

RUSSIAN, EAST EUROPEAN, AND EURASIAN STUDIES (RSEE)

* RSEE 024a / RUSS 024a, **Strange Russian Writers** Edyta Bojanowska

The course offers an introduction to some of the most bizarre and haunting works of Russian literature. In this artistic universe of madmen, prophets, and oddballs, of supernatural events and grotesque transformations, a nose can become a high-ranking bureaucrat, a dog turns into a boorish human after a pituitary gland transplant from a local drunk, 2 x 2 most emphatically equals five, and one encounters a diary entry dated “Da 34 te yare, February 349.” Yet along with all the fun, these fictions offer profound explorations of the challenges of modern life involving sexuality, technology, or class privilege, satirical vistas of both capitalist and communist systems, critiques of rationalism, and dystopian or humorous visions of Russian provincial or national malaise. This course asks you to suspend all assumptions, exert your powers of sense-making, and learn about a rich literary tradition. The course is especially appropriate for students with some experience in literary analysis, but welcomes any adventurous reader. Enrollment limited to first-year students. WR, HU

* 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 231a / HIST 221Ja, **Russia in the Age of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, 1850-1905** Sergei Antonov

Russian politics, culture, and society ca. 1850 to 1905. Tsars' personalities and ruling styles, political culture under autocracy. Reform from above and revolutionary terror. Serfdom and its abolition, problem of “traditional” Russian culture. Growth of industrial and financial capitalism, middle-class culture, and daily life. Foreign policy and imperial conquest, including the Caucasus and the Crimean War (1853-56). Readings combine key scholarly articles, book chapters, and representative primary sources. All readings and discussions in English. WR, HU

* RSEE 244a / FILM 369a / HUMS 186a / RUSS 222a, **War Games** Staff

Dismissed, mocked, feared or loved for decades, video games have become a staple of contemporary media, art, and popular culture, studied alongside traditional print media and film. They eclipse the global yearly revenue of both film and music industries combined, leaving their financial significance undeniable. What remains understudied, however, is the political and cultural significance of the medium. *War Games* is a seminar dedicated to the intersection of video games and political violence (both real and imaginary) in a global and particularly post-Cold War context. Students learn to recognize patterns of ideological communication in video games while developing close reading skills of literature and digital media alike. We combine the study of video games with broader inquiries into the media that circulate through the game mediaverse, including literature, social and news media, and film. Playing games and reading books, we pose the following questions: How do players “perform” war in

games, and how might they resist or subvert expected performances? How indeed are we as readers and players affected by the type of media we consume? What is an adaptation? How do adaptations influence or potentially reshape our relationships with the source material? What themes and ideas are revealed effectively through one medium versus another? Why do certain literary traditions (such as classical Russian literature) provide such fruitful ground for video game adaptation? What are the political implications for the ideologies present in a video game given the globalized position of the medium? Assigned readings include novels, short stories, news media, and internet forums alongside a range of secondary materials, including film and media theory, intellectual and media histories, digital anthropology, reception studies, and interviews. HU

RSEE 266a / HIST 265a, Soviet Russia 1917-1991 Staff

Overview of the rise and fall of the Soviet Union. Topics include political culture and ideology of the Bolshevik/Communist Party; social and economic changes; foreign policy and the role of WWII; major artistic and cultural movements. Paper assignments involve close readings of memoir and oral history accounts. HU o Course cr

*** RSEE 309a / HSAR 354a / RUSS 309a, Art and the Arctic** Molly Brunson

This seminar asks how the arctic took shape as an aesthetically contested ground in the visual art, literature, material culture, and popular media of the nineteenth century. How did national styles make claims on a stateless landscape? In what ways was the circumpolar region gendered and racialized? And how did these questions shape the emergence of a northern modernism too often neglected in histories of art? Questions of whiteness, exploration, and exploitation will be considered in the works of Russian, Nordic, and Sami artists from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. HU

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

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 316a / EALL 288a / EAST 316a / LITR 303a / RUSS 316a, Socialist '80s:**

Aesthetics of Reform in China and the Soviet Union Jinyi Chu

This course offers an interdisciplinary introduction to the study of the complex cultural and political paradigms of late socialism from a transnational perspective by focusing on the literature, cinema, and popular culture of the Soviet Union and China in 1980s. How were intellectual and everyday life in the Soviet Union and China distinct from

and similar to that of the West of the same era? How do we parse “the cultural logic of late socialism?” What can today’s America learn from it? Examining two major socialist cultures together in a global context, this course queries the ethnographic, ideological, and socio-economic constituents of late socialism. Students analyze cultural materials in the context of Soviet and Chinese history. Along the way, we explore themes of identity, nationalism, globalization, capitalism, and the Cold War. Students with knowledge of Russian and Chinese are encouraged to read in original languages. All readings are available in English. WR, HU TR

*** RSEE 329a / HIST 398Ja / MMES 300a / RUSS 329a, Introduction to Modern Central Asia** Claire Roosien

An overview of the history of modern Central Asia – modern-day Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of the People’s Republic of China. This course shows Central Asia to be a pivotal participant in some of the major global issues of the 20th and 21st centuries, from environmental degradation and Cold War, to women’s emancipation and postcolonial nation-building, to religion and the rise of mass society. It also includes an overview of the region’s longer history, of the conquests by the Russian and Chinese empires, the rise of Islamic modernist reform movements, the Bolshevik victory, World War II, the *perestroika*, and the projects of post-Soviet nation-building. Readings in history are supplemented by such primary sources as novels and poetry, films and songs, government decrees, travelogues, courtly chronicles, and the periodical press. All readings and discussions in English. HU

*** RSEE 380a / FILM 360a / LITR 301a / RUSS 380a, Putin's Russia and Protest Culture** Staff

Survey of Russian literature and culture since the fall of communism. The chaos of the 1990s; the solidification of power in Putin's Russia; the recent rise of protest culture. Sources include literature, film, and performances by art collectives. Readings and discussion in English; texts available in Russian. WR, HU

RSEE 390b / HIST 237b / RUSS 241b, Russian Culture: The Modern Age Claire Roosien and Sergei Antonov

An interdisciplinary exploration of Russian cultural history, focusing on literature, art, religion, social and political thought, and film. Conceptions of Russian nationhood; the myths of St. Petersburg; dissent and persecution; the role of social and cultural elites; the intelligentsia; attitudes toward the common people; conflicting appeals of rationality, spirituality, and idealism; the politicization of personal life; the impact of the Bolshevik Revolution and its aftermath. Readings and discussion in English. HU

*** RSEE 401b / RUSS 401b, Socialist Realism And Its Legacies** Claire Roosien

Socialist Realism was promulgated in the 1930s as the sole mode for cultural production in the Soviet Union. Since that time, it has been maligned as totalitarian, lauded as emancipatory, dismissed as hackish, and reappropriated in a variety of ways—from homage to parody. This course offers an introduction to Socialist Realism and its legacies, beginning with its prehistory in the early Soviet avant-garde and other cultural movements, tracing its official adoption under Stalin, its reassessment in the late Soviet period, and its legacies after the fall of the Soviet Union. Special attention is paid to the interpretations of Socialist Realism in the emerging national cultures beyond the Russian SFSR. The course also examines select examples of the impact of Socialist Realism beyond the Soviet Union, particularly in the “Third World” during the era

of Cold War cultural diplomacy. Questions for discussion include: How did Socialist Realism imagine, enforce, and unsettle hierarchies of gender, race, and ethnicity? What did Socialist Realism look like beyond literature—in film, visual art, architecture, and music? How did the imperative to use Socialist Realism connect to the Soviet project to create minority cultures that would be “national in form, socialist in content”? How did people outside the Second World receive and appropriate Socialist Realism? HU

*** RSEE 490a and RSEE 491b, The Senior Essay** Jinyi Chu

Preparation of the senior essay under faculty supervision. The essay grade becomes the grade for both terms of the course. Required of all seniors majoring in Russian and East European Studies. Credit for RSEE 490 only on completion of RSEE 491.