

RUSS 431 Studies/Russian Culture

INSTRUCTOR: Alla Grikurova agrikurova@alaska.edu
OFFICE: Gruening Building 607B 474-5461
OFFICE HOURS: M W 10:45-11:45
R 3:30 – 4:30 (or by appointment)
FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPT. 474 – 7396

Course overview:

The course will survey Russian culture through the development of its art, architecture, literature, music and folklore in its social context. A major aim is that you develop an understanding of certain aspects of Russian mentality. I *hope* that the material selected for the class would give us the opportunity to look at both Culture and culture. My ambitious (too ambitious, quite possibly) goal is to look at the Russian Culture/culture as the glue which holds the nation together, regardless of the type of government.

What you have to do:

Besides the general assigned readings you will have specific ones just for you. You will have to report about your specific readings orally to the class - data, your conclusions, and impressions from the reading. While working on the specific readings you will also prepare several (3 to 5) questions for your classmates to answer after your presentation. Cooperative learning seems to be the most appropriate for this course, so we will all share and learn from each other.

There will be some written answers to the questions on your general assigned readings, and sometimes on the films we are going to see, as well as one small research paper: about **6** pages if by hand, double spaced, on a subject of interest to you that we agree upon. The **topic** for your **research paper** ought to be defined by **September 17**, and the **final draft** has to be turned in by **Thanksgiving (November 26)**. Students usually go through 3-4 drafts: the final version needs to be mistakes-free. Our last two classes, **December 8 and 10**, is the time for your paper presentation(s?)

What I have to do:

I will give brief lectures and slide presentations in order to introduce themes, or to complement them. I will organize the distribution of materials to be read by you as well as the time of your oral presentations, and organize the frame for discussions. I will work with the Office of Disabilities Services (203 WHIT, 474-7043) to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities. I will give you assignments from one class to the next. **Let me know if you have any problems.** You are welcome to go over any assignment in my office, oral and/or written. I will be willing to help you with the pronunciation and/or grammar, if necessary. If you feel you need a Russian tutor, ask me; ASUAF (at the Wood Center) can provide you with a list of available tutors as well. Students are also encouraged to visit the Foreign Language Lab (Gruening, 6th floor; Monday – Friday; 8am – 5pm). I will work with the Office of Disabilities Services (203 WHIT, 474-7043) to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities. Another thing I have to do is decide if we should have a midterm around October 20-22, and I will!

How do you get a grade:

Oral presentations	30%
Attendance and participation	20%
Homework	20%
Research paper	30%

This is our current grading scale:

A+	97-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69	F	0-60
A	93-96	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66		
A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62		

Students are not graded on a curve. An A requires excellent work.

There is no final exam in this class.

Format/Text

This is a multimedia lecture/discussion class, which will feature films in both Russian and English, slideshows, videos, opera and ballets excerpts, etc. There is no text that explores everything we will cover in this course. I have been collecting materials from different sources and photocopying them. These materials will be distributed to you throughout the semester.

Course topics:

The items that follow are tentative, and if there are reasons for them to be there, there might be other reasons to change them. You have the wonderful opportunity to create, re-create or influence the content and format of this course.

First half of the semester

Historical review: Byzantium and Rus
(the alphabet, the art, the Baptism, the Chronicle)
Moscow and the Tatars

Russian Orthodox - the millennium of Christianity.
Folk tales and the Russian myth
The continuity: Russian 19th century poets, the Chronicle,
and Russian 20th century composers.

Second half of the semester

The Russian way: those things we do

Suggested Individual Projects:

1. **"Господин Великий Новгород"** ("Great Lord Novgorod")
2. Byzantine influence in Rus.
3. Icon painting in old Russian towns.
4. The legends of the Chronicle.
5. **"Слово о полку Игореве"** (Igor Tale) - the masterpiece of medieval literature.
6. Three hundred years under the Tatars.
7. Peter the Great: **«первая перестройка»**
8. The Russian capitals and the rise of Moscow.
9. St. Petersburg - the window into Europe.
10. Russian fairy tales.
11. The last Russian czar.
12. Ivan the Terrible – **Иван Грозный**.
13. The siege of Leningrad during World War II.
14. Church in Rus - Russia - U.S.S.R. - Russia.
15. Александр Сергеевич Пушкин.
16. My favorite Russian writer/poet/story/poem...
17. Education: old versus new
18. Emigration.
19. Михаил Юрьевич Лермонтов.
20. История русского балета.
21. Социальное обеспечение/Social Services.
22. История Эрмитажа (Кремля/Третьяковской галереи).
23. Русские меценаты/Russian patrons of the arts.

Papers previously presented in this class:

Голубое движение в России

Николай и Александра

Дикий Восток

Русский балет и Анна Павлова

Русские суеверия

Битва за Сталинград

Русский рок (Виктор Цой и группа «Кино»)

История железной дороги в России

Русская баня

Русские народные сказки

Женщины в русских народных сказках

Дело Александра Никитина

Советская пропаганда 1920 годов

Русский авангард

Стенька Разин

Михаил Булгаков

Минеральные ресурсы России

«Ночные ведьмы»

Анна Ахматова

Владимир Высоцкий
Русские староверы на Аляске

Блокада Ленинграда
История русской водки

Иван Грозный
Византия и Русь

Русская Америка

Этика бизнеса в России

Петроград в 1917 году: первые дни октябрьской революции

Седьмая (Ленинградская) симфония Дмитрия Шостаковича

Русско-японская война

Русская православная церковь на Аляске

Лев Николаевич Толстой

Жаргон “феня” и криминально-тюремный мир Советского Союза и современной России

Фашизм в России сегодня

Пётр Первый

Николай Васильевич Гоголь

Сергей Прокофьев

Русско-финская война

Политический феминизм в России

Былины и былевое творчество

Please let me know if you are specifically interested in something.