

Russian 0810
Spring 2018
Tues/Thurs 1-2:15pm
Cathedral of Learning 129

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Masterpieces of Twentieth-Century Russian Literature

Course Description:

The twentieth century was the most tumultuous period in modern Russian history with three revolutions, the last of which led to the collapse of the Tsarist order and the beginning of the communist experiment. This course is a sequel to Russian 0800, covering such diverse writers as Chekhov, Akhmatova, Nabokov, Solzhenitsyn, Erofeev, and Alexievich. We will study major cultural and literary movements (such as modernism, the avant-garde, socialist realism) in relation to major political and historical events (such as Stalinist terror, World War II, the Thaw). As this is a W-course, students should produce at least 20-24 pages of written work. A significant portion of this work should be substantially revised in response to peer/instructor feedback.

Course Requirements:

Students are required to attend all class meetings and complete all reading assignments before the class meeting for which they are listed on the class schedule and to come to class prepared to discuss the text. Every student must bring his/her own hardcopy (no reading on laptop/E-readers/tablet) of the assigned text to class each day. Two unexcused absences are allowed without further penalty; every subsequent unexcused absence will result in a half-letter markdown (e.g. A- to B+, B+ to B) of the student's final course grade. Students who miss a class meeting are responsible for obtaining all relevant handouts and notes from their fellow students, not from the instructor. Each student will be required to make two short (5 min) in-class presentations about: (1) a passage in the reading assignment; (2) the final paper. When making a presentation on the reading assignment, be sure to analyze the text and select a rich passage to perform a close reading (we will go over what this means). Students will pose provocative questions that lead to class discussion that day. Regular quizzes, which may or may not be announced, should be expected. **No make-up quizzes will be possible.** Unless approval from the instructor has been obtained prior to the deadline, late papers will not be accepted. Plagiarism—the unacknowledged use of someone else's words or ideas—will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

*Those who read Russian should read the texts, at least partially, in the original.

Grading:

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| • Attendance and active participation in discussion | 25% |
| • Quizzes | 15% |
| • Short essays | 40% |
| • Final paper (10 pages) | 20% |

Required Texts:

- Clarence Brown, *The Portable Twentieth-Century Russian Reader* (ISBN: 0142437573)
- Svetlana Alexievich, *Voices from Chernobyl: The Oral History of a Nuclear Disaster* (ISBN: 0312425848)
- Vladimir Nabokov, *Pnin* (ISBN: 0679723412)
- Venedikt Erofeev, *Moscow to the End of the Line* (ISBN: 0810112000)
- Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (ISBN: 0451228146)

Schedule (subject to change):

January 9: Introduction

January 11: Chekhov, "The Bishop" (1902)

January 16: Gorky, "Recollections of Tolstoy" (1919)

January 18: Bunin, "Light Breathing" (1916)

January 23: Blok and Mayakovsky, selected poems

January 25: Akhmatova, selected poems

January 30: Mandelstam, selected poems, **PAPER 1 DUE**

February 1: Nadezhda Mandelstam, "A May Night," "Last Letter"

February 6: Olesha, *Emy* (1927)

February 8: *Emy*

February 13: Zoshchenko, "Bees and People," from *Before Sunrise*,

PAPER 1 REVISION DUE

February 15: Kharms, "Anecdotes about Pushkin's Life," "The Connection"

February 20: Platonov, *The Potudan River* (1937)

February 22: Bulgakov, from *The Master and Margarita*, **PAPER 2 DUE**

February 27: Pasternak, from *Doctor Zhivago*

March 1: Nabokov, "The Visit to the Museum" (1939)

March 5-9: SPRNIG BREAK

March 13: Nabokov, *Pnin* (1957), **PAPER 2 REVISION DUE**

March 15: *Pnin*

March 20: Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1962)

March 22: *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*

March 27: Shalamov, from *Kolyma Tales*

March 29: Sinyavsky, *Pk̄bent̄z̄* (1966)

April 3: Erofeev, *Moscow to the End of the Line* (1970), **PAPER 3 DUE**

April 5: *Moscow to the End of the Line*

April 10: Alexievich, *Voices from Chernobyl* (1997)

April 12: *Voices from Chernobyl*, **FINAL PAPER PROPOSAL DUE**

April 17: wrap-up/final paper presentations

April 19: wrap-up/final paper presentations

April 26: FINAL PAPER DUE