



## **CIEE Saint Petersburg, Russia**

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|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>Course name:</b>              | Russian Social and Political Life       |
| <b>Course number:</b>            | RUSI 3006 RLPR                          |
| <b>Programs offering course:</b> | St. Petersburg Russian Language Program |
| <b>Language of Instruction:</b>  | Russian                                 |
| <b>U.S. Semester Credits:</b>    | 3                                       |
| <b>Contact Hours:</b>            | 45                                      |
| <b>Term:</b>                     | Fall 2019                               |

### **Course Description**

This course analyzes issues of social and political behavior as they emerge in the representation of contemporary Russia. Topics covered include intellectual life, religion, gender, living conditions, work and employment as well as topical current events oriented toward political life in Russian society. The course focuses mainly on specific patterns that shape political attitudes of the Russians, such as: Just, Communal Survival and others. Texts discussed in class are related to current events and help students to explore the language of the press.

### **Learning Objectives**

This course aims at taking an in-depth look at Russian traditionalism, spirituality, conformism, alcoholism, and other popular stereotypes. The course introduces students to the folklore reminiscences and their impact on the contemporary Russians. Topics covered include intellectual life, Russian daily life, political outlook, influence of religion and different social phenomena. By the end of this course, students should have a better understanding of the Russia of today, as well as the impact of the Soviet Union on the contemporary society which has emerged.

### **Methods of Instruction**

The course combines lecture mode of teaching with the class open discussion model. The teaching process will include the use of PowerPoint material presentation, mass media articles, films and video clips on discussed topics.

### **Assessment and Final Grade**

The final grade is determined through attendance and participation in class, as well as student performance on the three written exams and term paper:

- class participation 20%
- tests (Midterm and Final) 30% (15% each)
- essay 25%
- in-class presentation 25%



## **Course requirements**

**Class participation.** Active participation in class discussions is required. Students are expected to complete class readings for the assigned date and come to class ready to analyze and debate issues raised by the readings.

**Essay.** Each student is expected to write a 2-page long (up to 600 words) essay in Russian, double-spaced, using 12-pt. Times New Roman font. The topic of the essays should relate to the overall theme of the course and be chosen in consultation with the instructor. Language you use must be verifiably your own. This means that while you are free to use dictionaries and other class and reference materials in preparing essays and presentations, you should not get substantive (=more than one or two expressions) language assistance from native speakers or anyone else.

**In-class presentation.** Before submitting their essays to the instructor, students will present their ideas to the class and receive feedback. You are welcome to use visuals for your presentations, either in the form of handouts or a Power Point. Your presentation should be 10-minute long.

**Midterm and final tests** will be given in a written form and they will test your knowledge of course concepts, theories and facts. It is a combination of multiple choice questions, open questions and a short essay on a proposed topic.

## **Class Attendance**

Attendance is crucial for successful completion of the class. Students are allowed to have two unexcused absences for each course for the whole semester program. These allowed unexcused absences should be used for situations such as minor illnesses without a doctor's note or personal situations that prevent the student from attending the class. Allowed unexcused absences should not be used in a planned way for travel or other activities.

Unexcused absences beyond the limit of two will lower a student's grade by 2 points on the 100-point scale each. For example, if your overall score in the class is 90 (an equivalent of A-) and you have had three unexcused absences, your final score will be 88 (B+).

## **Weekly Schedule**

### **Week 1.**

Class 1.

Syllabus, practical matters. The language of the new Russia.

Class 2. Russia as social network

Screening: documentary "Landscape" (dir. Youry Loznitsa)

### **Week 2.**

Class 1. Social Networks in Russia.

Watch at home: TV show "Vecher s Ivanom Urgantom"; "Real Russia" vlog

Class 2. Russian blogosphere



Reading: Public discourse in the Russian blogosphere: Mapping RuNet Politics and Mobilization (part 1)

### **Week 3.**

Class 1. Russian blogosphere (continued)

Reading: Public discourse in the Russian blogosphere: Mapping RuNet Politics and Mobilization (part 2)

Class 2. Street actionism in Russia

Pussy Riot: punk-feminist group actions.

Readings: Press coverage of the trial (excerpts, to be distributed by instructor)

### **Week 4.**

Class 1. Alcoholism as social problem and an image of an alcoholic in Russian culture.

Reading:

Yerofeev, Venedict *Moscow To The End Of the Line* (excerpts)

Screening: documentary: *From Moscow to Petushki: A Journey With Benedict Yerofeev* (dir. Paul Pavlikovski, 1991)

Class 2. Russian life in poems and problems

Reading:

Boris Ryzhy, selected poems

Documentary: *Boris Ryzhy* (dir. Alena van der Khost, 2009)

### **Week 5.**

Class 1. The rich and the poor in Russia

Reading: articles from contemporary Russian press (to be distributed by the instructor)

Class 2. The rich and the poor in Russia (continued)

To watch at home: *Elena* (dir. Zviagintsev, 2011)

### **Week 6.**

Class 1 and 2. Russian Culture of losses

Reading: Nancy Ries, *Russian Talk*

❖ **Midterm test**

### **Week 7.**

Class 1. Russian Orthodoxy. Religion Under Soviet Rule

Reading:

John Garrard and Carol Garrard, "The Babylonian Legacy: Exiles, Martyrs and Collaborators" in

Garrard, John; Garrard, Carol, eds. *Russian Orthodoxy Resurgent (Faith and Power in the New Russia)* Princeton University Press 2008 p.181-206

Class 2. Russian Orthodoxy during the Soviet times

To watch at home: Anti-Religious Show Trial 1961 (Soviet Propaganda Film)

### **Week 8.**

Class 1. Russian Orthodoxy during the Post-Soviet era

Reading: "Twenty years after: From Party to Patriarch" in



Garrard, John; Garrard, Carol *Russian Orthodoxy Resurgent (Faith and Power in the New Russia)* Princeton University Press 2008 pp.242-254

Class 2.

❖ **Student presentations**

**Week 9.**

Class 1. Us/ Them Mentality: Russia and “the West”

Class 2. Inferiority Complex in Russian Society

To watch at home: film *Brother- 2* (dir. Balabanov, 2000).

**Week 10**

Class 1. Russian Society: Trust and Confrontation

Reading: articles from Russian press

Class 2.

❖ **Student presentations**

**Week 11**

Class 1. Radicalism and hooliganism in Russia. Political radicalism

Reading: articles from Russian press

Class 2. Radicalism and hooliganism in Russia (continued)

To watch at home: episodes from TV Series: “Fizruk”, “School”

**Week 12.**

Class 1. Russia after 2014

Class 2.

❖ **Final test**

**Course materials**

**Readings**

Etlings Bruce, Karina Alexanyan, John Kelly, Robert Faris, John Palfrey, and Urs Gasser. *Public discourse in the Russian blogosphere: Mapping RuNet Politics and Mobilization*. The Berkman Center for Internet and Society. October 2010.

Garrard, John; Garrard, Carol, eds. *Russian Orthodoxy Resurgent (Faith and Power in the New Russia)* Princeton University Press 2008. Ries Nancy *Russian talk: culture and conversation during Perestroika* Cornell University Press, 1997

Yerofeev, Venedict. “Moscow To The End Of the Line,” in *The Portable Twentieth-Century Russian Reader*. NY: Penguin Books, 2003.