This course is an introduction to the culture of Russia from the advent of Christianity in 988 to the Decembrist Revolt in 1825. The literature, architecture, graphic arts, and performing arts of Russia will be considered in their historical context, and the complex relationship of Russian culture to the culture of its neighbors to its eastern, western, and southern neighbors will be explored. Students will gain a deeper understanding of the legacy of Russia’s early culture and the ways in which it did and did not determine the further development of Russian in the modern world.

Required Texts


Zenkovsky, Serge, ed. Medieval Russia’s Epics, Chronicles, and Tales.

Several important primary and secondary texts will be provided by the instructor in digital (pdf) format. Students will be required to print out all primary texts and bring these copies to class on the days they are assigned for discussion.

Expectations, Examinations, and Requirements

1. Attendance is required at all class meetings and a classroom grade is assigned after each meeting based on participation in class discussions. Students absent for any class meeting receive a 0 [zero] for that class meeting. Having missed six class sessions, a student’s final grade will be lowered one full letter grade (e.g., B+ => C+); having missed eight class sessions, a student’s final grade will be lowered two full letter grades (e.g., B+ => D+); having missed ten classes, a student will fail the course.

2. Students are to complete all reading assignments before the class meeting for which they are listed in the Meeting Schedule below. Students **must bring the Zenkovsky text and any class handouts to class with them on days when those readings are due.** The Riasanovsky/Steinberg history text need not be brought to class, but students are responsible for the material in the history text when assigned and there will be frequent quizzes on this material.

3. There will be three tests given over the course of the semester on the dates given in the Meeting Schedule. They will cover the content of the course up to that point and since the preceding test. In other words, they are not cumulative. There is no midterm or final examination. Students who miss any test due to absence will receive a zero on that test. No test can be made up (but see Paper Option below).
4. Each student will present the discussion material for one class session. A schedule of student discussion presentations will be drawn up during the second week of the semester. Students should consult with the instructor if they have any doubts or questions regarding the form or content of these presentations.

Grading

Grades will be calculated according to the following schema:

- Tests: 60% (3 x 20%)
- Classroom discussion: 25% (15% + 10% for presentation)
- Quizzes: 15%

Paper Option

Students who wish to write a paper have the option of doing so. If this option is taken, the paper will replace one of the three major in-class tests, determined by the time period treated in the paper—for example, someone writing a paper on the iconography of the Kievian period will not have to take the first test. The paper project will involve the writing of a draft and final version. A detailed written description of the writing project, including requirements, guidelines, possible topics, and due dates, will be distributed during the second week of the course. Students wishing to exercise this option must commit to it in writing during the fourth week of the course. Taking the option to write a paper is an irrevocable decision—once made, it cannot be undone. Students are welcome and encouraged to discuss their interest in writing a paper with the instructor in advance of committing to it.

Academic Integrity

By remaining enrolled in the course, you not only agree to abide by the stipulations of this course overview, but also understand that we will follow rigorously the rules spelled out in the Handbook on Integrity regarding cheating, plagiarism, etc. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with these rules and observe them. Any infraction will be penalized accordingly.

Disability

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union, 412-648-7890 or 412-383-7355 (TTY) as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

Classroom Recording

Students may not use any electronic recording devices in the classroom without written verification from DRS that such recording is a necessary accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Meeting Schedule with Assignments and Test Dates

27 August: Introduction

29 August: The Rise of Kiev
R&S 3–17
Zenkovsky 2–7, 11
The Apostle Andrew Comes to Russia
Founding of the City of Kiev
Beginning of the Russian State and the Arrival of Rurik
Oleg’s Campaign Against Constantinople
The Death of Oleg
Igor’s Death and Olga’s Revenge
Vladimir Christianizes Russia

3 September: Christenization of Rus’
R&S 19–37
Zenkovsky 12, 18, 20
Yaroslav the Wise
Metropolitan Hilarion’s Sermon on Law and Grace
Vladimir Monomakh’s Instruction to His Children

5 September: Political Decay and Architectural Splendor
R&S 38–55
Zenkovsky 21, 22, 32, 25
Martyrdom of Boris and Gleb
Beginning of the Kiev Crypt Monastery and Its Founder, St. Antonius
St. Theodosius, Abbot of the Crypt Monastery
Life of Our Blessed Father Theodosius, Abbot of the Crypt Monastery
Architecture of Kievan Rus’ [Courseweb]

10 September: The Beginnings of Icon Painting
Zenkovsky 31, 33
Descent of the Virgin into Hell
The Lay of Igor’s Campaign
“Russkaia Pravda” (short version)
Icons of Kievan Rus’ [Courseweb]

12 September: Mongol Invasion
R&S 61–70
Zenkovsky, 34, 35
The Battle on the River Kalka
Orison on the Downfall of Russia

17 September: Rus’ Under the Yoke: Novgorod
R&S 71–82
Zenkovsky, 39, 40
Tale of the Life and Courage of the Pious and Great Prince Alexander
Narrative of the Pious Prince Dovmont and His Courgae
Art and Architecture of Novgorod [Courseweb]
19 September: Rus’ Under the Yoke: Vladimir/Suzdal
   R&S 83–88
   Documents of the Yoke [Courseweb]
   Art and Architecture of Vladimir/Suzdal [Courseweb]

24 September: The Wane of the Yoke
   Zenkovsky 43
   Daniel the Prisoner
   TBA [Courseweb]

26 September: Test 1

1 October: The Rise of Moscow
   R&S 89–113
   Zenkovsky
   Zadonshchina
   The Last Will of Ivan Kalita, The Money Bag

3 October: Andrei Rublev and others
   R&S 114–127
   Zenkovsky 44, 45, 46, 47
   Epiphanius, to St. Stephen
   Epiphanius, Life of Sergius of Radonezh
   Peter and Fevronia
   Life of St. Michael, a Fool in Christ
   The Rublev phenomenon [Courseweb]

8 October: Culture under the “Moscow Yoke”
   R&S 128–136
   Zenkovsky, 50, 51
   Tale of the White Cowl
   Afanasy Nikitin’s Journey Across Three Seas
   Filofei, on the “Third Rome”
   Culture after Rublev: Painting, Music, Architecture [Courseweb]

10 October: Ivan IV The Terrible
   R&S 139–153
   Zenkovsky 52, 53, 54
   Steven Bathory’s Campaign Against Pskov
   Kurbsky, First Epistle to Ivan IV
   Ivan IV, Epistle of the Tsar Against Prince Kurbsky

17 October: The Time of Troubles
   R&S 155–172
22 October: Pious Alexis and The Schism
  R&S 173–181; 195–201
  Zenkovsky 59
  Life of Archpriest Avvakum By Himself
  from the “Biography of Boyarina Morozova”

24 October: External Influences
  R&S 182–194; 201–209
  Zenkovsky 58
  Life of Yuliania Lazarevy

29 October: The Beginnings of a Secular Court Culture
  Zenkovsky 60, 61, 62, 64
  Shemiaka’s Judgment
  Tale of Savva Grudtsyn
  Frol Skobeev, the Rogue
  Misery-Luckless-Plight

31 October: Test 2

5 November: Peter I The Great
  R&S 211–238
  Peter the Great, “Decree on the Duties of the Senate”
  ---, “Letter to the Holy Synod”
  ---, “Instruction to Russian Students Abroad Studying Navigation”

7 November: The Rise of St. Petersburg
  R&S 239–243
  Zenkovsky, 73, 74, 75
  Simeon Polotsky, Ode on the Birth of Peter I
  Simeon Polotsky, The Law
  Simeon Polotsky, The Merchant Class

12 November: Baroque and Rococo
  R&S 243–250
  Mikhail Lomonosov, Letter on the Use of Glass

14 November: Enlightenment and Empire
  R&S 251–261; 272–276

19 November: The Age of Catherine II The Great
  R&S 261–271; 276–279
  Catherine the Great, from The Instruction
  ---, “Manifesto Against Pugachev”
  Pugachev, “Emancipation Decree”
21 November: The Fruits of Enlightenment
   R&S 280–295
   Aleksandr Radishchev, excerpts from *A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow*

26 November: Archaists and Innovators
   R&S 296–318
   Nikolai Novikov, Polemic with Catherine II
   ---, “Perception of Russian Society, Jan 1770”

3 December: Sentimentalism and the Dawn of Romanticism
   Karamzin, “Natalie, the Boyar’s Daughter” (or other story)
   Karamzin, from *History of the Russian State*
   Alexander I, “Proclamation To the Nation”

5 December: Test 3