

# RUSSIAN & SLAVIC STUDIES (RUSSN-GA)

## RUSSN-GA 1001 Topics in Russian & Slavic Studies (4 Credits)

*Typically offered occasionally*

Topical course with different topics every semester.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

## RUSSN-GA 1006 Seminar in 19th Century Lit: (4 Credits)

*Typically offered occasionally*

The seminar will examine the canonical strain of Russian realist fiction with an eye to the social and political imaginaries underpinning its discursive and mimetic field. How does the Russian realist tradition differ from its Western-European counterparts when it comes to the representation of the contemporary social dynamics? Can concepts developed in social and political theory illuminate this tradition's stylistic, generic, and characterological patterns? Beginning with Nikolai Chernyshevsky's famous essay on Turgenev's tale, *Asya* (1958), "The Russian on the Rendezvous" and focusing on the shapes taken by these works' central romantic encounters, we will try to address these and related questions. We will discuss long and short prose works by F. Dostoevsky, A. Herzen, A. Pushkin, L. Tolstoy and I. Turgenev.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

## RUSSN-GA 1007 Reading Contemporary Russian I (4 Credits)

This course is the first part of a year-long Reading Contemporary Russian sequence intended to assist graduate students in the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences with little or no knowledge of Russian in developing reading skills for conducting academic research using written Russian-language sources. During the first half of the semester, students will be introduced to the Russian writing system and will develop grammar, vocabulary, and word-building knowledge that will scaffold their reading efforts. In the second half of the semester, students will begin working on short translations from authentic materials. Choice of these materials will be adapted to the specific needs and interests of students.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

## RUSSN-GA 1008 Reading Contemporary Russian II (4 Credits)

This course is designed to meet the needs of graduate students from various academic fields who wish to conduct academic research using written Russian language sources. The primary focus of this course is the acquisition of high-proficiency reading skills and the review of relevant grammatical material. Materials and instruction will be tailored to meet the learning needs and objectives of individual students.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

## RUSSN-GA 1009 Topics in Mastering and Teaching Russian (4 Credits)

This is an advanced seminar designed to develop mastery of difficult aspects of Russian grammar and an advanced understanding of the complexities of grammatical choices and structural features of modern Russian. Topics will vary and may include the Russian verb system (aspect, locomotion); case system; temporal, spatial, and causal relationships; and word formation.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

## RUSSN-GA 2106 Special Study Literary: (4 Credits)

*Typically offered occasionally*

In the famous phrase by Michael Foucault, the modern state can be defined by the fact that it has the right 'to make live and to let die', in contrast to the sovereign state of the older variety that 'take life or let live'. According to Foucault, the modern state functions primarily as a 'biopower' whose justification is that it secures the survival of the human masses, of the human species. However, the 'natural' death of any given individual is passively accepted by the state as an unavoidable event and thus treated as a private matter of this individual. But what would happen if the biopower were to radicalise its claim and combat not only collective death but also individual, 'natural' death – with the ultimate goal of eliminating it entirely. Admittedly, this kind of demand sounds utopian, and indeed it is. But this very demand was expressed by many Russian authors before and after the October Revolution. The Russian Cosmists required as basic human rights: immortality, regular rejuvenation and free movement in the cosmic space. In the seminar, the texts of Russian Cosmists will be read and discussed, including the texts by A.O. Nikolay Fedorov, Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, Alexander Svyatogor and Alexander Bogdanov.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes

## RUSSN-GA 2112 Russian Utopian Fiction (4 Credits)

*Typically offered occasionally*

Survey of the development of the utopian tradition in Russia, within the context of the larger European utopian tradition. Special attention is paid to 20th-century works and to questions of genre.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

## RUSSN-GA 2118 Bakhtin (4 Credits)

*Typically offered occasionally*

This seminar is designed to study in depth an influential literary theory created by Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin. In many respects, Bakhtin remains an enigmatic and contradictory figure. The authorship of many of his texts is still unclear. They were published under the names of several of his friends, written by Bakhtin not as his own texts but as texts by the others. These texts (three books and several articles) should probably be described as experiences in dialogism – when an idea acquires autonomy and is associated more with a fictitious character than with the author himself. The seminar will focus on the history of this key-concept - dialogism - and its meaning. We will study an immediate intellectual context of Bakhtin's work and explore how the idea of dialogism triggered a new understanding of carnival. A special attention will be paid to surprising relations between comedy and dialogism, dialogism and platonic tradition. We will read Bakhtin's famous books on Dostoevsky and on Rabelais and carnival, as well as his less known works. We will study Bakhtin against a fascinating background of intellectual trends that dominated European culture in the 1910-1930s (Nietzsche, neokantianism, phenomenology).

**Grading:** GSAS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

## RUSSN-GA 2121 Graduate Proseminar (4 Credits)

*Typically offered occasionally*

Interdisciplinary, team-taught course designed to introduce the main methods and chief scholarly debates in contemporary Russian studies.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded

**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

**RUSSN-GA 2123 Theories of The Novel and Russian Case Studies (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

This seminar will explore major 20th century approaches to the sociology of literature, with special emphasis on the novel. Authors discussed in detail include George Lukács, Mikhail Bakhtin, Lucien Goldman, Pierre Bourdieu, Raymond Williams, Fredric Jameson, Pierre Macherey, and Franco Moretti. Russian case Studies:

**Grading:** GSAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RUSSN-GA 2126 The Bildungsroman in Russia & The West (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

The course explores the generic field of the Bildungsroman as it organizes a number of representative narratives in nineteenth-century Russia and Western Europe in light of modernity's paradoxical injunctions towards rigorous socialization on the one hand and subjective volatilization on the other. The course foregrounds difficulties and rewards of the Bildungsroman within the specifically Russian literary tradition and social context. Readings from Goethe, Balzac, Constant, Dostoevsky, Goncharov, Flaubert, Lermontov, Pushkin, Tolstoy, and Turgenev.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RUSSN-GA 2128 Hegel, Kojève, & The End of History (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

During the last decades we were again and again confronted with a discourse on the end of history, of subjectivity, of art, the death of Man and post-humanity. This discourse took its origin in the lectures on Hegel's "Phenomenology of the Spirit" that were given by Alexandre Kojève in Paris from 1933 to 1939. In the seminar we will be discussing the works by Kojève and his students, such as Georges Bataille and Jacques Lacan.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RUSSN-GA 2135 Reading Post-Socialist Russia (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

What was post-socialism, and what comes next? This course will attempt to answer these and other relevant questions through an examination of Russian literature and film from 1991 to the present. We will pay special attention to themes of aestheticized violence, economic change, social collapse, and shifting expectations in the realms of gender and sexuality. Featured authors and directors will include, among others, Kira Muratova, Boris Akunin, Andrei Zvyagintsev, Vladimir Sorokin, Victor Pelevin, and Linor Goralik

**Grading:** GSAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RUSSN-GA 2137 Grad Research Seminar and Practicum (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

This course prepares students to write their MA thesis by walking them through the process of writing a thesis prospectus. This is a 3-4-page, single-spaced document that includes (1) the proposed central argument of the MA thesis; (2) a table of contents with chapter outlines; (3) a preliminary bibliography; (4) and the names of two faculty readers who have agreed to serve on the student's committee. Students draft their prospectuses through a series of scaffolded steps that culminate in a prospectus colloquium taking place at the conclusion of the semester before an audience of seminar participants and departmental faculty.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RUSSN-GA 2139 Marxist Aesthetics in Russia (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

The goal of this course is to describe and discuss the development of Marxist thought on art in Russia before and after the October Revolution. It begins with Plekhanov's writings on Marxist aesthetics and follows its evolution through Russian avant-garde and Proletkult up to the theories of Socialist Realism in the 1930s. We will also be reading authors relevant to Russian Marxist art critique, including Lukacs, Brecht, and Adorno.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RUSSN-GA 2141 Media Culture in Russia's Long Twentieth Century (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

For much of the last century and a half, the Russian state in its different iterations (late imperial, Soviet, and post-Soviet) has not only commissioned positive representations of its itself, its agenda, and the society over which it was ruling but has also imposed censorship on critical ones. Over the course of this period, however, cultural producers driven by a variety of agendas have sought and found ways to create such critical representations and distribute them to wider audiences, domestic or foreign. This confrontation has played out over numerous media and has accounted for a great deal of the specificity or the exaggerated popularity of some cultural forms in Russia such as the thick journal, samizdat, tamizdat, magnitizdat, the joke, and the highly specific structure and use of contemporary Russian internet. As we move chronologically forward, students will not only become familiar with the specific workings of different Russian media, with the texts produced in them and the political contexts shaping their use but they will also conceptualize them through the theoretical frameworks proposed by such media theorists as Marshall McLuhan, Jurgen Habermas, Régis Debray, Raymond Williams, Michael Warner, and Lev Manovich.

**Grading:** GSAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RUSSN-GA 2149 Dostoevsky & Modernity (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

Dostoevsky himself may have been the first person to characterize his own work as specifically "modern." Distinguishing himself from the "historical novelists" who focused on the life forms of the landowning aristocracy, he characterized his specific take on the novelistic form as particularly capable of grasping the fleeting phenomena of Russia's confused present. This course explores Dostoevsky's novelistic form, both early and late, as a particularly helpful prism for understanding the conditions, experience and philosophical ramifications of modernity. Questions of the relationship between modernity and the novel form more generally will be inevitably raised to mediate between Dostoevsky's specific novels and the various theorizations of the modern. Readings from Dostoevsky: Poor People, Notes from Underground, Crime and Punishment, The Brothers Karamazov. Theoretical readings from Marx, Weber, Giddens, Charles Taylor, Foucault, Lukács, Bakhtin, etc. Readings and discussions will be in English. (Ph. D. students, please speak to instructor before registering.)

**Grading:** GSAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RUSSN-GA 3991 Research (1-4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

Independent research course

**Grading:** GSAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes