

**RUSS/ENGLIT 0325: The Russian Short Story in Context**  
**University of Pittsburgh**  
**Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures**  
**Fall 2013**

*The following course overview serves as **a contract** between the student and the two instructors teaching this course. Please read the entire text carefully and let the instructors know if you have any questions about it **as soon as possible**.*

<b>Instructor:</b> Olga Klimova <b>Class meetings:</b> Monday and Wednesday 4:30-5:45pm <b>Room:</b> A216 Public Health	<b>Office:</b> Cathedral of Learning 1417 <b>Office telephone:</b> (412) 624-5906 <b>e-mail:</b> vok1@pitt.edu <b>Office hours:</b> Tuesday and Thursday 11:30am-12:30pm
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course will be devoted to reading short stories from 19th and 20th century Russian literature. The authors we will read range from 19th century masters (Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoevskii, Tolstoi, and Chekhov) to 20th century favorites (Babel, Zamiatin, Nabokov, and Zoshchenko), right up to the most popular writers in contemporary Russia (Solzhenitsyn, Shalamov, Tolstaia, Petrushevskiaia, and Dovlatov).

As we read and discuss these stories we will be asking why these authors selected the short story rather another genre for their inventions and fantasies, philosophies and teachings; and why and how they expressed their views as they did using particular forms of language, literary techniques, imagery, and narrative structures. We will compare Russian and American ideas and values, considering our cultural similarities as well as our differences. We will examine common and uncommon emotions and passions, customs and mores, beliefs, fantasies and dreams. And we will discuss the themes and values expressed in these stories, both those which we share and those that we may identify with particular national stereotypes or peculiar "Russian" or "American" characteristics. Finally, we will endeavor to draw conclusions about our own values, feelings, assumptions, reactions and prejudices and try to identify their sources as we respond to the great variety of short stories from a fascinating and different culture.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Chandler, Robert. Ed. *Russian Short Stories from Pushkin to Buida*. London: Penguin Classics, 2005.

[book]

PDF files (will be posted on the Courseweb by the instructor) [X]

**EVALUATION AND GRADES:**

Attendance and Participation:	20%
1/2-page blog entry (submitted 10 times, Total 5 pages):	30%
Group presentation	10%
Final paper proposal:	5%
First draft of the final paper:	15%
Final paper:	20%

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TOTAL: 100%

The following grading standards will be used in assigning grades in this course:

97-100	A+	73-77	C
93-96	A	70-72	C-
90-92	A-	68-69	D+
88-89	B+	64-67	D
83-87	B	60-63	D-
80-82	B-	59 and below	F
78-79	C+		

## **EXPLANATION OF EVALUATION CRITERIA:**

### **Attendance, Participation, and Absences:**

This class meets twice a week. Students are expected to attend all classes and be on time. Students will receive daily grades for each meeting of the course. Attendance will be recorded each class. Failure to come to class will result in a **ZERO** for that day. Missing class jeopardizes your participation records and puts you in danger of missing quizzes and assignments. Any student who misses more than four classes will have his/her final grade lowered one full letter grade (e.g., B+ to C+).

**Please, be aware that six missed classes (excused and unexcused) automatically translate into an F for the course, regardless of the student's prior standing.** In extenuating circumstances this condition may be negotiated. **Please, note: repetitive lateness for class will result in lowered grade.**

If you miss a class it is your responsibility to find out from your classmates what important information was announced or passed out during the session you missed. Therefore, you should exchange e-mail addresses or phone numbers with another student in the class or contact the instructor through e-mail or arrange a meeting at her office. Participation in the discussion is an essential part of your grade in this course. You will be graded for actively participating in the discussion on a regular basis, giving intelligent and interesting comments.

**Written Assignments:** Your abstract, first draft, and the final draft of your term paper have to be printed out twelve-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with left-aligned, one-inch margins, left-aligned. Please use either MLA or APA format. They should be submitted **BEFORE** our class on the day, when it is due.

**Blog Entries:** Students will have to submit ten 1/2-page blog entries in the form of critical/analytical responses to the stories we read. Blog entries should be submitted on the Courseweb **NOT LATER THAN 9pm** the day before our class, for which these specific readings have been assigned. These responses will also be used to stimulate class discussion. Blog entries should include at least 2 questions/issues, raised in the readings for that class. During some classes, the instructor may ask students to analyze some anonymous blog entries for the content and writing style. In this case, this assignment will count toward your participation grade.

**Final Paper:** You will be given a few topics to choose from. You can also choose your own topic on what to write your final paper. Your paper should be a minimum of 10 and no more

than 15 pages. Start working on your paper early. Come and talk to the instructor about the topic of your final paper early in the semester, ideally before September 20. Your one-page paper proposal should be submitted on September 30 and should include your research question and your main argument. The first draft (7-10 pages) has to be submitted on November 4. You will receive the instructor's commentaries within two weeks and you must revise your paper in accordance with these comments. The final copy of your paper is due on December 4. Your paper must be **focused and analytical**. Do NOT retell the story. At the beginning, state clearly and concisely what you wish to accomplish in the paper (your research question). Try to be concrete, particular, not abstract or universal. Use the quotations only when necessary; try to give examples instead.

If you have never taken any college-level writing course, you can go the English Department (CL 5<sup>th</sup> floor) or to the Writing Center and ask for help. You are always welcome to stop by to talk to the instructor during her office hours.

**Group presentation:** Throughout the semester, students will prepare for class discussions in groups of 3 to 4. Each group will be given a specific assignment for the next class. A spokesperson from each group will do a short introductory presentation (no more than 3 minutes) to initiate class discussion, the other group members will continue facilitating the discussion by introducing some new themes and asking questions prepared in advance. Students will take turns doing these presentations.

#### **DISABILITY POLICY:**

If a student has a disability that requires special teaching, testing accommodations, or other classroom modifications, he or she must notify the instructor and the Office of Disabled Student Services (DDS) as early as possible in the semester, preferably before Add/Drop on September 7. The student may be asked to provide documentation of the disability to determine the appropriateness of accommodations. To notify DDS, call 648-7890 (Voice or TDD) to schedule an appointment. The office is located in 216 William Pitt Union.

#### **PLAGIARISM:**

“Student Obligations and Adjudication” (University Policy 02-03-03) states that “students have an obligation to exhibit honesty, and to respect the ethical standard of his (their) chosen profession in carrying out (their) academic assignments.” A student “violates this obligation” if he/she: “a) presents as one’s own, for academic evaluation, the ideas, representations, or works of another person or persons without customary and proper acknowledgement of sources; b) submits the work of another person in a manner which represents the work to be one’s own; c) knowingly permits one’s work to be submitted by another person without the instructor’s authorization”.

The penalties for plagiarism can be very severe. The immediate consequence of plagiarism will be a zero for the particular assignment and can lead to an F for the course. For the references, please, check the Academic Integrity Code, School of Arts and Sciences on line: <http://www.fcas.pitt.edu/academicintegrity.html>.

**COURSE SCHEDULE:**

The instructors reserve right to introduce some changes into the course schedule throughout the term.

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>
WEEK 1	Monday, August 26	Introduction
	Wednesday, August 28	Karamzin “Poor Liza” [X], “Island of Bornholm” [X]
WEEK 2	Monday, September 2	NO CLASS. Labor Day!
	Wednesday, September 4	Pushkin “The Stationmaster” [X]
WEEK 3	Monday, September 9	Pushkin “The Shot,” “The Blizzard” [X]
	Wednesday, September 11	Lermontov “The Fatalist” [book], “Shtoss” [X]
WEEK 4	Monday, September 16	Gogol “The Portrait” [X]
	Wednesday, September 18	Gogol “The Nose” [X]
WEEK 5	Monday, September 23	Turgenev “First Love” [X]
	Wednesday, September 25	Turgenev “The Knocking” [book]
WEEK 6	Monday, September 30	Paper proposal is due. Leskov “The Steel Flea” [book]
	Wednesday, October 2	Dostoevskii “A Gentle Creature” [X]
WEEK 7	Monday, October 7	Dostoevskii “Bobok” [book], “The Dream of a Ridiculous Man” [X]
	Wednesday, October 9	Tolstoi “God Sees the Truth but Waits” [book], “After the Ball” [X]
WEEK 8	Monday, October 14 (no classes), a make-up class—Tuesday, October 15	Tolstoi “The Death of Ivan Ilych” [X]
	Wednesday, October 16	Chekhov “Sleepy,” “Gooseberries,” “Anna on the Neck” [X]

WEEK 9	Monday, October 21	Kuprin "The Garnet Bracelet," "Olesia" [X]
	Wednesday, October 23	Gorkii "The Old Woman Izergil" [X]
WEEK 10	Monday, October 28	Teffi "Love," "A Family Journey" [book]
	Wednesday, October 30	Bunin "The Gentleman from San Francisco," "In Paris" [book]
WEEK 11	Monday, November 4	1st draft of paper due. Babel "My First Goose," "The Death of Dolgushov," "Salt" [book]
	Wednesday, November 6	Zoshchenko "Electrification," "Pelageia," "The Bathhouse," "The Crises," "The Galosh" [book]
WEEK 12	Monday, November 11	Bulgakov "The Embroidered Towel" [book], Zamiatin "The Lion" [book]
	Wednesday, November 13	Kharms "The Old Woman" [book], Nabokov "Return of Chorb" [X]
WEEK 13	Monday, November 18	Shalamov "Through the Snow," Berries "The Snake Charmer," "Duck" [book]
	Wednesday, November 20	Platonov "The Third Son," "The Return" [book]
WEEK 14	Monday, November 25	Shukshin "In the Autumn," Solzhenitsyn "What a Pity" [book]
	Wednesday, November 27	No class. Thanksgiving break!
WEEK 15	Monday, December 2	Dovlatov "The Officer's Belt" [book], Pelevin "The Ninth Dream of Vera Pavlovna" [X]
	Wednesday, December 4	Paper due. Tolstaia "The Poet and the Muse," "Peters" [X]