RUSSIAN, EAST EUROPEAN, AND EURASIAN STUDIES (RSEE)

* RSEE 222b / HIST 222Jb, Russia and the Eurasian Steppe  Paul Bushkovitch
A study of Russia’s interaction with the nomads of the Eurasian steppe. Topics include the Mongol invasion, the Mongol Empire in Asia and the Golden Horde, Islam, nomadic society, and the Russian state. Focus on conquest and settlement. May count toward either European or Asian distributional credit within the History major, upon application to the director of undergraduate studies.  WR, HU

RSEE 225a / HIST 290a, Russia from the Ninth Century to 1801  Paul Bushkovitch
The mainstream of Russian history from the Kievan state to 1801. Political, social, and economic institutions and the transition from Eastern Orthodoxy to the Enlightenment.  HU 0 Course cr

* RSEE 241b / HIST 240Jb, Government, Law, and Society in Modern Russia, 1853-1953  Sergei Antonov
Russian political culture from the Crimean War to the death of Stalin. Special attention to continuities, as well as changes, across the revolutionary divide of 1917, and to comparing official policies with daily experiences of ordinary Russians. Changing ideologies and ruling styles of tsars and early Soviet leaders (esp. Lenin, Trotsky, and Stalin) and relations with aristocratic and bureaucratic elites; political dissent and protest, including popular and state-imposed violence; the problem of legality and the rule of law. All discussions and readings in English.  WR, HU  TR

* RSEE 243a / RUSS 243a / SLAV 243a, Race, Identity, and Empire: Soviet Literature for Children and Young Adults, 1920-1970  Staff
Children’s literature—works written for children, teenagers, and young adults—emerged only in the late nineteenth-century, as childhood itself was newly understood as a special developmental stage in human life. Alphabet primers, picture books, and novels attempted to establish a set of moral and behavioral ethics that structured children’s perceptions of norms and values for many years ahead. In this course, we examine the political life of children’s literature in the Soviet Union. How did Soviet writers initiate their young readers’ perception of the racial, political, gendered Self and Other, particularly as the Soviet Union situated itself as a transcontinental empire? We begin in the 1920s, when the Soviet state revolutionized children’s literature internationally by commissioning books and poems from first-class writers, like Vladimir Mayakovksy, Osip Mandelstam, and Daniil Kharms. As we move through the twentieth century, we investigate how children’s literature responds to the international developments of the Cold War. How is the Soviet ideology of race elaborated in children’s literature? How are children readers invited into the project of empire, and initiated as citizens, in the very act of reading or holding a book? We approach these works as adult interpreters, while also imagining ourselves as children readers. We discuss the multimediality of these texts, the interaction between text and image in illustrated books. Together, we explore the collections of Soviet children’s literature at the Beinecke Library and Princeton’s Cotsen Library. Guest instructors discuss the animal and the human in children’s literature, the relationship between books and toys, and the practice of translating children’s literature. This is an LxC course.  HU
* RSEE 257a / LITR 205a / RUSS 267a, Memory and Memoir in Russian Culture
  Jinyi Chu

How do we remember and forget? How does memory transform into narrative? Why do we read and write memoirs and autobiography? What can they tell us about the past? How do we analyze the roles of the narrator, the author, and the protagonist? How should we understand the ideological tensions between official historiography and personal reminiscences, especially in 20th-century Russia? This course aims to answer these questions through close readings of a few cultural celebrities’ memoirs and autobiographical writings that are also widely acknowledged as the best representatives of 20th-century Russian prose. Along the way, we read literary texts in dialogue with theories of memory, historiography, and narratology. Students acquire the theoretical apparatus that enables them to analyze the complex ideas, e.g. cultural memory and trauma, historicity and narrativity, and fiction and non-fiction. Students finish the course with an in-depth knowledge of the major themes of 20th-century Russian history, e.g. empire, revolution, war, Stalinism, and exilic experience, as well as increased skills in the analysis of literary texts. Students with knowledge of Russian are encouraged to read in the original language. All readings are available in English.  WR, HU

RSEE 271a / HIST 271a / HUMS 339a, European Intellectual History since Nietzsche
  Staff

Major currents in European intellectual history from the late nineteenth century through the twentieth. Topics include Marxism-Leninism, psychoanalysis, expressionism, structuralism, phenomenology, existentialism, antipolitics, and deconstruction.  HU  o Course cr

* RSEE 313a / LITR 210a / RUSS 313a / SLAV 313a / THST 314a, Art and Resistance in Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine  Staff

This interdisciplinary seminar is devoted to the study of protest art as part of the struggle of society against authoritarianism and totalitarianism. It focuses on the example of the Soviet and post-Soviet transformation of Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine. The period under discussion begins after the death of Stalin in 1953 and ends with the art of protest against the modern post-Soviet dictatorships of Alexander Lukashenka in Belarus and Vladimir Putin in Russia, the protest art of the Ukrainian Maidan and the anti-war movement of artists against the Russian-Ukrainian war. The course begins by looking at the influence of the “Khrushchev Thaw” on literature and cinema, which opened the way for protest art to a wide Soviet audience. We explore different approaches to protest art in conditions of political unfreedom: "nonconformism," "dissidence," "mimicry," "rebellion." The course investigates the existential conflict of artistic freedom and the political machine of authoritarianism. These themes are explored at different levels through specific examples from the works and biographies of artists. Students immerse themselves in works of different genres: films, songs, performances, plays and literary works.  HU

* RSEE 325a / RUSS 325a / URBN 303a, Ten Eurasian Cities  Nariman Shelepkayev

This course explores histories and identities of ten cities in Northern and Central Eurasia. Its approach is based on an assumption that studying cities is crucial for an understanding of how societies developed on the territory of the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, and post-Soviet states. The course is structured around the study of ten cities—Kyiv, Saint Petersburg, Moscow, Odesa, Baku, Magnitogorsk, Kharkiv,
Tashkent, Semey (former Semipalatinsk), and Nur-Sultan (former Astana)—that are located on the territory of modern Ukraine, Russia, Central Asia, and the Caucasus. We study these cities through the prism of various scholarly approaches, as well as historical and visual sources. Literary texts are used not only as a means to illustrate certain historical processes but as artifacts that were instrumental in creating the identity of these cities within and beyond their territories. The ultimate goal of the course is to acquaint all participants with the dynamics of social, cultural, and political development of the ten Eurasian cities, their urban layout and architectural features. The course also provides an overview of basic conceptual approaches to the study of cities and ongoing urbanization in Northern and Central Eurasia. 

* RSEE 355a / EVST 294a / HUMS 294a / RUSS 355a, Ecology and Russian Culture

Molly Brunson

Interdisciplinary study of Russian literature, film, and art from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries, organized into four units—forest, farm, labor, and disaster. Topics include: perception and representation of nature; deforestation and human habitation; politics and culture of land-ownership; leisure, labor, and forced labor; modernity and industrialization; and nuclear technologies and disasters. Analysis of short stories, novels, and supplementary readings on ecocriticism and environmental humanities, as well as films, paintings, and visual materials. Several course meetings take place at the Yale Farm. Readings and discussions in English. 

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