

## RUT 3504: Russia Today



**Prof. M. Gorham • UF Russian Studies • Dept. of Languages, Literatures and Cultures**

**Class #18381 | Section #296C • GenEd H & N • 3 credits**

**Class #18356 | Section #2959 • GenEd H & N & WR6 • 3 credits**

**MWF 7/Turlington 2346**

**Fall 2021**

*“Russia Today” will give you a comprehensive introduction to the various traditional and newly emerging institutions, practices, behaviors, beliefs, attitudes and symbols that shape everyday life and thought from the late-Soviet era to the present day (1985–2021). No less importantly, it will also help you develop the methodological and analytical tools needed for critically examining any culture, foreign or native. The course will draw from anthropology, journalism, politics, literature, film, and popular culture as a means of exploring the special place that culture (broadly defined) occupies in the complex process of defining and reinventing national, social, and individual identity. In doing so it will take a thematic approach and will depend on regular and active student participation. It will also provide you with extra-credit opportunities designed to enhance your interaction with and understanding of Russian culture and society today.*

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Office Hours (in-person or via Zoom): Mondays 3–4 PM & Wednesdays 9–10 AM (or by appointment)

Zoom Office Hours location: <https://ufl.zoom.us/my/gorham> (Meeting ID: 523 004 7250)

### ***Credit and Prerequisites***

This course carries three credits that also satisfy General Education requirements for Humanities (H) and International (N) courses. For those students registered in section #18356/2959, it also satisfies 6000 words for the UF General Education writing requirement. There are **no prerequisites** and **no knowledge of Russia or Russian language is required.**

### ***Course Requirements***

Final grades will depend on your performance in the following areas:

- Class 18356/Section 2959 (WR6 section):
  - Class participation: 10%
  - Pop quizzes: 10%
  - 4 shorter argumentative briefs (3000 words total): 15%
  - Two longer essays (1500 words each): 30%
  - Test 2: 35%
  
- Class 18381/Section 296C (non-WR6 section):
  - Class participation: 10%
  - Pop quizzes: 10%
  - Class presentations: 15%
  - Test 1: 30%
  - Test 2: 35%

### ***Attendance***

While not officially required, attendance will be a critical factor in your overall course performance. This is because most learning happens through active engagement and because of the participation/preparation policy outlined above. Moreover, much of the questions making up the midterm and final will be based on in-class lectures and discussions that are not necessarily duplicated in the course readings. Finally, if you miss class on the day of a pop-quiz (see below) you will receive a failing grade for that quiz.

### ***Guidelines for Class Participation and Quizzes***

Under the assumption that long-term learning and personal development depend primarily on one's active engagement in the subject matter at hand, our class meetings will often take the form of group discussions of the assigned readings and broader issues relating to them. Background cultural, historical, social, and political information will be provided in the form of short lectures. For this reason, it is essential not only that you complete assignments promptly and thoughtfully but also that you come to class prepared to share one or two coherent and articulate ideas, questions, or opinions. Study questions for readings slated for discussion will be made available at the course website and should be consulted prior to class. **Participation** will be evaluated based on the quality and quantity of your in-class and on-line contributions, and will count for 10% of your final grade. Regular pop **quizzes** will be administered over the course of the semester to assess your basic comprehension of the reading assignments. These quizzes will be short, factually oriented, and based on the readings due for the day on which they are given. If you miss class on the day of a pop quiz, you will receive a failing grade for that quiz. Your cumulative average on the pop quizzes (with the lowest quiz score being dropped) will count for 10% of your final grade.

The class presentations and discussion papers described below are also designed to enhance in-class discussions.

### ***In-Class Presentations (Non-GR6 students)***

Students from the non-writing-intensive section will be asked on a regular basis to prepare three (3) 2–3 minute oral comments on assigned readings and/or Russia-related news reports as a means of initiating class discussion. (See detailed guidelines posted in Canvas.)

### ***Tests***

The two tests (only 1 for WR6 section [18356/2959]) will be closed-book and cumulative, consisting of a combination of true-false and multiple-choice questions, short-answer IDs, short, sight analyses of relevant texts, and essay questions.

### ***Tentative test schedule (dates subject to change with fair advanced warning):***

- Test 1 (section 18381/296C only) – Wednesday, Oct. 13 (during regularly scheduled class meeting)
- Test 2 – Wednesday, Dec. 8 (during regularly scheduled class meeting)

***There will be no final exam for this course.***

### ***Guidelines for Writing Assignments (WR6 students)***

#### Format and Presentation

For the response papers and longer essays, you should use some 12-point legible font, typed and double-spaced, on 8 1/2" by 11" paper with top and bottom, left and right margins of 1 inch. You must always edit your paper submissions down to the maximum required length.

More detailed guidelines on topics and execution will be provided with the individual assignments.

Submission We will use the Canvas e-learning system to process all writing assignments. All papers will likewise be subjected to originality check using the "Turnitin" interface. To get into the system, you will need your Gatorlink ID and password to log on at <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/>. Unless you are instructed otherwise, all written assignments should be submitted within this system as Word (".doc" or ".docx") files. Name your file according to the following protocol, inserting the relevant information in place of the brackets: "[your last name]\_Response[#]" or "[your last name]\_Essay[#]", where "Response1" refers to the first response paper due, "Essay1" to the first longer essay, and so on. Jane Doe's second short response paper, in other words, would be named "Doe\_Response2" (without the quotes). Deadlines for electronic submissions are normally by class time (for shorter written assignments) and 11:59 PM (for longer essays) on the listed due date, but you should always consult the "Weekly Assignments" page to be sure.

#### Grading and revision

All written work will be graded using a 10-point scale (corresponding to the percentage grade scales listed on page 2). Grades will be based on both style and content. Students receiving a 9.5 or lower will have the option of revising papers. In order to qualify for a maximum full-grade increase, revisions must be turned in within two weeks of receiving the marked-up draft, and must represent a substantial improvement of the original work, particularly taking into account instructor's comments. Both comments and grades for all written work will be returned within two class meetings.

Please note: Due to the great importance of editing and revision in the writing process, the highest possible grade will rarely be awarded to first submissions. You should expect to invest additional time in revision in order to achieve the highest grade.

## ***Preliminary Course Schedule and Deadlines***

The following schedule is subject to change, with advanced notice. See course Canvas site for detailed schedule and assignments.

### **Part I: Nation and Revolution ~~ Chaos and Order**

Introduction  
Revolution and transition  
Reinventing Russia  
Tsar Putin

#### **WR6 deadlines:**

- **Short Response #1 due Sept. 10 by class time.**
- **Short Response #2 due Sept. 15 by class time.**

### **Part II: People & Places**

The Russian soul  
The heartland  
Public health and the environment

#### **WR6 deadlines:**

- **Short Response #3 due Sept. 29 by class time.**
- **Essay 1 outline due Oct. 7; complete paper due Oct. 13. (Revisions due 11/1)**

#### **Non-WR6 deadlines:**

- **Complete at least 1 in-class presentation by Oct. 8**
- **Test 1 (Oct. 13)**

### **Part III: Media & Entertainment**

Literary culture  
Mass media  
Internet culture & politics

### **Part IV: Business Culture & Corruption**

Business, wealth, and consumer culture  
Culture of corruption

#### **WR6 deadlines:**

- **Essay 1 revisions due Oct. 11/1**
- **Short Response #4 due Nov. 5 by class time.**

### **Part V: Faith, Nation, Aliens**

Faith and spirituality  
Sport and leisure  
Nationalism and national identity  
Russian Images of America

**Non-WR6: Complete all 3 in-class presentations by Dec. 3**

#### **Both sections:**

- **Test 2 (Dec. 8)**
- **Final posting date for optional Extra-credit RT blog: Dec. 8, 11:59 PM**

**WR6: Essay 2 (Dec. 15, 12:00 noon)**

## Course Materials

**Important note:** Course information and materials (detailed assignments, study questions, handouts, etc.) will be available primarily (and, in most cases, only) through the course Canvas site.

### Books for Purchase (in order assigned)

- Neidhart, Christoph. *Russia's Carnival: The Smells, Sights, and Sounds of Transition*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003. **[to be read in its entirety]**
- Putin, Vladimir. *First Person: An Astonishingly Frank Self-Portrait by Russia's President*. New York: Public Affairs, 2000. **[to be read in its entirety]**
- Pesmen, Dale. *Russia and Soul: An Exploration*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell U. P., 2000. **[7/10 chapters read]**
- **[pending instructor's final approval]** Pelevin, Victor. *Homo Zapiens*. Trans. Andrew Bromfield. New York: Viking Press, 1999. **[if assigned, to be read in its entirety]**

*The remainder of assigned readings will be available either online (OL) or through Course Reserve (CR), links to which may be found at the Weekly Schedule & Assignments page in Canvas.*

### Recommended Writing Manuals (WR6 section only)

- *Rules for Writers* (Hacker, any edition).
- *Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace* (Williams and Bizup 2015)

## Other Course Information

### Grading percentages

Grades based on percentages will be determined according to the following scale:

A = 93 – 100%	C = 73 – 76%
A- = 90 – 92%	C- = 70 – 72%
B+ = 87 – 89%	D+ = 67 – 69%
B = 83 – 86%	D = 63 – 66%
B- = 80 – 82%	D- = 60 – 62%
C+ = 77 – 79%	E = less than 60%

For information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points, see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>.

Make-up policy. Make-up presentations and tests will be permitted only in the case of legitimate conflicts well-documented in advance. Please contact me as early as possible if you think you have a scheduling conflict.

### Students Requiring Accommodation

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

### Academic Honesty

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

### Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

### Student Evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

### The Writing Studio

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.