

University of Florida
Fall 2019
Russian: Advanced Seminar
RUS 4501 (0385)
Wednesday, 9-11, CBD 0234
Instructor: Dr. Galina Rylkova
Office hours: Tuesday: 3 p.m.—5 p.m., 256, Dauer Hall)
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Course description:

This is a multi-part course that is designed to introduce Russian majors and minors to some of the more significant trends and ideas in Russian literary, cultural, and historical studies. Students will develop their ability to understand and produce critical scholarly argument in a variety of formats, including class discussion, formal presentation, and a written research project. The first hour of this seminar will be based on the textbook, *Advanced Russian through History*, while the other two periods will be devoted to building up reading and research strategies, oral presentations, and discussion of Russian cultural studies as a discipline. Every student will be expected to write a research paper in English. This course is particularly useful to students who consider going to graduate schools and/or would like to continue specializing in Russian studies after graduation. Prerequisite: any of a 3000-level Russian language course or higher, or permission of the instructor.

Required texts are really required. You will need to bring your hard copies to class:

1. Anton Chekhov, *Stories*, translated by Richard Pevear, and Larissa Volokhonsky
2. *Russian Fairy Tales*
3. Benjamin Rifkin, and Olga Kagan, *Advanced Russian through History*

Grading:

Attendance + Weekly Assignments/Participation in discussion: 30%

Group-teaching presentations: 10%

Attending opera broadcast and writing a response paper: 10%

Research paper outline and bibliography: 10%

Oral presentation: 15%

Research paper: 25%

PARTICIPATION (30%)

Class participation and attendance will be taken seriously in the determination of your final grade. You are expected to do all assignments and reading carefully so that they will form the basis for your contributions to class-discussion. **Missed coursework** may be made up, at the discretion of the instructor. With two classes missed, consider dropping this class.

GROUP-TEACHING PRESENTATIONS (10%)

You should start by reading Chekhov's short stories from *Stories*, find a story that you particularly like and/or want to talk about. You will need to work with other students (in groups of 2-4). Together you will teach other students how to interpret/read the chosen story. To prepare your presentation you will need to know all the details of your story very well, which means that you will also need to consult available critical literature and tell the class about your findings. Other students will also read your chosen texts in advance and will be asking questions and commenting on your interpretation. You need to choose your story by October 16. All teaching presentations will take place on October 23. I suggest you start working on this assignment at the end of September. Working with others is both difficult and rewarding. Be creative! On the day of the presentations the groups should hand in a summary of their collective thinking (200-300 words).

ATTENDING OPERA BROADCAST AND WRITING A BRIEF RESPONSE PAPER, 350-500 WORDS (10%) DUE November 13 or sooner.

In writing your paper, please, answer the following questions:

- What mood were you in when you entered the theater? What mood were you in when you were leaving the theater?
- What did you think about the opera?
- How did the fact that you were attending a live broadcast (in other words, if anything did go extremely well or wrong onstage, you were going to see it) affect your impressions of the performance?
- Did you feel part of what was going on onstage or behind the scenes?
- What did you think about the audience's reaction here in Gainesville and in New York to the show?
- Did you feel prepared for the live broadcast of "Madama Butterfly"? In other words, was it useful to learn something about Puccini's opera and opera in general prior to your visit?
- Will you ever repeat this experience again?

RESEARCH PAPER OUTLINE AND BIBLIOGRAPHY (10%)

Students should submit a one-page outline (approximately -300 words) of their research projects (explaining why you chose a particular topic and how you will approach it), and a list of your sources (books, articles, film, the Internet sources, etc.) due November 6 in class. I will return them to you with my comments on November 13.

ORAL PRESENTATION (15%)

Every student will be expected to give a formal oral presentation on the subject of his/her original research. These should be well planned in advance and will last about 15 minutes, followed by Q-and-A periods. These presentations can be given in Russian or in English. You might use one of the chapters that we are not going to discuss in class from *Advanced Russian through History* (and oral lectures) as your initial sources of information. Please, do not hesitate to discuss your presentations with me either during my office hours or after class. Ideally, you will teach us all something that we do not know much about. In addition, your presentation is an excellent opportunity for you to receive feedback on your project.

RESEARCH PAPER (25%)

Every student will be expected to write a research paper (8-12 pages) on the subject of his/her choice related to Russian history, politics, language, literature and culture. I would like you to submit an outline of your papers, including the sources **by November 6**. I encourage you to discuss your plans for your oral presentations and papers with me in advance. I am really interested in your research projects and would like to help you as much as I can. **Due December 11, 11 p.m.**

Grading Scale

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
94-100	90-93	87-89	84-86	80-83	77-79	74-76	70-73	67-69	64-66	60-63	0-59

*A C- will not be a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, Gordon Rule or Basic College Distribution Credit.

Grading Policy: www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html.

Honor Code: www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php.

Counselling and Wellness Center: www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc

Course Policies

We will start each session at 4.05 p.m. and discuss an assigned chapter from *Russian through History*. Then we will have a 20-minute break from 5.05 to 5.25 (I highly recommend walking, stretching, eating, looking at notes related to the second part of our seminar, etc.). The second segment will be from 5.25 to 6.55 p.m.

Please, come to class on time. Please, bring your copies of *the assigned texts* to every class.

Cell phones and gadgets: Please turn your cell phone off during class as a courtesy to us all. If your cell phone does happen to disturb the class, you are required to treat the class to cookies as reparation for the interruption. Please keep all other gadgets out of sight and sound as well: they are a distraction!

Please do not hesitate to contact me during the semester if you have any individual concerns or issues that need to be discussed. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office (www.dso.ufl.edu/drp/). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

In writing papers, be certain to give proper credit whenever you use words, phrases, ideas, arguments, and conclusions drawn from someone else's work. Failure to give credit by quoting

and/or footnoting is PLAGIARISM and is unacceptable. Please review the University's honesty policy at www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/.

SYLLABUS

Please note: This schedule is preliminary and may undergo modifications as the semester progresses. All reading and writing assignments must be completed by the beginning of the class period under which they are listed. No late assignments will be accepted without legitimate reason (documented illness, excused absence).

August 21:

Introduction

Film screening, Andrzej Munk, "Passenger" (1963), discussion:

<https://easterneuropeanmovies.com/drama/258-passenger.html>

1. History, Historical Truth

August 28:

Russian Through History: Chapter Chapter 19.

Frederick Corney, *Telling October* (excerpt, a PDF file)

Babel, "The Letter," "My First Goose" (a PDF file)

Eisenstein, "The Battleship Potyomkin" (clips); "October" (clips, in class)

September 4:

Russian Through History: Chapter 20.

Ivan Bunin, "Sunstroke" (a PDF file)

Nikita Mikhalkov, film "Sunstroke," clips (2014)

Galina Rylkova, "From *Cursed Days* to 'Sunstroke': The authenticity of Ivan Bunin's recollections of the Bolshevik Revolution in the 1920s" (2018), a PDF file.

2. Strategies of Reading, Analyzing, and Interpreting

September 11:

Russian Through History: Chapter 2

On bibliotherapy: <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/can-reading-make-you-happier>

Hemingway, "A Very Short Story":

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/default.asp?page=2008/06/06/story_6-6-2008_pg3_4

Oats "Papa at Ketchum" (a PDF file, the very beginning)

Steven Millhauser, "The Ambition of a Short Story":

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/05/books/review/Millhauser-t.html?_r=0

Mieke Bal, "Fabula: Elements" (a PDF file)

Hugh McLean, "Hemingway and Tolstoy: A Pugilistic Encounter" from *In Quest of Tolstoy* (e-book, library West)

September 18:

Russian Fairy Tales

Guest lecture: Reading Russian Fairy Tales. (Katy Meigs)

Russian Through History: Chapters 6

September 25:

Russian Through History: Chapter 7

Tolstoy, "The Death of Ivan Ilyich" (A PDF file)

The Banality of Empathy:

<https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2019/03/02/the-banality-of-empathy>

October 2:

Russian Through History: Chapter 8

Chekhov, "A Boring Story," "Gusev" (BOOK); "Kashtanka," (a PDF file)

Lars Svendsen, *A Philosophy of Boredom* (a PDF file)

Rylkova, "Homo Sachaliensis: Chekhov as a Family Man." (a PDF file)

October 9:

Russian Through History: Chapter 9

Chekhov, "The Black Monk" + "Rothchild's Fiddle" (BOOK)

Imagining Russian Provinces (a PDF file)

Students need to tell me which stories they chose for discussion on October 30

October 16:

Russian Through History: Chapter 10

Group-teaching sessions: students analyze their chosen texts (BOOK)

3. Research. What is a research paper? How long does it take to write one?**October 23: Personal/Impersonal; Hot/Cold (A)**

Guest lectures (Dr. Alexander Burak)

Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, excerpts, pp. 603-613; 821-828; 870-878 (a PDF file)

Berlin, "The Hedgehog and the Fox" (a PDF file)

Hugh McLean, "Foxes into Hedgehogs. Berlin and Tolstoy," from *In Quest of Tolstoy* (e-book, library West)

Thomas Newlin, "'Swam Life' and the Biology of *War and Peace*" (a PDF file)

October 30: Personal/Impersonal; Hot/Cold (B)

Guest lectures (Dr. Michael Gorham)

Maia Stepenberg, Appendix A from *Against Nihilism: Nietzsche Meets Dostoevsky* (2019) (a PDF file)

Shenk, *Lincoln and Melancholia* (excerpt, a PDF file)

"Lincoln," film (clips)

4. Thinking Out of the Opera Box

November 6:

Russian Through History, Chapter 15; Chapter 33

Puccini, “Madama Butterfly” (opera, synopsis, clips)

Paper outlines are due in class.

Saturday, November 9 we will be going to see Puccini’s opera “Madama Butterfly”

November 13:

Russian Through History, Chapter 16

Russian Avant Garde: <http://max.mmlc.northwestern.edu/~mdenner/Drama/visualarts/avant-garde/avantgarde12.html>

Opera, discussion. **Your response papers are due in class.**

David Henry Hwang, *M. Butterfly* (a PDF file) + film (clips)

1964 introduction to Kabuki in English: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6oZu80KZAM4>

November 20:

Russian Through History, Chapter 26

The Future of Humanities

Students’ presentations (2-4)

November 27: Thanksgiving

December 4

Students’ presentations (6-8)

Research papers are due Tuesday, December 11, 11.00 p.m. or earlier.