

University of Pittsburgh
Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures

Russian 0325: Russian Short Story in Context
Tuesday/Thursday 2:30–3:45
Victoria 230

Gerald McCausland
Office Hours: Wednesday 10:30–12:00
Thursday 10:30–12:00
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Course Overview

Required Texts

Chandler, Robert, ed. *Russian Short Stories from Pushkin to Buida*. London: Penguin, 2005.
Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 6th ed. New York: MLA, 2003.
These books should be purchased at the University Book Center.

Many additional texts will be made available electronically. Students are responsible for printing out these required texts when they are assigned.

Several research works will be placed on course reserve in Hillman Library. The instructor will describe these works over the course of the semester.

Requirements

1. Students are required to attend all class meetings. 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 obtaining all relevant handouts and notes from their fellow students.
2. Students are required to complete all reading assignments before the class meeting for which they are listed on the class schedule and to come to class prepared to participate fully in an intellectual discussion of the text(s).
3. There will be six required writing assignments over the course of the semester as well as one optional assignment at the end of the semester. All writing assignments must be submitted in hard copy by 2:30 pm on the date due. Papers submitted electronically are not accepted. Late papers are not accepted. Failure to turn in a written assignment will result in a grade of "0" (zero) for that assignment.
4. While the instructor will make a good-faith effort to avoid the use of e-mail as the *sole* method of communication of important course information, all students are required to monitor their university e-mail accounts (@pitt.edu) or to forward their university e-mail to another reliable address. Any student choosing to forward their mail to another account bears full responsibility for the reliability of that account, including the proper configuration of spam filters. Failure to receive e-mail from the instructor is not a valid excuse for any resulting disadvantage suffered by a student.

Evaluation

1. Students are expected to participate in all class discussions and to contribute to the collective work of the group in a thoughtful and informed way. Students will receive a grade for their participation in class for each class meeting. The instructor will explain the mechanics of this grading procedure during the first class meeting; students are welcome and encouraged to request feedback from the instructor about their class participation at any time throughout the semester.
2. There will be *at least* ten unannounced quizzes given during the semester. They will be given at the start of class and will test the students' comprehension of the reading material assigned for that day. Any student absent for a quiz or late for the start of that class meeting will receive a "0" (zero) for that quiz.
3. There will be 6 mandatory and 1 optional writing assignments over the course of the semester. Each mandatory writing assignment must be submitted in the specified number of hard copies by 2:30 pm on the day it is due. The optional assignment will be accepted in the instructor's mailbox (CL 1417) during the last week of classes, from 3 December until **12 noon** on Friday, 7 December. Each mandatory assignment will receive a letter grade. The grades for all writing assignments will carry equal weight among themselves in the computation of the grade, regardless of differences in the nature and length of each individual writing task.
4. There are no midterm exams. There is one final exam, scheduled for Saturday, 15 December, at 12 o'clock noon. Students must not plan their departure from campus before Saturday afternoon, as travel plans are not accommodated in the administration of the exam.
5. The final course grade will be computed according to the following mathematical schema:
 - Papers: 45%
 - Class Discussion: 25%
 - Final Exam: 20%
 - Quizzes: 10%

Writing Assignments

This course is designed to fulfill the University of Pittsburgh's undergraduate writing requirement (W). Thus, a significant amount of student work will take the form of various writing assignments. Each assignment will be designed to develop the student's ability to formulate ideas critically and clearly, to construct and structure an intellectual argument, and to format his/her writing in conformity with the customs and practices of language and literature studies as an academic field. Attention will be devoted to these customs and practices as well as to the individual student's proficiency and adeptness in written expression.

There will be six (6) written assignments, but these will not necessarily represent six discrete pieces of writing. Some assignments will consist in the revision and expansion of a text previously written by the student and commented upon by the instructor. Some of these "papers" may be extraordinarily short and will require a highly disciplined and focused writing style. Regardless of the length, all assignments should be well structured, with a clearly identifiable beginning, middle, and end.

The optional written assignment is to be completed at the end of the semester. If a student chooses to write the optional seventh paper, the grade received on the paper *will replace the lowest grade* previously received on the six required papers.

Each specific writing assignment will be described by the instructor in class, in oral and written form, one week before the assignment is due. The nature of the assignments will vary but will form a progression from simple expository writing to complex argumentation using varied secondary sources. Significant

attention will be devoted to the development of good judgment in the use of secondary literature and in the complex issues regarding its attribution, documentation, and representation.

All students bear full responsibility, from the second class meeting on, for understanding the notion of plagiarism and for avoiding even the appearance of passing off another's work as one's own. The penalty for plagiarism in this course, intentional or unintentional, is a grade of "F" **for the course** and/or other administrative action according to University of Pittsburgh policies.

All students are urged in the strongest possible terms to avoid the use of the internet in the research and writing of their papers. Misuse of the internet as a research tool will likely have a devastating impact on the quality of papers as an academic document and could very well result in a failing grade for that assignment.

Schedule of Assignments

The following schedule is subject to change, but any changes will be few and minor. In addition to the primary texts, the instructor will assign 2–3 critical or historical articles and up to 2 additional short stories either to the class as a whole or individually as the basis for writing assignments.

28 August

no assignment

30 August

Gibaldi, *MLA Handbook* 66–75; 132–134.
Karamzin, "Poor Liza"

4 September

Gibaldi, *MLA Handbook*
Pushkin, "The Stationmaster," "The Undertaker"

6 September

Paper #1 due before start of class.
Pushkin, "The Queen of Spades"

11 September

Lermontov, "The Fatalist," "Taman"

13 September

Gogol, "The Overcoat"

18 September

Gogol, "The Nose"

20 September

Paper #2 due before start of class.
Turgenev, Asya

25 September

Turgenev, "Knocking," "Bezhin Meadow"

27 September

Leskov, "The Steel Flea"

2 October

Tolstoy, "After the Ball," "God Sees the Truth, But Waits"

4 October

Paper #3 due before start of class.

Dostoevsky, "Dream of a Ridiculous Man"

9 October

Dostoevsky, "Bobok"

11 October

Chekhov, "In the Cart," "Heartache"

16 October

Chekhov, "The Darling," "Gooseberries," "Lady with the Lapdog"

18 October

Paper #4 due before start of class.

Gorky, "Makar Chudra," "Twenty-Six and One"

23 October

Bunin, "The Gentleman from San Francisco," "Sunstroke"

25 October

Nabokov, "Return of Chorb"

Teffi, "Love," "Family Journey"

Zamyatin, "The Lion"

30 October

Babel, "My First Goose," "The Death of Dolgushev," "Salt," "How It's Done in Odessa"

1 November

Paper #5 due before start of class.

Zoshchenko, "Electrification," "Pelageya," "The Bathhouse," "The Crisis," "The Galosh," "The Hat"

Dobychin, "Medical Auxiliary," "The Father," "Please Do"

6 November

Bulgakov, “The Steel Windpipe,” “The Embroidered Towel”

8 November

Kharms, “The Old Woman”

13 November

Andrei Platonov, “The Third Son,” “The Return,” “Homeland of Electricity”
Sholokhov, “Fate of a Man”

15 November

CLASS CANCELED. Grieve in private—read some more Platonov.

20 November

Shalamov, “Through the Snow,” “Berries,” “The Snake Charmer,” “Duck”
Solzhenitsyn, “What a Pity”
Shukshin, “In the Autumn”

27 November

Dovlatov, stories from *The Suitcase*, including “The Officer’s Belt”

29 November

Tolstaya, “The Poet and the Muse,” “Peters”
Petrushevskaya, “Our Crowd”

4 December

Paper #6 due before start of class.
Sorokin, from the *Collected Stories*
E. Popov, from *The Joy of Russia*

6 December

Pelevin, “Mid-Game,” “Vera Pavlovna’s Ninth Dream”
Buida, “Sinbad the Sailor”