

SLAVIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES (SLAV)

*** SLAV 1010a / RUSS 2010a, Writing Literature: Doubles, Doppelgängers, and the Boundaries of the Self** Emily Ziffer

In 2024, a BBC article proclaimed that we are “living in the golden age of the doppelgänger.” From celebrity lookalike competitions to the threat of AI duplicates in Hollywood, recent media has demonstrated a renewed fascination with the concept of “the double.” In this course, we turn to the rich literary tradition of the “doppelgänger” to examine how writers—from Fyodor Dostoevsky to Kazuo Ishiguro—have engaged with the trope to explore questions of selfhood. We spend the first part of the course considering the theoretical origins of the doppelgänger in gothic literature, turning to concepts of “the self and other” from psychoanalytic, feminist, and postcolonial theory to help us think broadly through the category. In the second part of the course, we read works of literature that feature encounters with a large cast of doppelgänger sub-types, including alter-egos, shadows, ghosts, and evil twins. Finally, we revisit the doppelgänger trope in the digital age to interrogate how advanced technologies have altered the possibilities for “doubling” through innovations such as AI, cloning, and biogenetic de-extinction projects.

*** SLAV 3120a and SLAV 6120a / FILM 3007a / RSEE 3120a / UKRN 3120a and UKRN 6120a, Cinematic Ukraine: Culture, Identity, and Memory** Olha Tytarenko

This course traces the evolution of Ukrainian cinema from the avant-garde experiments of the 1920s to the vibrant post-2014 film resurgence. Exploring themes of national identity, historical memory, and resistance to political and cultural oppression, we analyze how filmmakers have shaped Ukraine’s self-conception through film. Topics include the poetic cinema of the 1960s, post-Soviet transition films, and contemporary works responding to war and cultural sovereignty. Students will engage critically with cinematic language, narrative structures, and visual aesthetics while incorporating perspectives from postcolonial theory and memory studies. The course features guest lectures from Ukrainian film directors and hands-on cinematographic workshops. Weekly thematic units pair films with historical and theoretical readings, offering a dynamic exploration of Ukraine’s place in global cinema and cultural history. None HU