All research papers must conform in layout, documentation, and works cited to the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.

## **EVALUATION AND GRADES:**

Grades will be calculated using the following percentages: final research paper (40%), preparation and participation (15%), presentations (25%), and performances (20%). Students are encouraged to meet with the instructor periodically to review their grades and progress in the course.

## **Schedule of Assignments:**

<b>Week 1:</b>	Wednesday 29 August	Syllabus and introduction
<b>Week 2:</b>	Wednesday 5 September	Neo-(Pseudo-)Classicism: Tragedy Aleksandr Sumarokov (1718-1777) <i>Khorev</i> (1747) <i>Dmitrii Samozvanets</i> (1771) <b>Presentation: Sumarokov and Classicism</b>
<b>Week 3:</b>	Wednesday 12 September	Rise of Satiric Comedy: Denis Fonvizin (1745-1792) <i>Brigadir</i> (1769) <i>Nedorosl'</i> (1783) <b>Presentation: Fonvizin and Satire</b>
<b>Week 4:</b>	Wednesday 19 September	Late 18 <sup>th</sup> Century Comedy: Iakov Kniazhnin (1742-1791) <i>Khvastun</i> (1786) Vasilii Kapnist (1758-1823) <i>Iabeda</i> (1798) <b>Presentation: Kniazhnin and Kapnist</b>

- Week 5:** Wednesday 26 September      Socio-Political Comedy:  
Aleksandr Griboedov (1795-1829)  
*Gore ot uma* (1822-23)  
**Presentation: Griboedov**
- Week 6:** Wednesday 3 October      Romantic Tragedy:  
Aleksandr Pushkin (1799-1837)  
*Boris Godunov* (1825)  
*Malen'kie tragedii* (1830)  
**Presentation: Pushkin**
- Week 7:** Wednesday 10 October      Satire:  
Nikolai Gogol' (1809-1852)  
*Revizor* (1836)  
*Zhenit'ba* (1832-42)  
**Presentation: Gogol'**
- Week 8:** Wednesday 17 October      Realistic Comedy and Tragedy:  
Aleksandr Ostrovskii (1823-1886)  
*Bednaia nevesta* (1852)  
*Groza* (1860)  
**Presentation: Ostrovskii and Realism**
- Week 9:** Wednesday 24 October      Ivan Turgenev (1818-1883)  
*Mesiats v derevne* (1855/72)  
*Vecher v Sorrente* (1882)  
**Presentation: Turgenev**
- Week 10:** Wednesday 31 October      Aleksandr Sukhovo-Kobylin (1817-1903)  
*Svad'ba Krechinskogo* (1855)  
Aleksei Pisemskii (1820-1881)  
*Gor'kaia sud'bina* (1859)  
**Presentation: Sukhovo-Kobylin and Pisemskii**
- Week 11:** Wednesday 7 November      Aleksei Tolstoi (1817-1825)  
*Smert' Ioanna Groznogo* (1866)  
Lev Tolstoi (1828-1910)  
*Vlast' t'my* (1887)  
**Presentation: Tolstoi and Tolstoi**
- Week 12:** Wednesday 14 November      Anton Chekhov (1860-1904)  
*Chaika* (1896)  
*Diadia Vania* (1899)  
**Presentation: Chekhov and his plays**

- Week 13:** Wednesday 28 November *Vishnevyyi sad* (1900)  
*Tri sestry* (1901)  
**Presentation: Chekhov and MKhAT**
- Week 14:** Wednesday 5 December Rise of Naturalism:  
Maksim Gor'kii (1868-1936)  
*Na dne* (1902)  
**Presentation: Gor'kii and Naturalism**
- Week 15:** Wednesday 12 December **Research paper and course evaluation due**