

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

Russian 2640: Post-Stalinist Russian Cinema  
Fall Semester 2006 (07-1)  
Mondays 2:00 — 6:00  
CL 249

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:15—1:30, Wednesdays 11:00—12:00, and Thursdays 1:00—2:00;  
and by appointment

**I. REQUIRED TEXTS:**

- Farraday, George. *Revolt of the Filmmakers: The Struggle for Artistic Autonomy and the Fall of the Soviet Film Industry*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State UP, 2000.
- Horton, Andrew and Michael Brashinsky. *The Zero Hour: Glasnost and Soviet Cinema in Transition*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1992.
- Lawton, Anna. *Before the Fall: Soviet Cinema in the Gorbachev Years*. Washington DC: New Academia Publishing, 2002.
- . *Imaging Russia: Film and Facts*. Washington DC: New Academia Publishing, 2004.
- Prokhorov, Alexander, ed. *Springtime for Soviet Cinema: Re/Viewing the 1960s*. Pittsburgh: Russian Film Symposium, 2001.
- Woll, Josephine. *Real Images: Soviet Cinema and the Thaw*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2000.  
photocopies of chapters/articles by Liehm, Ratchford, and Tarkovskii.

**II. RECOMMENDED TEXTS:**

- Leyda, Jay. *Kino: A History of the Russian and Soviet Film*. 3d ed. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1983.
- Liehm, Mira and Antonin. *The Most Important Art: Soviet and East European Film After 1945*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1977.
- Stites, Richard. *Russian popular culture: Entertainment and society since 1900*. NY: Cambridge UP, 1992.
- Taylor, Richard and Ian Christie, eds. *The Film Factory: Russian and Soviet Cinema in Documents, 1896-1939*. Trans. Richard Taylor. London and NY: Routledge, 1994.

**III. TEXTS ON RUSSO-SOVIET CINEMA IN HILLMAN LIBRARY:**

Many of the texts relevant to post-Stalin Russian cinema are located in Hillman Library. For their individual research projects, students should consult the online bibliography for Russo-Soviet cinema at

[http://www.pitt.edu/~slavic/video/cinema\\_biblio.html](http://www.pitt.edu/~slavic/video/cinema_biblio.html)

and then check Pittcat for the holdings of specific titles in Hillman Library.

**IV. READING, SCREENING, and WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:**

The Schedule of Assignments provides an itemization of screening and writing assignments for the entire semester. With the exception of the first meeting of the seminar, there will be no films screened in class. Instead, students will be assigned three films to view in the following week and the first half of each meeting of the seminar (two hours) will be a detailed examination and discussion of each film.

Reading assignments are more loosely defined: students must read in their entirety the Prokhorov and Woll texts on the cinema of the Thaw by the beginning of week three of the seminar; the Farraday by the beginning of week six; the Horton/Brashinsky and Lawton (*Before the Fall*) by

week nine; the second Lawton by week twelve. Photocopies of articles distributed in class must be read by the next meeting of the seminar. Any student not present in class when photocopied materials are distributed must obtain a copy of the materials from another student before the next scheduled meeting of the class and is responsible for that reading. Since students will receive a number of grades for each meeting of the course (preparation, participation, and quality of written work), students are encouraged not to attend any session for which they have not thoroughly prepared. Any suspicion that students are not keeping up with the reading will result in a bombardment of quizzes that will lower grades.

Screening assignments: students are required to view all assigned films prior to the next meeting of the class. Students should arrange a convenient time and location for the assigned screening. The instructor will provide viewing copies of the assigned films for the scheduled screenings. All films must be returned to the instructor immediately after the screening to ensure that other students will be able to view the film in time. Several of the films scheduled screenings do not have English subtitles (marked with a double asterisk in the Schedule of Assignments). Consequently, students who do not speak Russian should arrange to view these films with a Russian speaker to provide a voice-over translation.

Writing assignments: there will be weekly writing assignments and students must submit all writing assignments on the date due. All assignments must be submitted in a sufficient number of copies for each member of the course. With the exception of the final research paper (see below), all writing assignments should be limited to one or two printed pages maximum. There are three types of writing assignments for the course:

(i) “viewing questions and rationalization”: students must compile a list of viewing questions for the assigned films. Viewing questions should both assist and guide students in making sense of the film. The rationalization for the viewing questions must state explicitly (and elaborate) the formal and content considerations that are central to the film and that are embedded in the viewing questions.

(ii) “trope assignments”: students must choose a specific trope (positive hero, Party-mindedness, class-mindedness, people-mindedness, idea-mindedness, monumentality, historical inevitability, socialist competition, bureaucracy, the family, labor, etc.) and identify—on the basis of specific sequences in specific films—the changes that the trope undergoes as it moves from one socio-political period to another.

(iii) “research paper assignments”: students must submit an abstract (maximum two printed paragraphs) of their proposed research paper on 16 October to every member of the class. All students (as well as the instructor) must comment on and make suggestions concerning the abstract. Students must submit a revised version of the abstract together with a preliminary list of relevant works on 30 October; an annotated bio-filmography (and expanded list of relevant works) on 13 November; and an outline of the research paper with a finalized list of relevant works on 27 November; and a final research paper on 11 December.

#### **V. 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 they 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.

**VI. QUIZZES:**

There will be a number of unannounced quizzes during the semester on assigned readings, screenings, and material covered in the course. No quizzes will be re-scheduled and no make-up quizzes will be given.

**VII. RESEARCH PAPER:**

All students must submit a final research paper (20-30 pages) on Monday 11 December. Topics for the research paper must be discussed with the instructor before beginning work on the project. Since the first “research paper assignment” is due on 16 October, students are encouraged to begin work immediately 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* (6<sup>th</sup> edition).

**VIII. EVALUATION AND GRADES:**

Grades will be calculated using the following percentages: final research paper (30%), preparation and participation (10%), quizzes (10%), viewing questions and rationalizations (15%), trope assignments (20%), and research paper assignments (15%). Students are encouraged to meet with the instructor periodically to review their grades and progress in the course.

## IX. SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS:

### **week 1: 28 August: Late Stalinism, 1945-53: Varnishing the Monumental**

*bezkonfliktnost', lakirovka, malokatin'e*

Spectacle films and monumental realism

screen: Mikhail Chiaureli: *The Fall of Berlin* (1949)

assignments for week 2:

a. reading: Liehm 47-75 and 199-215; Prokhorov; Woll  
(recommended: Stites 98-122)

b. screening: Grigorii Aleksandrov: *Volga-Volga* (1938)

\*\*Ivan Pyr'ev: *Cossacks of the Kuban* (1949)

\*\*El'dar Riazanov: *Carnival Night* (1956)

c. writing: viewing questions for *Volga-Volga*, *Cossacks of the Kuban*, *Carnival Night* and rationalization

### **week 2: 4 September: Was “Life Getting Better”?: The Stalin and Thaw Musical**

The Thaw: 1956-1957

Problems of periodization

The Re-emergence of Private Life and the Reconstruction of the Family

Revolutionary Leninism

assignments for week 3:

a. reading: Prokhorov; Woll  
(recommended: Stites 123-147)

b. screening: Feliks Mironer and Marlen Khutsiev: *Spring on Zarechnaia Street* (1956)

Mikhail Kalatozov: *The Cranes Are Flying* (1957)

\*\*Lev Kulidzhanov and Iakov Segel: *The House I Live In* (1957)

c. writing: Stalinist/Thaw trope

### **week 3: 11 September: Recasting the Positive Hero**

The Thaw: 1957-1960

From Factory to Foyer: Shifting the Site of Identity Formation

State Truth versus Personal Truth

assignments for week 4:

a. reading: Prokhorov; Woll

b. screening: Grigorii Chukhrai: *Ballad of a Soldier* (1959)

Grigorii Chukhrai: *Clear Sky* (1961)

Georgii Daneliia and Igor' Talankin: *Serezha [A Summer to Remember]* (1960)

c. writing: viewing questions for *Ballad of a Soldier*, *Clear Sky*, *Serezha* and rationalization

**week 4: 18 September: Redefining the Cult of the Artist and the Status of the Artistic Object**

The Thaw: 1960-1964

The Glass Ceiling: The limits of Cultural Politics

Fathers and Sons: Ordinary Individuals and the Gifted Ones

assignments for week 5:

a. reading: Tarkovskii 15-35; Prokhorov; Woll

b. screening: Andrei Tarkovskii: *Ivan's Childhood* (1962)

\*\*Marlen Khutsiev/Sergei Gerasimov: *Lenin's Guard/I'm Twenty* (1964)

c. writing: viewing questions for *Ivan's Childhood*, *Lenin's Guard/I'm Twenty* and rationalization

**week 5: 25 September: Breaching Taboos I: Artistic Experimentation, Ethnic Identity, and Social Satire**

The Thaw within Stagnation: 1964-1967

Reassessing the Past and Present

"Poetic Realism" and Ethnic Identity

Shelved Films

assignments for week 6:

a. reading: Prokhorov; Woll; Farraday

b. screening: Sergei Paradjanov: *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* (1964)

*Beginning of an Unknown Era* (1967/1987): Andrei Smirnov: *Angel* and Larisa Shepitko: *Homeland of Electricity*

Andrei Konchalovskii: *The Story of Asia Kliachina Who Loved But Did Not Marry* (1967/1987)

c. writing: viewing questions for *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors*, *Angel/Homeland of Electricity*, *The Story of Asia Kliachina* and rationalization

**week 6: 2 October\*: Breaching Taboos II: The Power of the Shelf and Limited Distribution**

The First Shoots of Stagnation: 1967-1971

Redefining the Popular

Heretical History

The Constructed Family

assignments for week 7:

a. reading: Farraday

b. screening: Aleksandr Askol'dov: *Commissar* (1967/1987)

Aleksei German: *Trial on the Road* (1971/1985)

Andrei Tarkovskii: *Mirror* (1975)

c. writing: Stagnation/Thaw trope

**week 7: 9 October\*: The Positive Hero and the Loss of Aura**

Developing Stagnation: 1971-1977

The Production Film

Competition with Television and the New Year's Eve Film

Broken Relations

assignments for week 8:

a. reading: Farraday

b. screening: Kira Muratova: *Brief Encounters* (1968/1987)

Aleksandr Motyl: *White Sun of the Desert* (1969)

Vasilii Shukshin: *Snowball Berry Red* (1973)

c. writing: viewing questions for *Brief Encounters*, *White Sun of the Desert*, *Snowball Berry Red* and rationalization

**week 8: 16 October: Cinema and the Fostering of Socio-Political Myths**

Blossoming Stagnation: 1977-1980

Escape into Fantasy

The Rise of Melodrama

assignments for week 9:

a. reading: Horton/Brashinsky and Lawton

b. screening: Georgii Daneliia: *Autumn Marathon* (1980)

Vladimir Men'shov: *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* (1980)

c. writing: two paragraph abstract of research paper

**week 9: 23 October: Cinema and Challenges to the Socio-Political Body**

Stagnation's Last Gasp—"Five in Four Graves": 1980-1986

The Birth of Glasnost' and Perestroika

Cleaning the Cultural Unions

assignments for week 10:

a. reading: Horton/Brashinsky and Lawton

b. screening: Rolan Bykov: *Scarecrow* (1984)

Tengiz Abuladze: *Repentance* (1984/1986)

Juris Podnieks: *Is It Easy to be Young?* (1986)

c. writing: viewing questions for *Scarecrow*, *Repentance*, *Is it Easy to Be Young?* and rationalization

**week 10: 30 October: Rediscovering Youth Culture: Sex, Drugs, and Rock 'n' Roll**

Perestroika: 1986-1988

Social Commentary

Completing the Agenda of the Thaw

Unshelving Films

assignments for week 11:

a. reading: Horton/Brashinsky and Lawton

b. screening: Vasilii Pichul: *Little Vera* (1988)

Rashid Nugmanov: *The Needle* (1988)

Petr Todorovskii: *Intergirl* (1989)

c. writing: revised abstract (one page) and preliminary list of relevant works

**week 11: 6 November: Re-examinations of National History**

Perestroika: 1988-1990

The Re-Rise of the Documentary

Burying Stalin

assignments for week 12:

a. reading: Horton/Brashinsky and Lawton

b. screening: Tofik Shakhverdiev: *Is Stalin With Us?* (1989)

Marina Goldovskaia: *Solovki Power* (1988)

Evgenii Tsymbal: *Defense Counsel Sedov* (1990)

c. writing: Stagnation/Perestroika trope

**week 12: 13 November: Mythic Repackaging of National History**

Perestroika: Overview

assignments for week 13:

a. reading: Ratchford handout and Lawton *Imaging Russia*

b. screening: Karen Shakhnazarov: *City Zero* (1989)

Iurii Mamin: *Sideburns* (1990)

Pavel Lungine: *Taxi Blues* (1990)

c. writing: annotated bio-filmography and expanded list of relevant works

**week 13: 20 November: Kino-business and the Collapse of the Domestic Market**

Post-Perestroika: 1991-1993

El'tsin's Russia and Klondike Capitalism

Disappearance of Russian Films from the Silver Screen

The American Invasion

Rise of the Small Screen

assignments for week 14:

a. reading: Lawton

b. screening: Ivan Dykhovichnyi: *Prorva [Moscow Parade]* (1992)

Sergei Ovcharov: *Drummiad* (1993)

Vladimir Khotinenko: *Makarov* (1993)

c. writing: no writing assignment

**week 14: 27 November: Reinventing the Domestic Cinema Market**

Post-Perestroika: 1994-1996

Films for Festivals

Alternative Models of Film Production

Rise of the Producer

assignments for week 15:

a. reading: Lawton

b. screening: Nikita Mikhalkov: *Burnt By the Sun* (1994)

Sergei Livnev: *Hammer and Sickle* (1994)

Sergei Bodrov: *Prisoner of the Mountains* (1996)

b. writing: outline of research paper with finalized list of relevant works

**week 15: 4 December:**

Putin's Russia: 1996-1999

Re-appropriation of the Media by the State

Overhauling the Infrastructure of Film Viewing

assignments for week 16:

a. screening: Aleksei Balabanov: *The Brother* (1997)

Pavel Chukhrai: *The Thief* (1997)

Aleksandr Rogozhkin: *Checkpoint* (1998)

**week 16: 11 December:**

Putin's Russia: 2000-2006

A National Film Industry

Russian Blockbusters

The Return of the Viewing Public

writing assignment: research paper due