

University of Florida
Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures (LLC)

Fall 2021

RUSSIAN SHORT PROSE
RUW 4370 (Section: 43R7 / Class No: 27008)

Classes: M, W, F: Period 7 (1:55-2:45 pm) | DAU 0342

Circumstances beyond our control may force us to hold some classes via Zoom (synchronously)

Instructor: Dr. Alexander Burak

Office hours: T 1:55-2:45; W 3.00-3.50 pm or by appointment (254 Dauer Hall)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This is a language and literature course introducing students to some of the latest Russian short prose works. Special emphasis will be placed on close reading and linguo-cultural analysis of the texts, which will involve thorough preparation of home assignments, using Russian-English and English-Russian dictionaries; reading and translating the texts out loud in class; analyzing the grammar and vocabulary of the texts; discussing the sociocultural background and present-day cultural significance of the texts; and enhancing conversational skills by retelling, summarizing, acting out, and commenting on the texts.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Students will acquire a deeper knowledge of the Russian language and a better understanding of its expressive potential through specific goal-oriented activities in class and preparation of home assignments. They will also acquire initial skills at critical text analysis. These goals will be achieved in the course of close reading of the selected texts, accompanied by intensive oral and written Russian language practice in summarizing a text's plot, describing its characters and setting, identifying the text's theme/s and the narrator's point of view, finding in the text instances of symbolism and stylistic devices used to evoke in the reader a certain attitude to the text. It is expected that by the conclusion of this course students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the content of several literary works that are part of Russians' collective memory;
2. Use acquired close-reading skills to analyze and interpret imaginative texts requiring undistracted, attentive to linguistic nuance and figurative language work;
3. Produce critical analyses and interpretations of the short prose pieces examined in class, using the strategies of formalist, reader-response, and cultural text criticism;
4. Critically assess the role of the short prose genre in creating cultural memory, based on their personal experiences (reader-response). Suggest possible associations that the given texts may evoke with reference to any "required reading" lists in American schools and at UF.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

Lydia Buravova. *The Routledge Intermediate Russian Reader*. London and New York: Routledge, 2016. ISBN 978-0-415-67887-2.

Brian James Baer (ed.). *New Penguin Parallel Text: Short Stories in Russian*. New York: Penguin Books, 2017. ISBN 978-0-1431-18343.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION:

Attendance & participation/in-class activities (40%)
2 take-home exams (30% each = 60%)

1. Attendance & Participation (40%)

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory and will be assessed by class roll-call or sign-up sheet. Students will lose 1% from their final grade for every unexcused absence. Absences will be excused in accordance with UF policy. Acceptable reasons include illness, religious holidays, military obligation, and the twelve-day rule (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>). Should you miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for informing yourself as to what was covered in class.

Participation: Students are expected to read and review the assigned readings/viewings/listening before class. In addition, I will also send you some prompts or discussion questions that you should keep in mind while reading the assigned portions of the text/s. **There will be mandatory discussion assignments, quizzes, and occasional creative assignments that will also contribute to this portion of the final grade.**

2 Take-home exams (30% each—together 60% of the total grade)

You will have to submit the first exam paper by email not later than 11:59 pm on the Friday of week 8 (October 15, 2021), and the other exam paper will have to be submitted to me by email by 5 pm on December 10, 2021. The exams will be written at home, which will help you to check your factual knowledge and understanding of the assigned texts. For each of the two exams you will have to (1) translate from English into Russian and from Russian into English several short passages, closely based on the texts studied by the time of the exam, and also (2) to answer in writing in Russian several questions about the stories we will have read.

CLASSROOM POLICIES:

- **Makeup Policy:** Except in the case of certified illness or other UF accepted excuse (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>), there will be no make-up option for missed or late assignments/exams. Where possible, make-ups should be arranged by email or in person prior to the expected absence. In case of illness, students should contact the instructor on his or her return to classes.
- **Unexcused Absence Policy:** Student will lose **1%** from their final grade for each unexcused absence.
- **Late Policy:** A class roll will be available for students to sign at the front of the class before class begins. If a student is late, he or she will have to sign the "late roll sheet" after class. Such lateness distracts other students and the instructor and will affect the

student's final participation grade. Students will lose **0.5%** from their final grade each time they arrive late.

- **Cell phone policy:** Students must turn cell phones to silent before coming to class. Each time a student's cell phone rings or each time that a student texts during class, 1% will be deducted from that student's final grade (i.e. the student will be marked as absent).
- **Laptop policy:** Students may use laptops to take notes or read electronic textbooks. Wi-fi must be disabled in class. Students who use the Internet will be marked as absent and 1% will be deducted from the student's final grade (i.e. the student will be marked as absent).

Grading Scale (& GPA equivalent):

| A | A- | B+ | B | B- | C+ | C | C- | D+ | D | D- | E |
|--------|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|-------|--------|--------|-------|--------|-----|
| 100-93 | 92-90 | 89-87 | 86-83 | 82-80 | 79-77 | 76-73 | 72-70 | 69-67 | 63-66 | 62-60 | 59- |
| (4.0) | (3.67) | (3.33) | (3.0) | (2.67) | (2.33) | (2.0) | (1.67) | (1.33) | (1.0) | (0.67) | (0) |

Note: There is no rounding up in this course. If you earn 92.99, your grade is A-

Note: A grade of C- is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, or College Basic distribution credit. For further information on UF's Grading Policy, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

<http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>

Academic Honesty: Students are required to be honest in their coursework and must properly cite all sources that they have consulted for their projects. Any act of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Students and may result in failure of the assignment in question and/or the course. For University of Florida's honor code, see

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. Contact the Disability Resources Center (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>) for information about available resources for students with disabilities.

Counseling and Mental Health Resources: Students facing difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help should call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352 392-1575; <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>).

Online Course Evaluation: Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester (or days, in the case of the summer), but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>.

Schedule of Classes

Please note that this schedule of class assignments is not set in stone and may undergo some modifications to better fit the profile of the class as the semester progresses.

Weeks 1-4

Aleksey Slapovsky, RR: Chapter 4, pp. 56-74

Sergey Lukyanenko. Don't Panic!

Julia Kissina. The Lithuanian Hand.

Weeks 5-7

Yevgeny Grishkovets, RR: Chapter 9, pp. 131-144

Evgeny Grishkovets. The Tattoo.

Yuly Daniel. Hands.

Weeks 8-10

Mikhail Shishkin, RR: Chapter 16, pp. 228-242

Dina Rubina. Grandpa and Laima.

Yuri Buida. Sinbad the Sailor.

Weeks 11-13

Anna Starobinets, RR: Chapter 17, pp. 243-257

Ludmila Ulitskaya. The Beast.

Ludmilla Petrushevskaya. The Arm.

Weeks 14-15

Maksim Krongauz, RR: Chapter 18, pp. 258-269

Vladimir Sorokin. The Swim.

Alexander Ilichevsky. Three Wars.

Final exam briefing.

Submit your final exam paper by email as a Microsoft Word file no later than 11:59 pm, December 10, 2021. Earlier submissions will be appreciated.