

V55. 0510-001

✱ **Russia Between East and West** ✱  
**Spring 2011**

TR 2-3:15  
Tisch UC 50

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**Course Description:** This course will trace a question that has troubled Russians for centuries: what is Russia? What does it mean to be “Russian”? Certainly, most nations engage in such soul-searching at one time or another, but Russia, thanks to special historical circumstances, has been obsessed with the problem of its own identity. Central to this issue is an issue that would appear to be more geographical than cultural: is Russia a part of Europe (the West), or of Asia (the East)? Or is it some hybrid that must find its own unique destiny? As we trace the development of this problem throughout Russia’s history, we will also become acquainted with the major characteristics and achievements of Russian culture, from its very beginnings to the present day.

**Course requirements:** No knowledge of any foreign language is expected, as all works will be read and discussed in English. It is essential that you keep up with the reading assignments and come to class prepared. Attendance is, of course, mandatory. Sleeping in class is punishable by dismemberment.

**Recitation Sections.** In addition to the lectures, all students must enrol in a discussion section led by one of the preceptors assigned to this course. This will be an opportunity for you to become actively engaged in the material, as well as simply to ask clarifying questions.

These recitations sections are an integral part of the course and are the **basis of your participation grade**. **More than three unexcused absences from recitation will cause you to fail this course.**

**Assignments:** Throughout the semester, you will be given **short assignments during your recitation sessions**. At times these assignments will consist of **preparing questions for class discussion, writing brief (2-3 page) essays** in advance; on other occasions, there will be **short quizzes**. These assignments will, along with your level of participation, determine the recitation portion of your grade. In addition, you will also write **one longer, more formal essay (5-7 pages)** on topics assigned in advance, or on a topic of your choice that has been approved in advance. There will also be an **in-class midterm exam on March 10** and a **final exam on Tuesday, May 17, from 2:00-3:50**.

**Blackboard and the Internet.** Blackboard, which is accessible through the "Academics" tab of NYU Home, is an important part of the course, facilitating announcements and the distribution of course materials.

Please keep in mind that, by default, Blackboard uses your NYU email account. Many of you may have other email accounts that you use. If so, it is a quite simple matter to arrange for your email from one account to be forwarded automatically to the other. I strongly urge you to do so. It is **your responsibility** to make sure that you are receiving official email sent to your NYU account.

**Lecture Outlines** will be made available on Blackboard prior to the class meeting.

**Final Grade.** Your final grade will be determined according to the following formula:

Participation:	20%
2 Short Writing Assignments:	20%
Longer Writing Assignment:	15%
Midterm Exam:	20%
Final Exam:	25%

### **Required Texts, Part One (NYU Book Store):**

Please note: Of the four books ordered by the NYU bookstore, only one is needed immediately (Thompson). The others will arrive later.

Borenstein, Eliot. *Overkill: Sex and Violence in Contemporary Russian Popular Culture*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008

Thompson, John M. *Russia and the Soviet Union: An Historical Introduction from the Kievan State to the Present*. Sixth Edition. Boulder: Westview Press, 2008.

Von Geldern, James and Richard Stites (eds.). *Mass Culture in Soviet Russia: Tales, Poems, Songs, Movies, Plays, and Folklore, 1917-1953*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.

### **Required Texts , Part Two (On Blackboard)**

The rest of the readings for this class will be available in two formats on Blackboard: Rich Text Format (.rtf), which can be read and printed using virtually any word processing program on any platform, and .pdf, which treats the articles as images rather than texts. Occasionally, the files are in .html format rather than .rtf. In addition, some of the texts are available on Blackboard in the original Russian.

Please also note that the first five readings on Blackboard are not assigned for specific days; rather, they are ancillary materials designed to help you perform well in the class. I expect you to familiarize yourself with the first two ("Advice for Student Writers" and "Citation") before you turn in any written assignment. The next three are timelines of Russian history, included purely for your convenience.

Finally, please note that you must **bring the texts with you to your recitation sections**. The bulk of the reading for this class comes from handouts on Blackboard.

- A-1 Advice for Student Writers.
- A-2 Citation
- A-3 Chronology 1: Pre-Petrine
- A-4 Chronology 2: Peter the Great to the Fall of the Romanovs
- A-5 Chronology 3: Soviet and Post-Soviet Period
- A-6 From Pagan Deity to Christian Saint
- A-7 Church and Family in Medieval Russia
- A-8 "Vladimir Chooses a Faith." From the *Primary Chronicle*. Trans. by George Kalbouss. George Kalbouss. *Russian Culture*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998. 13-14.
- A-9. "From the *Primary Chronicle*. Yaroslav and St. Sophia. George Kalbouss. *Russian Culture*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998. 15.
- A-10. *The Lay of Igor's Campaign*. Serge A. Zenkovsky (ed. and trans.). *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*. New York: Penguin, 1974. 167-190.
- A-11 Bishop Simon: Prince Sviatosha of Chernigov. Serge A. Zenkovsky (ed. and trans.). *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*. New York: Penguin, 1974. 142-147.
- A-12 Kallistrat Druzhinina-Osoryin: The Life of Yuliania Lazarevsky. Serge A. Zenkovsky (ed. and trans.). *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles, and Tales*. New York: Penguin, 1974. 391-399.
- A-13 *The Life of Archpriest Avvakum by Himself*. Trans. Helen Iswolsky. From G. P. Fedotov. *A Treasury of Russian Spirituality*. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1948. 134-181. The assigned reading ends on page 160.
- A-14 Pushkin Handout
- A-15. Alexander Pushkin. *The Bronze Horseman*. Trans. Oliver Elton. <http://www.sunbirds.com/lacquer/readings/1070>.
- A-16. Platonov, Andrei. "The Epifan Locks." Trans. Marion Jordan . Andrei Platonov. *Collected Works*. Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1978. 233-256.
- A-17 Karmazin Handout
- A-18 Radishchev, Aleksandr. *A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow* (excerpts). "Mednoe". Trans. Nathaniel Knight. <http://artsci.shu.edu/reesp/documents/radishchev.htm>  
"Gorodnya." *A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958. 201-212.

- A-19. Chaadaev, Peter. *Philosophical Letters (One)*. Trans. Mary-Barbara Zeldin. James M. Edie, James P. Scanlan, and Mary-Barbara Zeldin, with the collaboration of George L. Kline (eds.). *Russian Philosophy Volume I: The Beginnings of Russian Philosophy. The Slavophiles. The Westerners*. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1965. 106-125.
- A-20. Danilievsky, Nikolai. "The Slav Role in World Civilization." Dostoevsky, Fedor. *Memoirs from the House of the Dead*. Trans. Jessie Coulson. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991. 6-12, 23-25, 35, 70-79, 110-113, 136-147, 267-275, 323-339, 356-361.
- A-21 Lermontov Handout
- A-22 Mikhail Lermontov. *A Hero of Our Time*. ("Author's Preface"; "Bela"). Translated by Vladimir Nabokov in collaboration with Dmitri Nabokov. Dana Point: Ardis, 1988. 1-49
- A-23 Tolstoy Handout
- A.23a Tolstoy, Leo. *Hadji Murat*. Translated by Hugh Alpin. London: Hesperus Press, 2003.
- A-24. Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *A Writer's Diary . Volume Two 1877-1881*. Trans. and Annotated by Kenneth Lantz. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1993. 900-925.
- A-25 Gogol Handout
- A-26 Gogol, Nikolai. *Taras Bulba. The Complete Tales of Nikolai Gogol . Volume 2*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press:, 1985.
- A-27. Gogol, Nikolai. "The Troika Scene." *Dead Souls*. Trans. George Reavey. Ed. George Gibian. New York: Norton, 1985. 269-270.
- A-28. Blok, Aleksandr. "The People and the Intelligentsia." Marc Raeff. *Russian Intellectual History: An Anthology*. New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1988, pp. 359-363.
- A-29. Blok, Aleksandr. "The Intelligentsia and the Revolution." Marc Raeff. *Russian Intellectual History: An Anthology*. New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1988, pp. 364-371.
- A-30 Blok, Aleksandr. *The Scythians*.  
[http://max.mmlc.northwestern.edu/~mdenner/Demo/texts/scythians\\_blok.html](http://max.mmlc.northwestern.edu/~mdenner/Demo/texts/scythians_blok.html)
- A-31 "Revolutionary Songs. (Late 19th Century)." Von Geldern, James and Louise McReynolds (eds). *Entertaining Tsarist Russia: Tales, Songs, Plays, Movies, Jokes, Ads, and Images from Russian Urban Life, 1779-1917*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998. 269-272.
- A-33. Isakovsky, Mikhail. "A Word to Comrade Stalin."
- A-34. Simonov, Konstantin. "Kill Him."
- A-35 Trifonov, Yuri. "The Exchange." Trans Ellendea Proffer 18-70. *The Exchange and Other Stories*. Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1991
- A-38. Limonov, Eduard. *It's Me, Eddie*. New York: Random House, 1983. 1-23.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

### January 25 (T) Introduction

### January 27 (Th) Russia Between Christians and Pagans:

#### Baptizing a Nation

▼ For Today:

- ☉Thompson Chapter One
- ☉"Vladimir Chooses a Faith" (A-8)
- ☉"Yaroslav and St. Sophia" (A-9)
- ☉*The Lay of Igor's Campaign* (A-10)

### February 1 (T) Enemy from the East: the "Uninvited Guests"

▼ For Today:

- ☉Thompson Chapter Two

### February 3 (Th) The Orthodox Church

Film: *Andrei Rublev*

▼ For Today:

- ☉Thompson Chapter Three
- Advice:** Start reading either A-15 or A-16, both of which are assigned for 2/10

### February 8 (T) The Time of Troubles

▼ For Today:

- ☉Thompson Chapter Four
- ☉Life of Sviatosha (A-11)
- ☉Life of Yuliania (A-12)

### February 10 (Th) The Schism

▼ For Today:

- ☉Thompson Chapter Five
- ☉*The Life of Archpriest Avvakum* (excerpt: 134-160) (A-13)
- Short Paper #1 Due*

### February 15 (T) Peter the Great/ Peter the Antichrist

▼ For Today:

- ☉Thompson Chapter Six
- ☉Alexander Pushkin (A-14)
- ☉Pushkin, *The Bronze Horseman* (A-15)
- ☉Platonov, "The Epifan Locks" (A-16)

### February 17 (Th) Sentimental Journeys

▼ For Today:

- ☉Thompson Chapter Seven
- ☉Nikolai Karamzin (A-17)
- ☉Radishchev, *A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow* (excerpts) (A-18)

### February 22 (T) Identity Crisis

▼ For Today:

- ☉Thompson Chapter Eight
- ☉Chaadaev, *Letter 1*, (A-19)

### February 24 (Th) Slavophiles and Westernizers

▼ For Today:

- ☉Danilievsky, "The Slav Role in World Civilization" (A-20)

### March 1 (T) Constructing Siberia

▼ For Today:

- ☉Dostoevsky, *Memoirs from the House of the Dead* (excerpts)

### March 3 (Th) Caucasus (1)

▼ For Today:

- ☉Mikhail Lermontov (A-21)
- ☉Lermontov, "Bela" (A-22)
- Short Paper #2 Due*

### March 8 (T) Caucasus (2)

▼ For Today:

- ☉Lev Tolstoy (A-23)
- ☉Tolstoy, *Hadji-Murat*

### March 10 (Th) MIDTERM EXAM

### March 15/17 SPRING BREAK

### March 22 (Th) Cossacks

▼ For Today:

- ☉Nikolai Gogol (A-25)
- ☉Gogol, *Taras Bulba* (A-26)

### March 24 (T) Jews

▼ For Today:

- ☉Thompson Chapter Nine
- ☉Dostoevsky, *A Writer's Diary* (A-24)

**March 26 (Th) Revolution (1)**

- ▼ For Today:
- ⊛ Thompson Chapter Ten
- ⊛ Gogol, Troika Scene (A-27)
- ⊛ Blok, "The People and the Intelligentsia" (A-28)
- ⊛ Blok, "The Intelligentsia and the Revolution" (A-29)
- ⊛ Blok, "The Scythians" (A-30)

**March 31 (Th) Revolution (2)**

- ▼ For Today:
- ⊛ Thompson Chapter Eleven (through p. 227)
- ⊛ Revolutionary Songs (A-31)
- ⊛ Von Geldern (3-6, 13-17, 36-52)

**April 5 (T) Revolutionary (3)**

- ▼ For Today:
- ⊛ Thompson Chapter Eleven (finish)
- ⊛ Von Geldern (56-71, 74-84, 86-114)

**April 7 (Th) The Terror/The Cult**

- ▼ For Today:
  - ⊛ Thompson Chapter Twelve (through 231)
  - ⊛ Isakovsky, "A Word to Comrade Stalin" (A-33)
  - ⊛ Von Geldern (153-156, 163-172, 216-227, 234-238, 257-268, 271-272, 327-328)
- Film: *Circus*

**April 12 (T) The Great Patriotic War**

- Film: *She Defends the Motherland*
- ▼ For Today:
  - ⊛ Thompson Chapter Twelve (finish)
  - ⊛ Simonov, "Kill Him" (A-34)
  - ⊛ von Geldern (315-318, 341-344, 371-386, 401-405, 416-421)

**April 14 (Th) The Thaw**

- ⊛ Thompson Chapter Thirteen
- ⊛ Von Geldern (450-453)

**April 19 (T) Stagnation**

- ⊛ Trifonov, "The Exchange" (A-35)

**April 21 (Th) Emigration**

- ▼ For Today:
  - ⊛ Thompson Chapter Fourteen
  - ⊛ Limonov, *It's Me, Eddie* (excerpts) (A-38)
- Longer Paper Due*

**April 26 (T) Perestroika and Moral Panic**

- Film: *Intergirl*  
*Little Vera*
- ▼ For Today:
  - ⊛ Borenstein, "Introduction"
  - ⊛ Borenstein, Chapter 3

**April 28 (Th) The Yeltsin Era**

- Film: *Brother*
- ▼ For Today:
  - ⊛ Thompson Chapter Fifteen
  - ⊛ Borenstein, Chapter 7

**May 3 (T) Someone Like Putin**

- ▼ For Today:
- ⊛ Thompson, Chapter Sixteen
- ⊛ Borenstein, Conclusion

**May 5 (Th) Yokels and Cosmopolitans**

**May 17 (T) 200:3:50**

**Final Exam**