

RUSS 0871: History of Russian Film 2
Laughter behind the Iron Curtain
University of Pittsburgh
Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures
Spring 2015

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

Instructor: Natalie Ryabchikova Office hours: Tuesday 4–5 pm; Wednesday 12–1 pm or by appointment Office: Cathedral of Learning 1417	Class meetings: Tuesday Time: 6:00-9:50pm Room: 444 Cathedral of Learning e-mail: nar46@pitt.edu
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course surveys Soviet and Russian cinema from the 1950s to present and concentrates on the works of popular genre directors, such as Leonid Gaidai, Georgii Daneliia, and El'dar Riazanov as well as directors who are considered *auteurs*, such as Kira Muratova and Pavel Lungin. It therefore traces the development of popular, “commercial,” mass cinema, and festival/“independent” cinema, taking into consideration the changing ways of film production and distribution during the past 60 years. The overarching theme of the course is comedy in all its variations: romantic, eccentric, musical, satiric, etc. Using this genre as an example, the course will provide a chronological overview of Russian and Soviet films in their social, political, historical, and cultural context from the death of Stalin to present, focusing on such cultural periods as the Thaw, the Brezhnev period/Stagnation, Perestroika, the post-Soviet period, and the 2000s-2010s. The class is conducted in English and all films will be shown with English subtitles.

CLASS FORMAT:

The course relies on lectures, readings, films, film clips, in-class discussions, and the writing component. Discussion may take the form of group work, open discussion, or question-and-answer exchanges between the instructor and students. In order to participate actively in the discussions it is essential that all students come to class prepared; that is to say, completing all reading and writing assignments is necessary. On average, you will be expected to read about 30–40 pages a week. These may include historical overviews, theoretical analyses, and short film reviews.

COURSE GOALS:

In addition to offering students a rich array of films, the class will also attempt to accomplish the following:

- comment on each film director’s distinctive style and relationship to Russo-Soviet cinema;
- train the student to interpret cinematic texts closely and analytically;
- make connections among films, authors, and cultural events;
- assist students in improving their critical, analytical, and research skills.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

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 other students. The majority of the films screened in class can be found in the Hillman library.

Students are required to complete all reading and writing 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). There will be regular home assignments during the semester (film reviews/blogs, short written responses, and the final paper).

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Directory of World Cinema: Russia. Ed. Birgit Beumers. Bristol and Chicago: Intellect, 2010.
(available online through PittCat)

Inside Soviet Film Satire: Laughter with a Lash. Ed. Andrew Horton. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993 (available online through PittCat)

In addition to this textbook, copies of chapters and articles from the following publications will be made available in PDF-format on CourseWeb (marked on the schedule CW):

Comedy/Cinema/Theory. Ed. Andrew Horton. Berkeley: U of California P, 1991.

Condee, Nancy. *The Imperial Trace: Recent Russian Cinema.* Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009.

Goscilo, Helena and Margaret B. Goscilo. *Fade from Red: The Cold War Ex-Enemy in Russian and American Film 1990–2005.* New Academia Publishing, 2014.

Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television

The Russian Cinema Reader: The Thaw to the Present. Vol. 2. Ed. Rimgaila Salys. Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2013.

Slavic Review

Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema

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

EVALUATION AND GRADES:

Attendance and Participation:	30%
6 film reviews (5 % each)	30%
One-page critical summaries of readings	20%
Final paper	15%
Unannounced quizzes	5%

TOTAL: 100%

The following grading standards will be used in assigning grades in this course:

97-100	A+	80-82	B-	64-67	D
93-96	A	78-79	C+	60-63	D-
90-92	A-	73-77	C	59 and below	F
88-89	B+	70-72	C-		
83-87	B	68-69	D+		

EXPLANATION OF EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Attendance, Participation, and Absences (30%):

This class meets once a week. Students are expected to attend all classes and be on time. Students will receive daily grades for each meeting of the course. Participation in the discussion is an essential part of your grade in this course. You will be graded for actively participating in the discussion on a regular basis, giving intelligent and interesting comments. Attendance will be recorded each class. Failure to come to class will result in a **ZERO** for that day. Missing class jeopardizes your participation records and puts you in danger of missing quizzes and, possibly, in-class assignments.

If you miss a class it is your responsibility to find out from your classmates what important information was announced or passed out during the session you missed. Therefore, it may be useful to exchange e-mail addresses or phone numbers with another student in the class. You are allowed **TWO DAYS** of absences during the term for whatever reason, though it is strongly recommended that you strive for perfect attendance. Save your absences for when you get sick or for family emergencies. Any student who misses more than two days of classes will have his/her final grade lowered one full letter grade (e.g., B+ to C+). **Please, be aware that four 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. **Please, note: repetitive lateness for class will result in lowered grade.**

Film Reviews (30%)

Throughout the course of the semester you will be required to write 6 two-page reviews of films that we watch in class. You can write more to get more experience in this genre—in that case only the 6 best grades will be counted towards your final grade in this section. We will read examples of film reviews and discuss specifics of genre, style, and format during one of the first class meetings.

To facilitate weekly reading assignments and to enrich your in-class screening experience, you are encouraged to **watch the film once before the class meeting**. Making notes during the screening will help you to participate actively in class discussions and to write reviews.

Your reviews are to be submitted in hard copy format to the instructor and also posted on CourseWeb.

Other students will be your readers and commentators, either in class or online. In either case, commentaries will be counted towards your class participation grade.

All written assignments (unless specified differently) are to be printed out 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with left-aligned, one-inch margins. Please, use MLA format. You can refer to Joseph Gibaldi, *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th ed. NY: MLA, 2009.

Critical Summaries of Readings (20 %):

For **each** week's class you are required to write a 1–1.5-page (double-spaced) summary of the text or texts assigned. You can use all texts assigned for that day or only one of them, but you have to provide a short **summary of their argument** and your response in the form of a **critique or questions**. These summaries are designed to help you assimilate information and participate in class discussion, as well as to write quizzes, reviews, and your final paper, so don't treat this assignment lightly. All summaries must be submitted to the instructor by 4 pm on the day of class **via email to nar46@pitt.edu**. You should also have either an electronic or hard copy of your summary with you in class to refer to it as needed. No late submission will be accepted.

Final Paper (15%):

Your paper should be between 5 and 7 pages long, double-spaced. It may built upon your reviews and summaries but should not simply be an amalgamation of them. It should include your research statement and have a clear structure and a smooth thesis development and a solid conclusion. It should use at least 3 secondary sources (books or

Start working on your papers early. Talk to the instructor about the topic of your paper at least 2 weeks before the deadline. Your papers must be **focused and analytical**. Do NOT retell the story. At the beginning, state clearly and concisely what you wish to accomplish in the paper (your research question). Try to be concrete, particular, not abstract or universal. Use the quotations, when necessary, but do not overuse them; try to provide examples instead.

Quizzes (5%)

There will be unannounced quizzes on the films watched in class and the readings completed at home administered over the course of the semester. Since one quiz with the lowest grade will automatically be dropped at the end of the semester, under no circumstances will make-up quizzes be given. The format of the quizzes may consist of fill-in-the-blank, multiple-choice, identification, short answer, or any combination of these.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

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 repeated **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).

If you use a laptop to take notes **during class** make sure you do not use it as an excuse to surf the web. Any non-class related computer activity will likewise result in a ZERO for participation for the day.

Do not use laptops, cell phones or other electronic devices **during screenings**. To make notes during screenings use pen and paper.

WRITING CENTER:

Located in 317B of O'Hara Street Student Center (with Satellite Hours also at Hillman Library), the Writing Center is an excellent resource for working on your writing with an experienced consultant. Although you should not expect consultants to "correct" your paper for you, they can assist you in learning to organize, edit, and revise your papers. Consultants can work with you on a one-time basis, or they can work with you throughout the term. In some cases, I may require that you go to the Writing Center for help on a particular problem; otherwise, you can decide on your own to seek assistance. Their services are free, but you should make an appointment online

(<http://www.composition.pitt.edu/writingcenter/index.html>).

DISABILITY POLICY:

If a student has a disability that requires special teaching, testing accommodations, or other classroom modifications, he or she must notify the instructor and the Office of Disabled Student Services (DDS) as early as possible in the semester, preferably before Add/Drop on September 7. The student may be asked to provide documentation of the disability to determine the appropriateness of accommodations. To notify DDS, call 648-7890 (Voice or TDD) to schedule an appointment. The office is located in 216 William Pitt Union.

PLAGIARISM:

"Student Obligations and Adjudication" (University Policy 02-03-03) states that "students have an obligation to exhibit honesty, and to respect the ethical standard of his (their) chosen profession in carrying out (their) academic assignments." A student "violates this obligation" if he/she: "a) presents as one's own, for academic evaluation, the ideas, representations, or works of another person or persons without customary and proper acknowledgement of sources; b) submits the work of another person in a manner which represents the work to be one's own; c) knowingly permits one's work to be submitted by another person without the instructor's authorization".

The penalties for plagiarism can be very severe. The immediate consequence of plagiarism will be a zero for the particular assignment and can lead to an F for the course. For the references, please, check the Academic Integrity Code, School of Arts and Sciences on line:

<http://www.fcas.pitt.edu/academicintegrity.html>.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Students are responsible for completing all the readings and homework assignments by the date marked on the schedule below. The instructors reserve right to introduce some changes into the course schedule throughout the term. The instructor will announce any changes through email and/or in class in advance of implementation. Students are responsible for changes conveyed orally in class.

<p>WEEK 1 January 6</p> <p>DVD 0928</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SYLLABUS. DEFINITIONS AND ISSUES. POST-STALINISM.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief intro into pre-Thaw cinema and Soviet comedy <p>In-class screening: Nadezhda Kosheverova and Aleksandr Ivanovskii, <i>Tamer of Tigers</i> (1954). 101 min.</p>
<p>WEEK 2 January 13</p> <p>DVD 0925</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SOCIALIST REALIST COMEDY</p> <p>Assignment due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Prokhorov, Aleksandr, “Cinema of the Thaw 1953–1967.” <i>The Russian Cinema Reader</i> (CW) • Read: Seckler, Dawn. “What Does <i>Zhanr</i> Mean in Russian?” <i>Directory of World Cinema: Russia</i>. 28–33 (online: PittCat) • Read: Gillespie, David, “Comedy and Musical Comedy”. <i>Directory of World Cinema: Russia</i>. 115–117 (online: PittCat) • Read: Reviews of <i>Kuban Cossacks</i> and <i>Carnival Night</i>. <i>Directory of World Cinema: Russia</i>. 128–132 (online: PittCat) <p>In-class screening: Leonid Gaidai. <i>Barbos and the Unusual Cross</i> (1961) 10 min, and <i>Prisoner of the Caucasus, or Shurik’s New Adventures</i> (1966). 76 min.</p>
<p>WEEK 3 January 20</p> <p>DVD 2724</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">THAW CINEMA: SLAPSTICK</p> <p>Assignment due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Horton, Andrew. “Introduction.” <i>Comedy/Cinema/Theory</i>. 1–21 (CW) • Read: <i>Springtime for Soviet Cinema. Re/Viewing the 1960s</i>. Ed. Alexander Prokhorov. Russian Film Symposium. Pittsburgh, 2001. 1–28 (CW) <p>In-class screening: Genrikh Oganesian, <i>Three Plus Two</i> (1963). 101 min.</p>
<p>WEEK 4 January 27</p> <p>DVD 0943</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">THAW CINEMA: LYRICAL COMEDY</p> <p>Assignment due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: <i>Springtime for Soviet Cinema. Re/Viewing the 1960s</i>. Ed. Alexander Prokhorov. Russian Film Symposium. Pittsburgh, 2001. 29-50 (CW) <p>In-class screening: Aleksandr Seryi. <i>Gentlemen of Fortune</i> (1971). 88 min</p>
<p>WEEK 5 February 3</p> <p>DVD 0951</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SOCIAL CRITICISM WITH A LAUGH: ECCENTRIC COMEDY</p> <p>Assignment due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Prokhorova, Elena, “Cinema of Stagnation, Late 1960s-1985.” <i>The Russian Cinema Reader</i> (CW) • Read: Review of <i>The Diamond Arm</i>. <i>Directory of World Cinema: Russia</i>. 133–134 (Online: PittCat) <p>In-class screening: Leonid Gaidai, <i>Ivan Vasil'evich Changes Professions</i> (1973). 93 min.</p>

<p>WEEK 6 February 10</p> <p>DVD 0643</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">MUSICAL/HISTORICAL/META COMEDY</p> <p>Assignment due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Chernyshova, Natalya. "Philistines on the big screen: consumerism in Soviet cinema of the Brezhnev era." <i>Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema</i> 5:2 (2011): 227–254 (CW) • Read: Prokhorov, Aleksandr. "Cinema of Attractions versus Narrative Cinema: Leonid Gaidai's Comedies and El'dar Riazanov's Satires of the 1960s." <i>Slavic Review</i> 62:3 (2003): 455–472 (CW) <p>In-class screening: El'dar Riazanov, <i>The Irony of Fate</i> (1975). 164 min.</p>
<p>WEEK 7 February 17</p> <p>DVD 0931</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SOVIET ROMCOM</p> <p>Assignment due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: DeBlasio, Alyssa. "The New-Year film as a genre of post-war Russian cinema." <i>Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema</i> 2:1 (2008): 43–61 (CW). • Read: Review of <i>The Irony of Fate</i>. <i>Directory of World Cinema: Russia</i>. 134–135 (Online: PittCat) <p>In-class screening: Mark Zakharov. <i>That Munchhausen</i> (1979). 105 min.</p>
<p>WEEK 8 February 24</p> <p>DVD 0366</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">BREZHNEV CINEMA/SATIRE/AESOPIAN LANGUAGE</p> <p>Assignment due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Horton, Andrew. "Soviet film satire yesterday and today." <i>Inside Soviet Film Satire</i>. 17–19. • Read: Moss, Kevin. "A Russian Munchausen: Aesopian Translation." <i>Inside Soviet Film Satire</i>. 20–3 <p>In-class screening: Georgii Daneliia, <i>Autumn Marathon</i> (1979). 92 min.</p>
<p>WEEK 9 March 5</p> <p>DVD 7899</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">STAGNATION: SAD COMEDY</p> <p>Assignment due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Kaganovsky, Lilya. "The Cultural Logic of Late Socialism." <i>Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema</i> 3:2 (2009): 185–199 (CW). • Read: First, Joshua. "Making Soviet Melodrama Contemporary: Conveying Emotional Information in the Era of Stagnation." <i>Studies in Russian & Soviet Cinema</i> 2/1(January 2008): 21–42 (CW) <p>In-class screening: Georgii Daneliia, <i>Kin-Dza-Dza!</i> (1986). 130 min</p>
<p>WEEK 10 March 10</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">SPRING BREAK. NO CLASSES.</p>
<p>WEEK 11 March 17</p> <p>V 4275 D 0429</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PERESTROIKA: POLITICAL SCI-FI</p> <p>Assignment due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Johnson, Vida and Elena Stishova. "Perestroika and Post-Soviet Cinema 1985–2000s." <i>The Russian Cinema Reader</i> (CW) • Read: Michaels, Paula A. "Navigating Treacherous Waters: Soviet Satire, National Identity, and Georgii Daneliia's Films of the 1970s." <i>Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television</i> 29:3 (2009): 343–364 (CW). <p>In-class screening: El'dar Riazanov, <i>The Promised Heavens</i> (1991). 125 min OR: Iurii Mamin, <i>Window to Paris</i> (1993). 92 min.</p>

<p>WEEK 12 March 24</p> <p>DVD 3890</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PERESTROIKA: BLACK/ABSURDIST COMEDY</p> <p>Assignment due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Reizen, Olga. “Black humor in Soviet cinema.” <i>Inside the Soviet Film Satire</i>. 94–97 • Read: Slobin, Greta. “A forgotten flute and remembered popular tradition.” <i>Inside the Soviet Film Satire</i>. 117–124. • Read: “One should begin with zero”: A discussion with satiric filmmaker Yuri Mamin. <i>Inside the Soviet Film Satire</i>. 154–156. • Read: The review of <i>Window to Paris</i>. <i>Directory of World Cinema: Russia</i>. 137–138 (Online: PittCat) • Read: Strukov, Vlad. “<i>The Promised Heavens</i>.” <i>Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema</i> 2:3 (2008): 353–354 (CW) <p>In-class screening: Leonid Gaidai, <i>The Weather’s Nice on Deribasov Street, or It’s Raining Again in Brighton Beach</i> (1992). 93 min.</p>
<p>WEEK 13 March 31</p> <p>DVD 1575</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">POST-SOVIET CINEMA: PARODY</p> <p>Assignment due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Goscilo, Helena and Margaret B. Goscilo. “Introduction: Celluloid Buddies or Baddies”; “Chapter 1: Buddies: The Sunny Phase of Russo-American Relations (1990–1992)”. <i>Fade from Red</i>. (CW). <p>In-class screening: Pavel Lungin, <i>The Wedding</i> (2000). 99 min</p>
<p>WEEK 14 April 7</p> <p>DVD 4113</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">THE 1990S: COMEDY OF MANNERS</p> <p>Assignment due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Condee, Nancy. “Cine-Amnesia: How Russia Forgot to Go to the Movies.” <i>The Imperial Trace</i>. 49–84 (CW) • Boele, Otto. “Melodrama.” <i>Directory of World Cinema: Russia</i>. 147–149 + review of <i>The Wedding</i>. 166–167 (Online: PittCat) <p>In-class screening: Kira Muratova, <i>The Tuner</i> (2004). 154 min.</p>
<p>WEEK 15 April 14</p> <p>DVD 12088</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">THE 2000S: AUTEUR CINEMA VS SEQUELS/REMAKES/REBOOTS</p> <p>Assignment due:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Johnson, Vida. “Laughter beyond the mirror: Humor and satire in the cinema of Andrei Tarkovsky.” <i>Inside the Soviet Film Satire</i>. 98–104. • Read: Condee, Nancy. “Kira Muratova: The Zoological Imperium.” <i>The Imperial Trace</i>. 115–140. (CW) • Read: Condee, Nancy. “<i>The Tuner</i>.” <i>The Russian Cinema Reader</i> (CW) • Read: Reviews of <i>The Sentimental Policeman</i> and <i>The Irony of Fate: A Continuation</i>. <i>Directory of World Cinema: Russia</i>. 135–137; 141–142 (Online: PittCat) <p>In-class screening: Timur Bekmambetov, <i>The Irony of Fate: A Continuation</i> (2007). 122 min.</p>
<p>Sunday, April 19, 3 pm</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">FINAL PAPER DUE TO RAR46@PITT.EDU</p>