**University of Pittsburgh**

**Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures**

Spring 2015

ENGLIT/RUSS 0590: **Formative Masterpieces of the 19th Century**

The following course overview serves as **a contract** between the student and the instructor. Please read the entire text carefully and let the instructor know if you have any questions about it as soon as possible.

Class meets:

Tuesdays and Thursdays

11:00 AM - 12:15 PM

512 Cathedral of Learning

Instructor: **Olga Mukhortova**

olm12@pitt.edu

Office CL 1417

Office hours Tuesday and Thursday at 2:15 – 3:15 or by appointment

**Course Description**

This course will be devoted to reading and discussing famous works by the greatest masters of Russian Literature, such as Pushkin, Gogol, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Chekhov. The readings will include the variety of genres and forms: short stories, novellas, plays, and poetry.

Russians have always valued works of literature as a source of wisdom and knowledge as well as entertainment and aesthetic pleasure, as a resource for understanding themselves as individuals in a complex society, as a means for analyzing social behavior and psychological relationships, and as a place for airing cultural issues and matters of major political and social concern.

Every work will be examined in terms of structure and literary techniques, as well as in terms of its literary and social impact.

The course will consist principally of lectures and discussion between students and the instructor. In order to facilitate discussion, every student MUST bring his/her own copy of the assigned text to class each day. Additional short texts that might be distributed by the instructor via CourseWeb should likewise be printed out and brought to class by every student. All students are expected to actively participate in the discussions, and their participation will be graded.

**Course Materials**

Required readings:

1. AUTHOR: Alexander Pushkin EDITION: December 1, 2012

TITLE: Ruslan and Lyudmila

ISBN: 978-1847492968 PUBLISHER: Alma Books

2. AUTHOR: Alexander Pushkin EDITION: July 1, 1998

TITLE: Tales of Belkin and Other Prose Writings

ISBN: 978-0140446753 PUBLISHER: Penguin Classics

3. AUTHOR: Ivan Turgenev EDITION: August 1, 2008

TITLE: First Love and Other Stories

ISBN: 978-0199540402 PUBLISHER: Oxford World's Classics

4. AUTHOR: Nikolai Gogol EDITION: January 15, 2009

TITLE: Plays and Petersburg Tales

ISBN:  978-0199555062 PUBLISHER: Oxford World's Classics

5. AUTHOR: Leo Tolstoy EDITION: Second

TITLE: Tolstoy's Short Fiction

ISBN: 978-0393931501 PUBLISHER: Norton Critical Editions

6. AUTHOR: Fyodor Dostoevsky EDITION: August 30, 1994

TITLE: Notes from Underground

ISBN: 978-0679734529 PUBLISHER: Vintage Classics

7. AUTHOR: Fyodor Dostoevsky EDITION: January 3, 2012

TITLE: The Eternal Husband and Other Stories

ISBN: 978-0812983371 PUBLISHER: Modern Library Classics

8. AUTHOR: Anton Chekhov EDITION: August 19, 2003

TITLE: Chekhov: The Essential Plays

ISBN: 978-0375761348 PUBLISHER: Modern Library Classics

9. AUTHOR: Anton Chekhov EDITION: September 1, 2008

TITLE: About Love and Other Stories

ISBN: 978-0199536689 PUBLISHER: Oxford World's Classics

RECOMMENDED REFERENCE WORKS AND SECONDARY TEXTS

Cornwell, Neil. Reference Guide to Russian Literature.

Moser, Charles, ed.: The Cambridge History of Russian Literature.

Terras, Victor, ed. Handbook of Russian Literature.

Mathewson, Rufus. The Positive Hero in Russian Literature

The Cambridge companion to Tolstoy / edited by Donna Tussing Orwin

The Cambridge companion to Chekhov / edited by Vera Gottlieb and Paul Allain.

The Cambridge companion to Pushkin / Andrew Kahn, editor.

The Cambridge companion to Dostoevskii / edited by W.J. Leatherbarrow.

**Course Requirements**

1. Reading all assignments, attendance and participation in class discussion are mandatory.

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 obtaining all relevant handouts and notes from their fellow students. Failure to come to class will result in a ZERO for that day. Missing class jeopardizes your participation and puts you in danger of missing quizzes. Any student who misses more than four classes will have his/her final grade lowered one full letter grade (e.g., B+ to C+). Please, be aware that six missed classes (excused and unexcused) automatically translate into an F for the course, regardless of the student's prior standing. In extenuating circumstances this condition may be negotiated.

2. Students are required to complete all reading assignments before the class meeting for which they are listed on the class schedule and to come to class prepared to participate fully in an intellectual discussion of the text. Every student MUST bring his/her own copy of the assigned text to class each day. Texts distributed by the instructor via CourseWeb should likewise be printed out and brought to class by every student.

3. While the instructor will make an 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.

4. **Classroom Respect and Civility**. The classroom is a space in which students and faculty come together to promote knowledge. It is crucial to this environment that respect for the rights of others and respect for the instructor are maintained. Differences of viewpoint or concerns should be expressed in terms that support the learning process. Student behavior that disrupts the learning process might lead to removal from the classroom and/or disciplinary action. Students responsible for cell phone interruptions during lectures (ringing, TEXTING) will be asked to leave and receive a ZERO for participation for the day. If you are expecting an important phone call during class (e.g., job interview or hospital-related), you are allowed to take your conversation outside of the classroom (your phone should still be in vibration/silent mode). You may use your laptops and tablets to take notes during class, but any non-class related computer activity will likewise result in a ZERO for participation for the day.

**5. Participation**. 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. Students will receive a grade for their participation in class for each class meeting. Participation in the discussion is an essential part of your final grade in this course. You will be graded for actively participating in the discussion on a regular basis, giving intelligent and interesting comments. Students are welcome and encouraged to request feedback from the instructor about their class participation at any time throughout the semester.

**6.** **Group work**: throughout the semester, students will prepare for class discussions in small groups. Each group will be given a specific assignment each class. A spokesperson from the group will do a short introductory presentation to initiate class discussion. Students will take turns to do these presentations (will be recorded by the instructor). The schedule will be published after the second week of classes.

**7.** **Reading Journal**. Students will be required to keep a journal, recording responses to the works we read. Students should bring the journal to *all the classes* and show it to the instructor. Journals should be used in classroom activities to stimulate class discussion. Journal assignments will also help students to prepare for the quizzes and the exam.

8. **Journal Assignments should be printed.** 12p Times New Roman, double-spaced, 1" margins, left aligned, MLA style.

Your journal entries should be focused and analytical. Typed journal entries will be handed in 2 times during the semester: in the middle and the end of the semester. Some additional assignments may be made to help students organize their thinking about the short story as a literary form, as a means of entertainment, and as a source of particular insights into the range and depths of the human imagination, but students should feel free to think about the stories in their own way and to develop their own ideas. However, journal entries must be **logical, thoughtful, and analytical**.

Your journals must include all of our readings. Each entry should be no less than 1 page long. Each commentary should have its own theme, although you may compare two or more stories in one entry for a richer discussion, e.g., Discuss characterization of Russian women or Russian men in 2-3 stories, or by 2 different authors; or compare the Use of Irony in two different stories by two different authors; or the Construction of Plot in two stories or by two different authors; or Point of View or a recurrent Theme and its representation in 2 or more stories; or Use of Symbolism or Use of Setting by different authors; or Comic elements in Gogol, etc.

FIRST AND SECOND JOURNAL ENTRY ASSIGNMENTS

SUGGESTED ESSAY TOPICS FOR JOURNAL ESSAYS

Please remember that you are encouraged to come up with **your own topic** and the following is just a suggestion:

1. "If our lives make any sense at all; if they have a purpose – this is not a purpose to achieve happiness, but to accomplish something more rational and universal" (A.P. Chekhov). How is this theme developed in the works of Chekhov, Turgenev, etc? Discuss, analyze, compare and/or contrast stories by at least 3 authors.

2. Discuss the representation and use of time and space in Dostoyevsky, Turgenev, and Gogol.

3. A Stylistic and Thematic evaluation and/or comparison of Nikolai Gogol’s “The Nose” and Fedor Dostoevsky’s “The Dream of the Ridiculous Man.”

4. Write a critical study of a short story of your choice (should be different from the topic of your oral presentation). Base your work on the analysis of at least three elements such as form, theme, plot, imagery, characters, narrative techniques, setting, language and style, etc.

Please **discuss your choice** of any essay topic prior to writing.

Essays are to be typed (double spaced, MLA style).

This exercise does not call for any proofreading or polishing of your language. It involves the work on the **level of ideas**.

**8.** **Quizzes** and the writing of in-class paragraphs will be used to identify the works and clarify ideas/questions raised in the stories, and to further stimulate class discussion. Missed quizzes will not be made up. Quizzes will be given at random intervals; they may consist of several short factual questions or require a paragraph to a page in response to a general question.

The quiz should take nor more than 25 minutes to write (usually it takes about 20 minutes.)

NO MAKE UP QUIZZES

**9. Exams**. We will have three written examinations. They will consist of some ID questions and short essays. The exams will take the entire class period.

It has four parts:

**1.** Identify a passage (the author's name and the title).

There will be three ID questions in that part -- 10% each.

**2.** Setting/plot/time ID questions It will only be one question - 30%.

You should provide a brief answer. One or two sentences is enough. No need to go into many details -- this is an ID question.

Example: "How does Pushkin describe the routine of an officer in a provincial town?"

**3.** Narrator/language/style ID. One question - 10%

Provide a short answer, no need to illustrate or offer examples:

Is it a third-person or a first-person narrator? Is he/she personally involved in the events of the story; is the narrator reliable.

**4.** Character ID. One question - 30%.

You will be offered either a name of a SECONDARY character or a passage from a story.

You should identify the character, the story, and the author, and BRIEFLY describe the role of this character in the plot of the story.

Things you must know:

1) the exact spelling of the authors' first and last names;

2) the exact titles of the works;

3) the names (or ranks/titles -- if this is how they are called in the text) of ALL the characters from all the stories we have read so far;

4) basic sequence of events, setting, time frame, and the narrative mode of all the stories.

NO MAKE UP EXAMS

**10. Discussion Groups:**

Each student in our class will act as a group leader to initiate and conduct one class discussion. All students in the group should get together and prepare for the presentation. The grade will be given to the whole group, not to the discussion leader.

**All of you are responsible for all the readings and discussions throughout the semester.**

**Grading Policy and Requirements:**

Reading, Attendance and Participation in class Discussion 30%

Keeping a Journal, to be turned in 2 times 10%

Group work and presentations 20%

Three exams 30% (10% each)

Quizzes 10%

**G-Grade Policy:**

A G grade will be given only when a student who has been attending the course and has been making regular progress is prevented by a (documented) medical or family emergency from completing the requirements. Students must sign a written agreement to complete all missing requirements (or supplementary work) within one term after receiving the G grade.

**Academic Integrity:**

Students in this course will be expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy. Furthermore, no student may bring any unauthorized materials to an exam, including dictionaries and programmable calculators.

**Disabilities:**

If you have a disability that requires special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications, you need to notify both the instructor and the Disability Resources and Services no later than the 2nd week of the term. You may be asked to provide documentation of your disability to determine the appropriateness of accommodations. To notify Disability Resources and Services, call 648-7890 (Voice or TTD) to schedule an appointment. The Office is located in 140 William Pitt Union.

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| 6 January | Tuesday | Introduction. Schedule and Assignments. |
| **Alexander Pushkin (1799-1837)** | | |
| 8 January | Thursday | “Ruslan and Lyudmila” |
| 13 January | Tuesday | “Tales of Belkin”: “The Shot”, “Blizzard” |
| 15 January | Thursday | “Tales of Belkin”: “The Coffin Maker”, “The Station Master” |
| 20 January | Tuesday | “Tales of Belkin”: “The Squire's Daughter” |
| **Nikolai Gogol (1809-1852)** | | |
| 22 January | Thursday | Schedule and Assignments. Gogol.  “The Nose” |
| 27 January | Tuesday | “The Portrait” |
| 29 January | Thursday | “Diary of a Madman” |
| 3 February | Tuesday | “The Government Inspector” |
| 5 February | Thursday | **FIRST EXAM** |
| **Ivan Turgenev (1818-1883)** | | |
| 10 February | Tuesday | Schedule and Assignments. Turgenev  “The Diary of a Superfluous Man” |
| 12 February | Thursday | “Mumu” |
| 17 February | Tuesday | “King Lear of the Steppes” |
|  |  | **Feodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881)** |
| 19 February | Thursday | **FIRST JOURNAL IS DUE**  “Notes from Underground” |
| 24 February | Tuesday | "The Meek One" |
| 26 February | Thursday | “Bobok” |
| 3 March | Tuesday | “The Dream of a Ridiculous Man” |
| 5 March | Thursday | **SECOND EXAM** |
| 10 - 12 March | Tuesday Thursday | NO CLASS!  Have a great break! |
| **Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910)** | | |
| 17 March | Tuesday | Schedule and Assignments. Tolstoy |
| 19 March | Thursday | “Three Deaths” |
| 24 March | Tuesday | “Father Sergius” |
| 26 March | Thursday | “After the Ball” |
| **Anton Chekhov (1860-1904)** | | |
| 31 March | Tuesday | Schedule and Assignments. Chekhov  "The Seagull" |
| 2 April | Thursday | “The Man in a Case” |
| 7 April | Tuesday | “The Lady with the Little Dog” |
| 9 April | Thursday | “The House with the Mezzanine” |
| 14 April | Tuesday | **SECOND JOURNAL IS DUE**.  Review session |
| 16 April | Thursday | **THIRD EXAM** |