

**UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH**  
DEPARTMENT OF SLAVIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

**Course Information**

RUSS 0810: Masterpieces of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Russian  
Literature  
Spring 2015 (CRN: 10236)  
Tue, Thu 1.00-2.15  
129 Cathedral of Learning

**Instructor Information**

Olia Kim  
Monday 2.30-3.30; Tuesday 2.30-3.30  
CL 1417  
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**Course Overview**

**Credits, Prerequisites, Requirements, and Format**

Upon successful completion of Masterpieces of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Russian Literature, students will be awarded 3 credits and will have completed a University-designated writing course. This course is intended for undergraduate students and has no formal prerequisites. Students are required 1) to complete all assignment scheduled for each class meeting, and to be prepared to summarize and intelligently discuss them in class on the pertinent day; 2) to participate actively on a regular basis in classroom discussions; and 3) to submit all papers and revisions on the dates listed on the syllabus. The final paper is due on **April 23, 2015**. The topic will be formulated in consultation with me.

This class will employ a mixture of lecture and discussion format. Discussion may take the form of group work, open discussion, or question-and-answer exchanges between instructor and students. In order to participate actively in the class, it is essential that all students come to class prepared; that is to say, completing all assignments is necessary. Please bear in mind that because the class will present a survey of the prolific Russian literature of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and will require that you write a minimum of 20 pages, the reading and writing assignments are large and will be difficult to finish satisfactorily if they are put off until the day before they are due.

**Course Description**

In the twentieth century, the people of Russian lived through a wide range of both historical events and everyday practices. The apocalyptic anticipations of the *fin de siècle* appeared to be realized in the 1917 revolutions, when the world as Russians knew it changed enormously. The decades that immediately followed this complete regime change saw policies of nationalization, industrialization and collectivization, compounded with famine, wars, and terror, all of which caused massive, often catastrophic, demographic shifts. Soviet leaders from Lenin through Gorbachev ran the nation more like tyrannical fathers than savvy politicians. The postwar decades could be characterized by policies that partially and opportunistically rejected the violent upheavals of the first half of the twentieth century and cultivated Soviet labor and consumption in a highly controlled fashion. The effectiveness of such strategies would be judged in the final, tumultuous decades of the twentieth century.

The place of literature in this history is complex, because the relationship between life and art, and specifically literature, can be embodied by a whole array of possibilities. From the Symbolists and social agitators of the early years of the century, through the utopian discourses of the Soviet avant-garde and Socialist Realism, to the idealistic and jaded postwar reflections on the past and present in dissident, conformist, and postmodernist fashion, the relationship between life and art has always been a conscious, constantly-changing element of the creative act in the twentieth century.

This course will present students with masterpieces of Russian literature in more or less chronological order. Classroom lectures will provide the social and historical background necessary to position literature in relationship to its production history. Classroom discussions will focus on close reading and analysis of the primary literature. Acknowledgement of literary movements (Symbolism, Futurism, etc.) and aesthetic trends and methods (Modernism, Socialist Realism, and Postmodernism) will also guide our readings.

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

- Train the student to read primary texts closely and analytically;
- Make connections among texts, authors, and cultural events;
- Assist students in improving their research and writing skills.

## Required Texts

7 of the required texts for this course (listed below) are available from the Pitt Book Center. The instructor will post the remainder of required readings on Courseweb.

- Bulgakov, Mikhail. *The Master and Margarita*. Trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. New York: Penguin Classics, 1997.
- Olesha, Yuri. *Envy*. Trans. Marian Schwartz. New York: New York Review Books Classics, 2004.
- Pelevin, Victor. *Omon Ra*. Trans. Andrew Bromfield. New York: New Directions Books, 1994.
- Platonov, Andrei. *The Foundation Pit*. Trans. Robert Chandler, Elizabeth Chandler, and Olga Meerson. New York: New York Review Books Classics, 2009.
- Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr. *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. Trans. Ralph Parker. New York: Signet Books, 1974.
- Tertz, Abram (Andrei Siniavskii). *The Trial Begins and On Socialist Realism*. Trans Max Hayward and George Dennis. Berkeley and LA: U of CA P, 1982.
- Trifonov, Yuri. *Another Life and House on the Embankment*. Trans. Michael Glenny. Evanston, IL: Northwestern UP, 1999.

We will be using the following reference manual as a guide for all writing assignments. You are encouraged to buy or borrow a copy for your personal use.

- Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. NY: MLA, 2009.

The instructor has also placed Victor Terras's *History of Russian Literature* and *Handbook of Russian Literature* on reserve at Hillman Library. They are good general reference and may help you position yourself as you begin research for your papers.

## Attendance and Grading:

Students are expected to attend all classes in order to maintain a good record of participation and avoid the risk of missing quizzes and important information. **A student may take up to 3 unexcused absences, no questions asked, during the semester; any more will result in an "F" for the course.** Excused absences, such as illness or death in the immediate family, must be documented (e.g., a doctor's letter or the program of the funeral), stating that ON THE DAY AT THE TIME THE CLASS MEETS you were unable to attend, within a week of return to class. Such absences will be considered "excused" and will not (directly) affect your grade.

In the case of an absence, the student is responsible for the material covered, and should find out from classmates what important information was announced or passed out during the session he or she missed (this includes audio or visual material presented in class). Therefore, it is to your advantage to exchange e-mail addresses or telephone numbers with another student in the class. Please be generous and considerate

colleagues to one another. You may also see me during office hours to review these materials. I will NOT distribute my class notes.

Student performance will be evaluated in every session of the course and assigned a letter grade based on participation in classroom discussion, intellectual contribution to discussion, and the results of in-class activities.

### Quizzes and In-Class Writing Assignments

Quizzes and in-class writing assignments may be included in session plans for a number of reasons: to verify that students are completing the readings, to provoke discussion, to reinforce retention of information from session to session. Quizzes and in-class writing assignments will be incorporated into daily participation grades, and may be scheduled or unannounced as the instructor deems necessary.

### Grading Policy

Grades will be calculated based on the following percentages:

- 35% Participation
- 30% Short Paper (15% topic proposals, outlines, bibliographies; 15% five-page paper)
- 35% Final Paper (10% topic proposals, outlines, bibliographies; 25% ten-page paper)

**\*\*Please be aware that in-class writing assignments cannot be made up. Late papers will be penalized.**

Final grades will be determined on the following scale:

<b>A+</b>	97-100	<b>B+</b>	87-89	<b>C+</b>	77-79	<b>D+</b>	67-69	<b>F</b>	≤59
<b>A</b>	93-96	<b>B</b>	83-86	<b>C</b>	73-76	<b>D</b>	63-66		
<b>A-</b>	90-92	<b>B-</b>	80-82	<b>C-</b>	70-72	<b>D-</b>	60-62		

If you feel you are experiencing special problems in the course, or would like to consult about your progress in the class, do not hesitate to make an appointment with me or drop in during office hours. I will be happy to discuss any aspect of the class with you, including paper topics, study habits, reading strategies, additional literary interests, or Russian culture in general.

### Academic Integrity

By remaining enrolled in the course, students not only agree to abide by the above stipulations, but also understand that the instructors will follow rigorously the rules regarding cheating, plagiarism, etc. spelled out in the University's *Guidelines on Academic Integrity – Student and Faculty Obligations and Hearing Procedures* (Policy 02-03-02, <http://www.bc.pitt.edu/policies/policy/02/02-03-02.html>). It is the students' responsibility to familiarize themselves with these regulations and to observe them. Any infraction will be penalized according to these rules.

## Special Accommodations

Students who require special accommodations for testing or other classroom situations should notify me and Disabilities Resources and Services by the second week of the term. I will then work with Disability Resources and Services to meet those requirements for accommodation. Anyone who needs to register a disability should contact DRS at 412-648-7890, or visit their office in William Pitt Union, Room 216. Further information about DRS is available at <http://www.drs.pitt.edu/>.

The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus at any point in the semester, as circumstances demand. Any changes will be announced in class and through e-mail in advance of implementation.

## Schedule of Assignments

Your day-to-day assignments may be from the texts required for purchase, linked through CourseWeb, or e-mailed as PDF or word documents. **Online material must be printed and brought to class.** You should check CourseWeb and your e-mail regularly, as these will be the main modes for distributing information. Please note the following dates below, when important writing assignments are due.

I reserve the right to change assignments throughout the semester, but I will notify you in advance if there are any changes. Assignments are to be completed by the date beside which they appear.

Each specific writing assignment will be described by the instructor in class, in oral and written form, one week before the assignment is due.

### Short Paper

<b>January 27:</b>	One-Page Topic Proposal
<b>February 3:</b>	Half-Page Outline and Half-Page Bibliography
<b>February 17:</b>	Five-Page Paper
<b>March 3:</b>	Revision Assignment

### Final Paper

<b>March 17:</b>	One-Page Topic Proposal
<b>March 31:</b>	One-Page Bibliography
<b>April 14:</b>	One-Page Outline
<b>April 23:</b>	Ten-Page Paper

<i>Week 1</i>	<b>Tuesday, January 6</b>	<b>Topics:</b> Introduction to Class: Overview of Syllabus, Requirements, Policies Modernism: Making Sense of The End
	<b>Thursday, January 8</b>	<b>Topics:</b> - From Neo-Realism to Modernism  <b>Readings:</b> - Maksim Gor'kii: "Twenty-Six and One" (1899)
<i>Week 2</i>	<b>Tuesday, January 13</b>	<b>Topics:</b> - Symbolism: From the Forest of Symbols to Life-Creation and the Revolution  <b>Readings:</b> - Viacheslav Ivanov: "The Testaments of Symbolism" (1910)  - Valerii Briusov: "To a Young Poet" (1896)  - Aleksandr Blok: "The Stranger" (1906); "The Twelve" (1918); "The Scythians" (1918)
	<b>Thursday, January 15</b>	<b>Topics:</b> - Polemics with Symbolism: Acmeism and Futurism  <b>Readings:</b> - David Burluk, Aleksei Kruchenykh, Vladimir Maiakovskii, and Velimir Khlebnikov: "A Slap in the Face of Public Taste" (1912) - Osip Mandel'shtam: "The Morning of Acmeism" (1913)  - Vladimir Maiakovskii: "The Backbone-Flute" (1917) - Osip Mandel'shtam: "Hagia Sophia" (1922); "Notre Dame" (1922) - Anna Akhmatova: "He loved three things in the world" (1910); "Song about a Final Meeting" (1914)
<i>Week 3</i>	<b>Tuesday, January 20</b>	<b>Topics:</b> - <i>Zaum</i> : Trans-Sense Poetry - The Formalists  <b>Readings:</b> - Shklovsky: "The Resurrection of the Word" (1914); "Art as Technique" (1917)  - Velimir Khlebnikov: "Incantation of Laughter" (1908-09); "Proposals" (1915)

	Thursday, January 22	<p><b>Topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Civil War</li> <li>- Babel' Stories from <i>The Red Cavalry</i> (1920-1925)</li> </ul> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Isaak Babel': from <i>The Red Cavalry</i> (w. 1920-1925; p. 1927), "Gedali"; "My First Goose"; "The Rebbe"; "Salt"</li> </ul> <p><b>***One-Page Topic Proposal Due***</b></p>
Week 4	Tuesday, January 27	<p><b>Topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Urban Discourses of Utopia/Dystopia</li> </ul> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evgenii Zamiatin: "The Cave" (1920)</li> <li>- Mikhail Zoshchenko: "Nervous People" (1924); "The Galosh" (1927)</li> </ul>
	Thursday, January 29	<p><b>Topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fellow Travelers</li> <li>- Modern(-ist) Concerns</li> </ul> <p><b>Reading:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Iurii Olesha: <i>Emvy</i> (1927): 5-73</li> </ul>
Week 5	Tuesday, February 3	<p><b>Reading:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Iurii Olesha: <i>Emvy</i> (1927): 74-152</li> </ul> <p><b>***Half-Page Outline and Half-Page Bibliography Due***</b></p>
	Thursday, February 5	<p><b>Topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Cannibalization of the Soviet Avant-Garde</li> </ul> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Andrei Platonov: <i>The Foundation Pit</i> (1930): 1-80</li> </ul>
Week 6	Tuesday, February 10	<p><b>Readings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Andrei Platonov: <i>The Foundation Pit</i> (1930): 81-152</li> </ul>
	Thursday, February 12	<p><b>Topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Images and Concepts of Socialist Realism</li> </ul> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Katerina Clark: Excerpt from <i>The Soviet Novel</i></li> <li>- Nikolai Ostrovskii: Excerpt from <i>How the Steel Was Tempered</i> (1932-34)</li> </ul>

<i>Week 7</i>	Tuesday, February 17	<b>Topics:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fantastical worlds and grotesque realities</li> </ul> <b>Reading:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mikhail Bulgakov: <i>The Master and Margarita</i> (w. 1931-40; p. 1966): chapters 1-10</li> </ul> <b>***Five-Page Paper Due***</b>
	Thursday, February 19	<b>Reading:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mikhail Bulgakov: <i>The Master and Margarita</i>: chapters 11-18</li> </ul>
<i>Week 8</i>	Tuesday, February 24	<b>Reading:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mikhail Bulgakov: <i>The Master and Margarita</i>: chapters 19-25</li> </ul>
	Thursday, February 26	<b>Reading:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mikhail Bulgakov: <i>The Master and Margarita</i>: chapters 26-Epilogue</li> </ul>
<i>Week 9</i>	Tuesday, March 3	<b>Topics:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Uncovering Stalin's Crimes</li> <li>- Rehabilitating the Social Sphere</li> </ul> <b>Readings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn: <i>A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich</i> (1962): Intro.-80</li> </ul> <b>***Revision Assignment Due***</b>
	Thursday, March 5	<b>Topics:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Camp Literature</li> </ul> <b>Readings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn: <i>A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich</i>: 81-139</li> <li>- [Varlam Shalamov: from <i>The Kolyma Tales</i> (w. 1954-1973): "Prosthetic Appliances"; "Graphite"]</li> </ul>
<i>Week 10</i>	Tuesday, March 10	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
	Thursday, March 12	
<i>Week 11</i>	Tuesday, March 17	<b>Topics:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Double Life of Art</li> <li>- End of the Literary Thaw</li> </ul> <b>Readings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Andrei Siniavskii: "What is Socialist Realism?" (w. 1959)</li> <li>- Abram Tertz: "Pkhents" (1966) or "The Trial Begins"</li> </ul> <b>***One-page Topic Proposal Due***</b>

	Thursday, March 19	<b>Topics:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Village Prose: The Radiant Past</li> </ul> <b>Readings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vasilii Shukshin: "Snowball Berry Red" (1973)</li> </ul>
Week 12	Tuesday, March 24	<b>Topics:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Urbanists</li> </ul> <b>Readings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Iurii Trifonov: <i>The House on the Embankment</i> (1976): 187-280</li> </ul>
	Thursday, March 26	<b>Readings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Iurii Trifonov: <i>The House on the Embankment</i> (1976): 280-350</li> <li>-</li> </ul>
Week 13	Tuesday, March 31	<b>Topics:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Birth of Russian Postmodernism</li> </ul> <b>Readings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Venedikt Erofeev <i>Moscow to the End of the Line</i>: 1-65</li> </ul> <p><b>***One-Page Bibliography Due***</b></p>
	Thursday, April 2	<b>Readings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Venedikt Erofeev <i>Moscow to the End of the Line</i>: 66-125</li> </ul>
Week 14	Tuesday, April 7	<b>Readings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Finish Erofeev's <i>Moscow to the End of the Line</i></li> </ul>
	Thursday, April 9	<b>Topics:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Breakdown of Morals and Meaning</li> </ul> <b>Readings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Liudmila Petrushevskaja: "Our Crowd" (w. 1979; p. 1988)</li> <li>- Viktor Erofeev: "The Parakeet" (p. 1988)</li> </ul>
Week 15	Tuesday, April 14	<b>Topics:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Russian Postmodernism of 1990s</li> </ul> <b>Readings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Victor Pelevin: <i>Omon Ra</i> (1993): 1-91</li> </ul> <p><b>***One-Page Outline Due***</b></p>

	<b>Thursday, April 16</b>	<b>Topics:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Informal presentation of papers</li><li>- Conclusions and Wrap-Up</li></ul> <b>Readings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Viktor Pelevin: <i>Omon Ra</i> (1993): 92-154</li><li>-</li></ul> <b>***Final 10-Page Paper due on April 23 by 9 pm in olk11@pitt.edu***</b>
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