

The University of Pittsburgh
Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures

Russian 2453: Thaw and Perestroika
Spring Semester 2010
Mondays 2:30 — 5:25
CL 312

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Office Hours: Mondays 11:00 — 12:00, Tuesdays 1:00 — 2:00, Wednesdays 12:00 — 1:00, and
by appointment

I. Course Texts and Library Reserve:

No texts have been ordered through the University Bookstore. Reading assignments will be distributed among a large number of primary and secondary texts. At times, assigned texts will be distributed as pdf-files; at other times, texts and songs are available online; and still at others, students will be using/sharing texts from Hillman Library. Books have not been placed on reserve in the library in order to facilitate individual academic work and private-life schedules. Students are strongly urged to share library printed materials. The operative mode in the course will be “socialist competition,” not individualistic accumulation of cultural capital.

II. Recommended Secondary Texts:

- Brown, Deming. *The Last Years of Soviet Russian Literature, 1975-91*. NY: Cambridge UP, 1993.
- . *Soviet Russian Literature Since Stalin*. London: Cambridge UP, 1978.
- Brown, Edward J. *Russian Literature Since the Revolution*. Rev. and enl. ed. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1982.
- Clark, Katerina. *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*. 3rd ed. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2000.
- Friedberg, Maurice. *Russian Culture in the 1980s*. Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1985.
- Hosking, Geoffrey. *Beyond Socialist Realism: Soviet Fiction Since Ivan Denisovich*. NY: Holmes & Meier Pub., 1980.
- James, C. Vaughan. *Soviet Socialist Realism: Origins and Theory*. NY: St. Martin's Press, 1973.
- Johnson, Priscilla. *Khrushchev and the Arts: The Politics of Soviet Culture, 1962-1964*. Cambridge: The MIT P, 1965.
- Kasack, Wolfgang. *Russian Literature 1945-1988*. Arbeiten und Texte zur Slavistik 46. München: Verlag Otto Sagner, 1989.
- Lakshin, Vladimir. *Solzhenitsyn, Tvardovsky and Novyi mir*. Tr. Michael Glenny. Cambridge: The MIT P, 1980.
- Lowe, David. *Russian Writing Since 1953: A Critical Survey*. NY: Ungar, 1987.
- Mathewson, Rufus W. *The Positive Hero in Russian Literature*. 2nd ed. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1975.
- Ryback, Timothy. *Rock Around the Bloc: A History of Rock Music in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union*. NY: Oxford UP, 1990.
- Shneidman, N.N. *Soviet Literature in the 1970s: Artistic Diversity and Ideological Conformity*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1979.
- . *Soviet Literature in the 1980s: Decade of Transition*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1989.
- Solomon, Andrew. *The Irony Tower: Soviet Artists in a Time of Glasnost*. NY: Knopf, 1991.

Svirski, Grigori. *A History of Post-War Soviet Writing: The Literature of Moral Opposition*. Tr. and ed. Robert Dessaix and Michael Ulman. Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1981.
Troitsky, Artemy. *Back in the USSR: The True Story of Rock in Russia*. Boston: Faber and Faber, 1988.

III. Absence, Attendance, and Grades:

Students are expected to attend all classes. Excused absences due to personal illness, as well as illness or death in the family, must be documented. Absent students are required to obtain all in-class handouts and class notes for the missed session from another student; all missed assignments must be completed. In addition, students are allowed two unexcused absences (“mental health days”) during the semester. The combined total of excused and unexcused absences cannot exceed three class meetings (that is, three weeks of the semester).

Students will receive a letter grade for participation in each session of the course, two letter grades for each assignment, two for each examination, and one for each class administered. Session grades will be based on participation in discussion, intellectual contribution to the discussion, and the results of in-class activities/assignments. Students can review their grades with the instructor as frequently as they wish.

IV. Disability:

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both the instructor and the office of 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.

V. Quizzes:

At any point in the semester if the instructor suspects that students are not or any one student is not keeping up with the reading assignments, there will be an unannounced quiz. No quizzes will be re-scheduled and no make-up quizzes will be given.

VI. Examinations:

There will be two collective/individual examinations in the course (see the Schedule of Assignments). Students will be divided into two groups, each of which must develop a graduate-level syllabus for a fifteen-week course on the Soviet culture industry of the Thaw (examination one) and Stagnation (examination two). The syllabus must contain specific reading (and/or screening and listening) assignments, course work assignments, examinations, and final paper assignments. The syllabi submitted to the instructor must be the result of a collaborative effort on the part of all members of the group and the entire group will share the grade for the syllabus.

In addition to the collective syllabus, each student must submit (a) a rationale for the specific selections of materials in the syllabus, (b) a critique of the specific selections and/or omissions in the syllabus, and (c) a modified version of the syllabus that will resolve the issues that were raised in (a) and (b). Each student will receive a separate grade for this part of the examination.

VII. Writing Assignments:

There are four writing assignments that must be submitted to every member of the course: a translation of an unknown poem of the Thaw, an internal review of a play for an oversight committee, an outline of the contents of a publication you are editing, and your official resignation from the Party. Each student (and the instructor) must comment upon and grade each of the submissions. Students will receive separate grades for their assignment and for their commentaries.

VIII. Classroom Instruction:

Each meeting of the course (except for the first two) will be “taught” by one of the students. The “teacher” is responsible for: (a) locating copies of each of the assigned texts (online or hard copy); (b) if hard copy, having pdf-files made and distributed to all members of the course; and (c) prepare and run a two-hour graduate-level meeting of the course. The meeting cannot be run in its entirety as either an extended lecture or as a discussion of the assigned texts; each “teacher” will have to strike a balance. Supplementary material (historical, cultural, political, etc.) must be introduced by the “teacher.” Handouts are mandatory.

IX. Evaluation and Grades:

Grades will be calculated using the following percentages: daily grades (10%), writing assignments (40%—that is, 10% each), examinations (30%—that is, 15% each), and “teaching” (20%). Students are encouraged to meet with the instructor periodically to review their grades and progress in the course.

X. Schedule of Assignments:

week 2: Monday, 11 January: [In]Variants of Soviet Culture of Late Stalinism

assignment:

Владимир Померанцев: «Об искренности в литературе» (1953)
Эренбург, Илья: *Оттепель* I (1954)

week 3: Monday, 18 January: **NO CLASSES**

week 4: Monday, 25 January: Dismantling the Inherited Cultural Values of Late Stalinism

assignment:

Владимир Дудинцев: *Не хлебом единым* (1956)

week 5: Monday, 1 February: Thaw Fiction I

assignment:

Белла Ахмадиллина: «Лунатики» (1958), «Маленькие самолеты» (1962), «Клянусь» (1968), «Сказка о дожде» (1963)

Андрей Вознесенский: «Параболическая баллада» (1958), «Пожар в архитектурном институте» (1957), «Гойя» (1957) in *Парабола: стихи* (1960); «Треугольная груша» (1962) in *Треугольная груша: 40 лирических отступлений из поэмы*.

Евгений Евтушенко: «Поэзия — великая держава» (1956), «Тайны» (1960), «Американский соловей» (1960), «Наследники Сталина» (1961), «Бабий Яр» (1962)

Guitar Lyrics:

Александр Галич: «Вальс, посвящённый уставу караульной службы» (1966), «Мы не хуже Горация» (1966), «Баллада о чистых руках» (1968), «Поэма о Сталине» (1961-1964), «Памяти Бориса Леонидовича Пастернака» (1966), «Старый принц» (1972), «Истории из жизни Клим Петровича Коломийцева» (1970)

Булат Окуджава (50-ые годы): «Сентиментальный марш», «Весёлый барабанщик», «Король», «Полночный троллейбус», «Часовые любви», «Песенка о комсомольской богине», «Песенка про чёрного кота»

(60-ые годы): «Чёрный 'мессер'», «Дежурный по апрелю», «Гитара», «Песенка весёлого солдата», «Шла война к тому Берлину», «Оловянный солдатик моего сына»

Writing Assignment 1 (for Monday 8 February):

Write an English translation of an unknown *stikhotvorenie* by a Thaw poet.

week 6: Monday, 8 February: Thaw Poetry

assignment:

Леонид Зорин: *Гости* (1954)

Виктор Розов; *В поисках радости* (1957)

week 7: Monday, 15 February: Thaw Theater

assignment:

Василий Аксёнов: «Звёздный билет» (1962)

Александр Яшин: «Рычаги» (1956)

Юрий Казаков: «Адам и Эва» (1962)

Андрей Синявский: «Пхенц» (1957)

Александр Соженицын: «Матрёнин двор» (1963)

Writing Assignment 2 (for Monday 22 February):

You work for the Ministry of Culture and sympathize with a young playwright, whose recent play is a critique of entrenched interests and generational conflicts in a factory.

Write a small internal review (250 words) saving the play for production. Keep in mind that you have to satisfy both conservatives (Stalinists) and liberals (Neo-Leninists). You have only 250 words to save the stage production!

week 8: Monday, 22 February: Thaw Fiction II

assignment:

Андрей Битов; «Инфантьев» (1965)
Фазиль Искандер: «Пирры Балтасара» (1973)
Валентин Распутин: «Деньги для Марии» (1967)
Василий Шукшин: «Калина красная» (1973)
Юрий Трифонов: «Обмен» (1969)

Examination 1 Due on Monday 1 March: Committees One and Two must submit a collective syllabus for a fifteen-week graduate seminar on Soviet culture of the Thaw period. In addition, each student must submit a rationale for and critique of the syllabus, together with an amended and individualized syllabus that addresses the issues raised in the critique. Copies of both documents must be submitted to all members of the seminar.

week 9: Monday, 1 March: Stagnation Prose I

assignment:

Чингиз Айтматов: *И дольше века длится день* (1980)

week 10: Monday 8 March: **SPRING BREAK**

week 11: Monday, 15 March: Stagnation Prose II

assignment:

Frank Ellis: “The Media as Social Engineer.” *Russian Cultural Studies: An Introduction*. Eds. Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998. 192-222.

Ellen P. Mickiewicz: *Media and the Russian Public*. NY: Praeger, 1981. 18-32; 41-72.

Writing Assignment 3 (for Monday, 22 March):

It is 1974 and you are editor-in-chief of a major Soviet newspaper (*Pravda*, *Izvestiia*, *Literaturnaia gazeta*, take your pick). In English or in Russian: prepare an outline of one issue (4 pages, 10 articles—titles and 1-2 sentence summary). You might want to peruse some issues of actual newspapers of the period on microforms.

Criteria of assessment:

- a. “news-worthiness”
- b. variety (covering both domestic and international news)
- c. layout (what, where, how much, why)
- d. discourse (titles should be identifiable as belonging to the culture of Stagnation)
- e. a combination of “real” and “fictional” (optional) news

week 12: Monday, 22 March: Stagnation Media

assignment:

Юлий Ким (ТВА)
Юрий Визбор (ТВА)
Владимир Высоцкий (ТВА)

week 13: Monday, 29 March: *Magnitizdat* and Identity as Schizophrenia

assignment:

Александр Гельман; *Скамейка* (1983)
Людмила Петрушевская: *Три девушки в голубом* (1984)
Михаил Шатров: *Брестский мир* (1962/1987)

Examination 2 Due on Monday 5 April: Committees Three and Four must submit a collective syllabus for a fifteen-week graduate seminar on Soviet culture of the Stagnation period. In addition, each student must submit a rationale for and critique of the syllabus, together with an amended and individualized syllabus that addresses the issues raised in the critique. Copies of both documents must be submitted to all members of the seminar.

week 14: Monday, 5 April: Stagnation/Perestroika on Stage

assignment:

Виктор Ерофеев: *Русская красавица* (1983-4/1990)

recommended:

Lipovetsky, Mark: *Russian Postmodernist Fiction: Dialogue with Chaos*. Ed. Eliot Borenstein. Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1999. 3-35; 165-173.

week 15: Monday, 12 April: The Paradox of Russian Postmodernism

assignment:

Валерия Нарбикова: «Видимость нас»
Виктор Пелевин: «Девятый сон Веры Павловны»
Евгений Попов: «Как съели петуха», «Сила печатного слова», «Два сушеные пальца из пяти бывших», «Веселие Руси» (stories from *Веселие Руси*);
«Водоем», «Темный лес»
Владимир Сорокин: «Открытие сезона», «Сергей Андреевич»
Татьяна Толстая: «Сонечка»

week 16: Monday, 19 April 2001: The Final Break with Socialist Realism

assignment:

Жанна Агузарова—*Браво*

Борис Гребенщиков—*Аквариум*

Костя Кинчев—*Алиса*

Пётр Мамонов—*Звуки му*

Гарик Сухачёв—*Бригада С*

Виктор Цой—*Кино*

Writing Assignment 4 (for Monday, 25 April):

Resign from the Communist Party in protest over the Party's lack of diligence in monitoring and controlling the explosion of youth subcultures in the Soviet Union, many of which are openly modeled on cultural movements in the West. Your letter of resignation must address matters historical, as well as cultural and ethical.

week 17: Monday, 25 April: Lennon and the Marx Brothers: Long Live Rock-n-Roll