

The University of Pittsburgh
Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures

Russian 2453: Thaw and Perestroika
Spring Semester 2001 (01-2)
Fridays 1:00 — 4:00
CL 1221

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays 10:00—12:00, 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, photocopies of assigned texts will be distributed in class; at others, students will be using/sharing texts from Hillman Library. Neither books nor cassettes have 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; they are even more strongly urged to screen assigned films in groups. 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.
- Goulding, Daniel J., ed. *Post New Wave Cinema in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1989.
- Horton, Andrew and Michael Brashinsky. *The Zero Hour: Glasnost and Soviet Cinema in Transition*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1992.
- 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.
- Lawton, Anna. *Kinoglasnost: Soviet cinema in our time*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992.
- 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.
- 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.

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.

Students will receive a letter grade for each session of the course, in addition to letter grades for each assignment (written or oral), quizzes, exams, and essays. 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. Quizzes:

There will be scheduled quizzes and unannounced quizzes throughout the semester. Quizzes will serve a number of functions: to verify completion of reading assignments, to provide periodic reviews, to introduce new information, and to provoke discussion.

V. 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).

VI. Research Paper:

All students must submit a final research paper (20-30 pages) on Friday, 27 April 2001. Topics for the research paper must be discussed with the instructor before beginning work on the project. Paper topics can be on any aspect of Soviet cultural production and/or on any branch of

the Soviet culture industry between 1953 and 1991. All research papers must conform in layout, documentation, and works cited to the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (5th edition).

Students wishing to set up a schedule of assignments for the final paper (submission of abstracts, annotated bibliography in preparation for Works Cited, drafts, etc.) should meet with the instructor as soon as possible.

VII. Evaluation and Grades:

Grades will be calculated using the following percentages: daily grades (20%), quizzes (25%), examinations (25%), and final research paper (30%). Students are encouraged to meet with the instructor periodically to review their grades and progress in the course.

VIII. Schedule of Assignments:

week 1: Friday, 5 January 2001: [In]Variants of Soviet Culture of Late Stalinism

Syllabus

Formation of Committees One (Olga Karpushina, Nadia Kirkov, Petre Petrov, Irina Rejn) and Two (Maria Jett, Irina Makoveeva, Dawn Seckler, Benjamin Sutcliffe)
Introduction, Socialist Realism, *Zhdanovshchina* and Late Stalinism, Thaw, Stagnation, and Perestroika

assignment:

Polevoi, Boris: *The Story of a Real Man* (1946)
Stolper, Aleksandr: *The Story of a Real Man* (1948)

week 2: Friday, 12 January 2001: Dismantling the Inherited Cultural Values of Late Stalinism

Conflictlessness and the varnishing of reality
From epic to lyric: *liriki i fiziki*
Re-privatizing the representation of daily life
Party truth and Subjective truth; conformity and dissent; Authority and the Artist

assignment:

Chiaureli, Mikhail: *The Fall of Berlin* (1949)
Pyr'ev, Ivan: *Kuban Cossacks* (1950)
Ehrenburg, Il'ia: *The Thaw I* (1954)
Pomerantsev, Vladimir: "On Sincerity in Literature" (1953)

week 3: Friday, 19 January 2001: Thaw Poetry

Aleksandr Prokhorov

Anti-monumentalism
Redefining the war trope ("us" versus "them")
Poet as the Other

assignment:

Voznesenskii, Andrei: "Parabolic Ballad" from *Parabola* (1958); "Fire in the Architectural Institute" from *Parabola* (1957); "I am Goya" from *Parabola* (1957); "The Triangular Pear" from *Fourty Lyrical Digressions from the Poem Triangular Pear* (1962)

Evtushenko, Evgenii: "Poetry is a Super Power" (1956); "Secret Mysteries" (1960); "The American Nightingale" (1960); "The Heirs of Stalin" (1961); "Babii Yar" (1962)

Akhmadulina, Bella: "Lunatics" (1958); "Small Planes" (1962); "I Swear" (1968); "A Tale About Rain in Several Episodes" (1963)

Guitar Lyrics:

Okudzhava, Bulat—1950s: "Sentimental March"; "Jolly Drummer"; "King"; "Midnight Trolley"; "Love's Sentinels"; "Song About Komsomol Goddess"; "Song About a Black Cat"

—1960s: "Black Messersmitt"; "On April Duty"; "Guitar"; "Song of a Merry (American) Soldier"; "The War Was Rolling to Berlin"; "My Son's Toy Soldier"

Galich, Aleksandr: "Waltz" (1966); "We aren't Worse than Horace" (1966); "Ballad about Clean Hands" (1968); *Poem about Stalin* (1961-64); *In Memoriam* of Boris Pasternak" (1966); "Old Prince" (1972); "Stories from the Life of Klim Petrovich Kolomitsev" (1970)

Writing Assignment:

For February 2nd write an English translation of an unknown *stikhotvorenie* by a Thaw poet.

week 4: Friday, 26 January 2001: Thaw Cinema

Re-shooting Stalinism: officers and privates; the Big Family and the constructed family
The loss of the Father; fathers and sons
Rediscovering Revolutionary Leninism
The return of the repressed: physical bodies and aesthetic practices

assignment:

[Aleksandrov, Grigorii: *Volga-Volga* (1938)]

Riazanov, El'dar: *Carnival Night* (1956)

Kalatozov, Mikhail: *The Cranes Are Flying* (1957)

Tarkovskii, Andrei: *My Name is Ivan* (1962)

week 5: Friday, 2 February 2001: Thaw Theatre

Aleksandr Prokhorov

Generational Conflict
Leninist Adolescence
Redefining the Trial Scene
Hamletism

assignment:

Zorin, Leonid: *Guests* (1954)

Rozov, Viktor: *In Search of Happiness* (1957)
Natanson, Georgii and Anatolii Efros: *A Noisy Day* (1961)

Writing Assignment:

You work for the Ministry of Culture and sympathize with a young playwright.
Write a small internal review (200 words) saving the play for production.
Keep in mind that you have to satisfy both conservatives (Stalinists) and liberals (Neo-Leninists).
You have only 200 words to save the stage production!

week 6: Friday, 9 February 2001: Thaw Fiction

Fragmenting totalizing discourse: youth prose, country/village prose, almanacs
Re-centering subjectivity: interiority and stream of consciousness
Genre transgressions: poetic prose and prose poetry
Inverting the vertical (the view from below) and reversing the horizontal (journeys to the periphery)

assignment:

Aksenov, Vasilii: "Half Way to the Moon" (1962)
Iashin, Aleksandr: "Levers" (1956)
Kazakov, Iurii: "Adam and Eve" (1962)
Sin'iavskii, Andrei: "Pkhents" (1957)
Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr: "Matrena's Home" (1963)

week 7: Friday, 16 February 2001: Thaw/Stagnation/Perestroika: Cinema on the Shelf

Formation of Committees Three and Four
Discovering the (cultural) past and concealing the (cultural) present
Controlling cultural production: mechanisms and resistance
Breaching the taboo: sex and ideology; mothers and sons

assignment:

Askol'dov, Aleksandr: *Commissar* (1967/1987)
The Beginning of an Unknown Era (1967/1987):
Smirnov, Andrei: *Angel* and Shepit'ko, Larisa: *Homeland of Electricity*
Muratova, Kira: *Long Farewells* (1971/1987)

Examination 1 Due: 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.

THURSDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2001: Dmitrii Aleksandrovich Prigov

week 8: Friday, 23 February 2001: Stagnation Prose I

Country/village prose: politics and poetics
The rise of the Moscow (urban) School—*sorokoletniki*
Narrativity and the contemplation of identity

assignment:

Bitov, Andrei: “Infantiev” (1965)
Iskander, Fazil: “Belshazzar’s Feasts” (1973)
Rasputin, Valentin: “Money for Maria” (1967)
Shukshin, Vasilii: “Snowball Berry Red” (1973)
Trifonov, Iurii: “The Exchange” (1969)

week 9: Friday, 2 March 2001: Stagnation Cinema and the Rise of the Popular

Escapism: the Wild East and How to Marry a Millionaire
Escapism: [Soviet] “Socialism with a Human Face”
Escapism: Gender and the Sexual Revolution

assignment:

Men’shov, Vladimir: *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* (1980)
Motyl’, Vladimir: *White Sun of the Desert* (1969)
Shukshin, Vasilii: *Snowball Berry Red* (1973)

week 10: Friday 16 March 2001: Stagnation Prose II

Multi-national literature
The celestial soul and the loss of grace
Redefining Rousseau’s “natural man”
Mankurtism

assignment:

Aitmatov, Chingiz: *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years* (1980)

week 11: Friday, 23 March 2001: Stagnation Media

Elena Prokhorova

assignment:

Ellis, Frank: “The Media as Social Engineer.” *Russian Cultural Studies: An Introduction*. Eds. Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998. 192-222.
Mickiewicz, Ellen P. *Media and the Russian Public*. NY: Praeger, 1981. 18-32; 41-72.

Govorukhin, Stanislav: *The Meeting Place Cannot Be Changed* (1979): episode one.
Lioznova, Tat’iana: *Seventeen Moments of Spring* (1972); episode one.

Writing Assignment:

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: Friday, 30 March 2001: *Magizdat* and Identity as Schizophrenia

Technology and the war on censorship
The myths of privacy (kitchen-culture) and intimacy (campfire-culture)
Public enactment of private sensations: bards on stage
Robert Browning and the tradition of the dramatic monologue

assignment:

Kim, Iulii (TBA)
Vizbor, Iurii (TBA)
Vysotskii, Vladimir (TBA)

Examination 2 Due: Committees One and Two 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 13: Friday, 6 April 2001: Perestroika on Stage

Socialism on trial
Redefining the addressee and interactive theatre

assignment:

Gel'man, Aleksandr: *The Bench* (1983)
Petrushevskaiia, Liudmila: *Three Girls in Blue* (1984)
Shatrov, Mikhail: *The Treaty of Brest* (1962/1987)

week 14: Friday, 13 April 2001: Perestroika Cinema

The explosion of the repressed: *chernukha* and *pornukha*
Redefining youth and the explosion of youth culture

assignment:

Bykov, Rolan: *Scarecrow* (1984)
Pichul, Vasilii: *Little Vera* (1988)

week 15: Friday, 20 April 2001: The Paradox of Russian Postmodernism **Gerald McCausland**

assignment:

Erofeev, Viktor: *Russian Beauty* (1983-4/1990)

recommended:

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

In groups of two, all seminar participants should read and give a short resumé and analysis of assigned works of on other author from the list below:

Нарбикова, Валерия: “Видимость нас.”

Пелевин, Виктор: “Девятый сон Веры Павловны.”

Попов, Евгений: “Как съели петуха”; “Сила печатного слова”; “Два сушеные пальца из пяти бывших”; “Веселие Руси” (stories from *Веселие Руси*); “Водоем”; “Темный лес.”

Сорокин, Владимир: “Открытие сезона”; “Сергей Андреевич.”

The texts and guidelines for the seminar presentations will be made available before Spring break.

week 16: Friday, 27 April 2001: Lennon and the Marx Brothers: Long Live Rock-n-Roll

The Westernization of Soviet culture

Lyrics versus melodies

The collapse of a totalized culture: the explosion of sub-cultures

assignment:

Aguzarova, Zhanna—*Bravo*

Grebenshchikov, Boris—*Akvarium*

Kinchev, Kostia—*Alisa*

Mamonov, Petr—*Zvuki mu*

Sukhachev, Garik—*Brigada S*

Tsoi, Viktor—*Kino*

Final papers due