

University of Pittsburgh
Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures
RUSS 0860: Modern Russian Culture

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

<p>Spring 2019 Instructor: Dr. Olga Klimova Office hours: Monday and Wednesday 11:00am-12:00pm or by appointment online through Skype/GoToMeeting or in person e-mail: vok1@pitt.edu Skype: olgaklim5</p>	<p>Class meetings: MW Room: 304 Cathedral of Learning Time: 3:00-4:15pm Office telephone: (412) 624-5708 Office: 128 Cathedral of Learning GoToMeeting: https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/804833037</p>
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is an introduction to the culture of Russia from the beginning of the 19th century to the 21st century. It begins in the nineteenth century with the discussion of Russian reactions to European revolutions and the War of 1812 and ends in the present day with the discussion of current anti-Western and conservative turn in Russian culture and politics. We will examine the literature, architecture, music, cinema, visual and performing arts of Russia in their historical and ideological context and in their relationship to broader trends in world cultural development. Students will gain a deeper understanding of the uniqueness and the role of Russia in world cultures. We will cover the historical context of cultural events and talk about the historical times in which specific cultural figures were working, however, it will not be the sole focus of this course.

- Trace the development of the Slavic peoples from the reign of Nicolas I all the way into the 21st Century
- Determine and discuss key events throughout the cultural history of Russia, as well as its neighboring countries and peoples.
- Distinguish the art, music, philosophy, literature, and architecture of the Russians.
- Contrast the historical figures of Russian cultural history, and the role they played in the ever changing face of Russian culture.
- Evaluate the role of religion, ethnicity, and gender and their roles in Russian culture.

COURSE FORMAT

The course will combine lectures and in class discussions of readings and films that students have to finish before class. In order to participate actively in class discussions, it is essential that all students come to class prepared.

REQUIRED SOURCES:

1. Paul Bushkovitch, *A Concise History of Russia*.
2. Other readings and films will be posted on Courseweb as links and PDF files. Films are also available on library reserve.
3. Online blog, Sean's Russia Blog at <https://seansrussiablog.org/>

RECOMMENDED SOURCES:

- All the Russias' Blog - NYU Jordan Center. <http://jordanrussiacenter.org/all-the-russias/>
- Billington, James. *The Icon and the Axe: An Interpretive History of Russian Culture*. New York: Random House, 1966, Vintage Books, 1970.
- Hingley, Ronald. *A Concise History*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2003.
- Kivelson, Valerie A. and Joan Neuberger. Eds. *Picturing Russia: Explorations in Visual Culture*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2008.
- MacKenzie, David and Michael W. Curran. *A History of Russia, the Soviet Union, and Beyond*. 6th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2002.
- Massie, Suzanne. *Land of the Firebird: The Beauty of Old Russia*. 1980.
- Rice, Tamara Talbot. *A Concise History of Russian Art*. New York: Praeger, 1963.
- Roosevelt, Priscilla. *Life on a Russian Country Estate: A Social and Cultural History*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1995.
- Riasanovsky, Nicholas V. and Mark D. Steinberg. *A History of Russia*. 8th ed. New York: Oxford UP, 2010.
- Rzhevsky, Nicholas, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Russian Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998.
- Volkov, Solomon. *The Magical Chorus: A History of Russian Culture from Tolstoy to Solzhenitsyn*, transl. Antonina W. Boius. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008.

COURSE METHODOLOGY:

Overall, to complete this course, students are required (1) to complete the assignments scheduled by specific deadlines—normally that means reading 50-70 pages and watching or listening to additional materials per week; (2) to attend all class meetings and to participate actively and intelligently on a **REGULAR** basis in the course discussions; (3) to prepare and make an individual digital poster presentation; (4) to write a short midterm research paper 5-7 pages; (5) to prepare and present in a group a digital chronology of specific Russian cultural phenomena and cultural forms in the last class; (6) to do research on the contemporary Russian culture, collect and organize the data, and write short critical and analytical entries.

The instructor should not be expected to make, and will not make, any special effort to accommodate students who are absent from any class meeting. Students who miss a class meeting are responsible for screening the film (and any related clips) on their own and for obtaining all relevant handouts and notes from other students.

Students are required to complete all reading and watching assignments before the class meeting, for which they are listed on the class schedule. Depending on the nature of the readings and screenings, students will be expected to have absorbed the factual information contained therein and/or to be ready to discuss the theoretical, aesthetic, or social issues raised in these texts.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE INSTRUCTOR

If you have any questions or feel that you are falling behind in this course, please, contact me as soon as possible, so I can provide you with some guidance and help. I will be able to respond to you email within 24-48 hours, and 48-72 hours over the weekend.

I am also available during my office hours on Mondays and Wednesdays at 11:00am-12:00pm in 1228 Cathedral of Learning. You may also schedule an additional meeting with me online through GoToMeeting or Skype, if necessary. You will need to follow this link in order to get into the online office room: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/804833037>. You might need to download the launcher when you use this program for the first time.

We have a Courseweb page, on which I will be posting important announcements, grading rubrics, and instructions for projects and audio/video assignments, additional resources, links to video tutorials and grammar exercises and explanations, and other instructional and administrative materials. Your detailed gradebook is also located on Courseweb. Make sure to check it regularly.

If you have not used Blackboard before, in order to get started with a Blackboard course, please see the Blackboard Student Manual <http://help.blackboard.com/>. If you need further help, the Pitt Technology Help Desk Team provides technical support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They can be reached at 412-624-HELP, helpdesk@pitt.edu <http://technology.pitt.edu/help-desk>

EVALUATION AND GRADES:

Attendance and Participation	120 points
A mid-term paper (5-7 pages)	80 points
An individual digital poster presentation	50 points
A group digital chronology presentation	50 points
A final group research project	50 points
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TOTAL:	350 points =100%

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

93-100	A	80-82	B-	68-69	D+
90-92	A-	78-79	C+	65-67	D
88-89	B+	73-77	C	64-54	E
83-87	B	70-72	C-	53 and below	F

EXPLANATION OF EVALUATION CRITERIA

ATTENDANCE, PARTICIPATION, AND ABSENCES:

This class meets twice a week for 75 minutes. Students are expected to attend all classes and be on time. Students will receive daily grades for each meeting of the course that will be combined into a weekly attendance and participation grade and recorded in Blackboard. Attendance will be recorded each class.

Participation is an important part of this course. Your responses must be thoughtful and reference the assigned material specifically. I will judge your responses on thoughtfulness, thoroughness of understanding, depth of analysis, and how much it contributes to the discussion at hand, moving it forward in useful and interesting ways. You will also have a chance to discuss some questions in small groups during our class meetings. Your participation in small group discussions will be also counted toward your participation for that class meeting.

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 tests and important language explanation and practice. Any student who misses more than 4 classes (two weeks of classes) will have his/her final grade lowered by one letter grade (e.g., from A- to B+). Any student who misses more than 6 classes (three weeks of classes) will have his/her final grade lowered to a full letter grade (e.g., A- to B-).

Please, be aware that 8 missed classes (four weeks of classes, excused and/or 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 or using electronic devices in class unless is required by the assignment 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 (this includes audio or visual material presented in class). Therefore, you should exchange e-mail addresses or phone numbers with another student in the class or contact instructors through e-mail or arrange a meeting at their offices to review material.

Student athletes must provide a schedule of sporting events that will necessitate absence from class from their coach as early in the term as possible and definitely before these events take place if they are to be excused. Please note that the schedule of games posted on the College website does not satisfy this requirement, as it makes no mention of potential travel time and/or when the team would need to leave campus and be returning to campus.

At the end of the semester, I will drop TWO lowest grades (or two missed class) for attendance and participation. If you do not have any low or missed grades, these points will go toward your final grade as extra points.

INDIVIDUAL DIGITAL POSTER PRESENTATIONS:

Throughout the semester, you will prepare one digital poster (or an infographic) on a specific topic related to the main themes of that class session, using web-based poster creators (Glogster, Canva, etc.). You will need to post it on our Courseweb page by 11:59pm on Sunday or Tuesday (depending on the day when you are presenting it), to present it in class, and to be ready to facilitate a brief class discussion on your topic (all together no longer than 5-10 minutes). You will be able to sign up for this presentation on our Courseweb page (through the wiki "Poster Presentation Sign-up." You need to talk to me about your presentation or send me your ideas or an outline for your poster 3-5 days before your presentation. You need to post the final version of your digital poster on the discussion board through Courseweb by 12pm on the day of your presentation.

A MID-TERM PAPER:

You will need to write a short (5-7 pages) research paper on any topic related to the theme of our course. It can be from the first or the second half of our course. You will need to do research and include scholarly sources. You will need to submit a short paper proposal with the title, the research statement, a brief description of your paper, and a preliminary bibliography (5-8 scholarly entries) by Wednesday, January 23. The final version of the midterm paper is due in class on Monday, February 18th. Use MLA format for this paper.

A SMALL GROUP DIGITAL CHRONOLOGY:

In a group of 2-3 students, you will create an online digital chronology for one specific cultural form or cultural phenomenon (for example, “dvoeverie,” “Russian Orthodox Church,” “underground art,” “Russian soul,” etc.), using web-based tools, such as [Tiki-Toki](#). You will need to trace the development of this specific concept/idea/cultural form from the beginning of the 19th century till nowadays. You will need to choose the most critical point for the development/changes in this idea/form and should have about 12-15 entries in total. For each entry, you will need a short description (3-4 sentences), an image, and links to additional sources. You need to post the link to your digital chronology on the discussion board through Courseweb by 12pm on the last day of our classes, April 17. We will do the showcase of everyone’s chronology in class and each group will have a chance to present it and to answer any questions from the audience. I will distribute the detailed instructions later in the semester.

A LARGE GROUP RESEARCH PROJECT:

Students will be working on and submitting one final large group research project at the end of the semester. You will work with partners for this assignment (appr. 2-3 students in each group). You will be doing research on the contemporary Russian culture since the collapse of the Soviet Union, organizing the online data, and writing small analytical and critical entries that would accompany your research collection. Each group will have a specific time period (1991-1994, 1995-1999, 2000-2004, 2005-2009, 2010-2014, 2015-2019). Later, we will try to digitize and organize this collective database into a digital humanities project either through the data visualization or mapping. It is due by 11:59pm on Wednesday, April 23.

EXTRA-CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES

Throughout the semester, there will be various extra-curricular activities (Russia-related) at the Department of Slavic Languages and Cultures, CREES, or in the city. If you need/would like to earn extra points on your participation in this class, you might be able to do it by attending these events (film screenings, lectures, The Russian club’s events, etc.). I will be distributing the fliers closer to the events.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

I reserve rights to make changes in course schedule throughout the term. These changes will be announced in class and posted on Courseweb. Make sure to check announcements on Courseweb regularly, especially if you miss a class. You need to complete the assignments listed in the right column for the class date in the left column (for example, for the class on January 9th, you need to read Paul Bushkovitch's chapter "Russia as an Empire" and listen to the blog "Nation, Nationality, and Empire.")

Date	Topic and Assignments
WEEK 1	
Monday, January 7	Course requirements and syllabus. Introduction.
Wednesday, January 9	Russia as an Empire. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Paul Bushkovitch, "Russia as an Empire." pp. 249-271 • Listen to Sean's Russia Blog with Ronald Suny "Nation, Nationality, and Empire."
WEEK 2	
Monday, January 14	Russian Political Thought: Decembrists, Petr Chaadaev. Slavophiles and Westernizers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Paul Bushkovitch, "The Pinnacle of Autocracy." pp. 155-171 • Read Petr Chaadaev, "First Philosophical Letter" (PDF)
Wednesday, January 16	The Golden Age. Romanticism: Lermontov, Pushkin. The Development of Russian Language. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Paul Bushkovitch, "Culture and Autocracy." pp. 172-185 • Read Pushkin, "Bronze Horseman" (PDF) • Read Lermontov's "Mtsyri" (PDF)
WEEK 3	
Monday, January 21	Martin Luther King's Day. NO CLASSES.
Wednesday, January 23	Russian Religious Thought in the 19th c. Russian Idea. Russian Question. Sofia. Sobornost'. Vladimir Slov'ev, Pavel Florenskii, Vasilii Rozanov, Nikolai Berdiaev. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-term paper proposal is due in class on Wednesday • Read Simon Franklin, "Identity and Religion." pp. 95-115 (PDF) • Read Berdyaev's "The Russian Idea" (PDF) • Read Catriona Kelly and Vadim Volkov, "Obshchestvennost', Sobornost': Collective Identities" (PDF) • In class: watching excerpts from Sel'ianov's <i>Russian Idea</i>
WEEK 4	
Monday, January 28	Realism in Literature. Turgenev, Ostrovsky, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Paul Bushkovitch, "The Era of the Great Reforms." pp. 186-207 • Read Fedor Dostoevskii, "Gentle Creature" (PDF) • Read Leo Tolstoy, "After the Ball" (PDF)

Wednesday, January 30	Russian Art: Peredvizhniki (Itinerants). Music: The Mighty Five. Russian Opera.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <i>Modern Russian Culture</i> (PDF) • In class: listening to Mussorgsky's <i>Night on Bald Mountain</i>; watching an excerpt from Rimsky-Korsakov's opera <i>The Snow Maiden</i> or <i>Sadko</i>
WEEK 5	
Monday, February 4	Russian Modernism. Russian Avant-guard: Kazimir Malevich, Alexander Rodchenko.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <i>Modern Russian Culture</i> (PDF) • Read "A Slap in the Face of Public Taste" (PDF) • Read Groys, "The Russian Avant-garde: The Leap over Progress" (PDF)
Wednesday, February 6	The Silver Age. Akmeism. Symbolism. Futurism. The Birth of Russian Cinema.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poems by Akhmatova, Blok, Tsvetaeva, Maiakovskii (PDF) • Stites' "In Old Russia 1900-1917" • Gasparov's "Poetry of the Silver Age," <i>The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Russian Literature</i> (PDF) • In class: watching an excerpt from Protazanov's <i>Father Sergius</i> and Bauer's <i>Daydreams</i>
WEEK 6	
Monday, February 11	World War I and Russian Revolution. The Birth of Communist Ideas.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Paul Bushkovitch, "War and Revolution." pp. 401-425 • Read "The Communist Manifesto," <i>The Russian Reader</i> (PDF)
Wednesday, February 13	NEP Culture. Pre-kul'turnost' Era. Early Soviet Cinema: Eisenstein, Vertov, Pudovkin.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Paul Bushkovitch, "Compromise and Preparation." pp. 318-333 • Vertov's "We: Variant of a Manifesto," <i>The Russian Reader</i> (PDF) • In class: watching excerpts from Eisenstein and Vertov
WEEK 7	
Monday, February 18	Socialist Realism. Cultural Revolution and kulturnost'. Stalinism and The Great Purges. GULAG.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midterm paper is due in class on Monday • Read Paul Bushkovitch, "Building Utopia." pp. 351-370 and "Soviet Culture." pp. 413-422 • Read Catriona Kelly and Vadim Volkov, "Directed Desires: <i>Kulturnost'</i> and Consumption." (PDF) • In class: watching excerpts from Mikhalkov's <i>Burnt by the Sun</i>
Wednesday, February 20	Stalinist Architecture, Literature, and Art. Stalinist Film Comedies. Lakirovka. The Positive Hero.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Stites' "Stalin by Starlight 1928-1941" (PDF) • Read "Socialist Realism with Shores: The Conventions for the Positive Hero" (PDF) • In class: watch excerpts from Pyr'ev's <i>The Kuban Cossacks</i> and Aleksandrov's <i>Circus</i>
WEEK 8	

Monday, February 25	The Great Patriotic War. War and Post-War Culture. Propaganda Art. Poster Art.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Paul Bushkovitch, “War.” pp. 371-392 (PDF) • Read Stites, “Holy War and Cold War 1941-1953” (PDF) • Read war poetry (PDF) • In class: watch an excerpt from Ermler’s <i>No Greater Love (She Defends the Motherland)</i>
Wednesday, February 27	Nikita Khrushchev’s The Thaw. De-Stalinization. The Cold War Discourse. The Space Race.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Paul Bushkovitch, “Growth, Consolidation, and Stagnation.” pp. 393-407 and “The Cold War.” pp. 429-446 • Read Khrushchev’s “The Secret Speech,” <i>The Russian Reader</i> (PDF) • In class: watching excerpts from <i>I am Twenty</i>
WEEK 9	
Monday, March 4	Cultural Liberation. The Shestidesiatniki. The Soviet Auteur Cinema. Bard music
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Paul Bushkovitch, “Soviet Culture.” pp. 423-428 • Read Stites, “Springtime for Khrushchev 1953-1964” (PDF) • Read Bulat Okudzhava, “The Last Trolley” (PDF) • Watch an excerpt from <i>The Cranes Are Flying</i>
Wednesday, March 6	The Birth of Russia’s Youth Culture. International Festivals.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to Sean’s Russia’s Blog with Matthias Neumann “Communism, Youth, and Generation” • Read Gleb Tsipursky, “Jazz, Power, and Soviet Youth in the Early Cold War, 1948–1953” (PDF) • Watch excerpts from Todorovskii, <i>Stiliagi</i>
WEEK 10	
Monday, March 11	SPRING BREAK! NO CLASSES!
Wednesday, March 13	
WEEK 11	
Monday, March 18	Brezhnev’s Stagnation. The Dissident Movement. Tamizdat and Samizdat. Consumerism.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Paul Bushkovitch, “Growth, Consolidation, and Stagnation.” pp. 408-412 • Read excerpt from Solzhenitsyn, “Archipelago GULAG” (PDF)
Wednesday, March 20	Auteur Cinema Vs. Popular Cinema: Tarkovsky, Paradzhanov, Riazanov, Daneliia. The Rise of Soviet Television. Nonconformist Art and Moscow Conceptualists.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Stites’ “The Brezhnev culture wars 1964-1984” (PDF) • Watch an excerpt from Daneliia’s <i>The Autumn Marathon</i> • In class: watching excerpts from <i>Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears</i>
WEEK 12	
Monday, March 25	Perestroika: Glasnost. Free Market. Expansion of Western Culture. Soviet Byt.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Paul Bushkovitch, “Epilogue: The End of the USSR.” pp. 447-452 • Read Stites, “Perestroika and the peoples taste 1985-” (PDF) • In class: watching an excerpt from Hessman’s <i>My Perestroika</i> (2010)
Wednesday, March 27	<p>Perestroika: Soviet Cinema and Chernukha. Youth Culture. Russian Rock.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read <i>Modern Russian Culture</i> (PDF) • Watch an excerpt from Pichul’s <i>Little Vera</i> • In class: watching excerpts from Nugmanov’s <i>The Needle</i>
WEEK 13	
Monday, April 1	<p>The Collapse of the Soviet Union. Yeltsin. Market Reforms. Liberalization. Soviet kitsch and Soviet trash.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading: Paul Bushkovitch, “Epilogue: The End of the USSR.” pp. 433-446 • Read Liudmila Petrushevskaja, “New Robinson Crusoes: A Chronicle of the End of the Twentieth Century” (PDF)
Wednesday, April 3	<p>The chaotic 1990s. New Russian Nationalism. Russian Mafia and New Russians. Post-Soviet cinema.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Graham’s “The Wages of Syncretism: Folkloristic New Russians and Post-Soviet Popular Culture” (PDF) • Listen to Sean’s Russia Blog with Mark Galeotti “The Russian Mafia” • “Anecdotes about New Russian,” <i>The Russia Reader</i> (PDF) • In class: watching excerpts from Balabanov’s <i>Brother</i> and the TV series <i>Brigade</i>
WEEK 14	
Monday, April 8	<p>The 2000s. Putin and Medvedev. Change of Political and Cultural Environment. The case of Pussy Riot and Petr Pavlenskii</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Peter Rutland, “The Pussy Riot Affair: Gender and National Identity in Putin’s Russia,” <i>Nationalities Papers</i>, 42,4, 2014, 575-582, (PDF) • Read Nadezhda Tolokonnikova’s “Unread Statement” on Sean’s Russia Blog • In class: watching excerpts from the documentary, <i>Pussy Riot: A Punk Prayer</i>
Wednesday, April 10	<p>The 2000s: Stability and Sovereign Democracy. The Crisis of Russian Cinema. Conformist and Nonconformist Art.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to Sean’s Russia Blog with Anne Garrels “A Journey into Putin’s Country.” • Read Vladimir Sorokin, “Russia is Slipping Back into an Authoritarian Empire” (PDF) • Read, Viktor Pelevin, “Akiko”
WEEK 15	
Monday, April 15	<p>Russia today: the 2010s. Conservative Turn. The Rise of Nationalism and Patriotism. Media Manipulations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Peter Pomerantsev, “Russia: The Menace of Unreality” (online) • Read Ilya Budraitskis, “Russian Presidential Elections 2018: Predictable Results with Unpredictable Aftermath” (online)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In class: watching excerpts from <i>Putin's Kiss</i>
Wednesday, April 17	<p>Conclusion. The presentation of the chronology.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a digital chronology of Russian culture by categories and showcase/discuss it in class.
WEEK 16	
April 22-26	<p>Finals Week</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final research project due by 11:59pm on Wednesday, April 23