Course name: Gender and Sexuality in Russia
Course number: GEND 3001 RASP
Programs offering course: Russian Area Studies
Language of instruction: English
U.S. semester credits: 3
Contact hours: 45
Term: Spring 2019

Course Description
This course gives students an overview of the major issues related to gender and sexuality in Russian society: social constructions of masculinities and femininities, sexual and gender variance, family, reproduction, women’s agency and women’s movements. The course takes an interdisciplinary approach to the subject, as it employs historic and social analysis, and it also explores different media, through which gender and sexuality in Russian culture are shaped and articulated.

The course will follow a chronological order with emphasis on the following time-periods: Russia’s Middle Ages, the Petrine reforms, the post-Petrine, “modern” phase of Russian history, the state socialism, and post-socialist Russia. The course’s readings comprise texts written by historians and social scientists, as well as literary fiction, memoirs, autobiographies and visual texts. Artistic works serve not as illustrations of some historic ‘truths,’ but as ways to contest and complicate the understanding of gender and sexuality constructs under the changing regimes of power.

Learning Objectives
By completing this course, students will be able to:
• differentiate between the constructivist and the essentialists approaches to gender and sexuality
• examine how the configurations of gender and sexuality evolved in Russian culture, from the medieval to modern times
• develop an understanding of gender, queer and transgender identities and the way they intersect with the notions of class, citizenship and nationhood in Russia
• engage in gender-sensitive reading of literary, filmic and visual texts

Course Prerequisites
None
Methods of Instruction
Course material will be presented through the combination of lectures and discussions. It is important that students come to class having prepared home assignments and ready to offer thoughtful responses to the assigned texts. Each student will be asked to conduct an oral presentation on the topic of her/his choice during one of the final class meetings.

Assessment and Final Grade
Students will be assessed according to the following criteria:

Class participation                       15%
Quizzes                                        30% (10% for each quiz)
Presentation             25%
Final exam             30%
Total:                                            100%

Course Requirements

Class participation
Students are expected to complete all reading or viewing assignments before each class meeting and to come to class prepared to debate issues brought up by the readings, films or visual texts.

Quizzes
Three quizzes will be given throughout the semester, which will test students’ factual knowledge and their understanding of the notions and categories introduced in lectures and class readings.

Presentations
Students will conduct a 20-minute presentation, based on a text, film, theoretical concept, or author covered in the course. Each student chooses the topic for the presentation based on her/his own interests and then discusses it with the instructor for the final approval. Supporting visuals in the form of handouts, PowerPoint or other forms are welcome.

Final Exam
The goal of the test is to evaluate students' understanding of the course content and main ideas. The test will be a combination of short-answer and essay questions (from a list of options), which will be based on the quizzes, lectures, readings, and homework assignments.
**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**
- **Introduction to the course. Theorizing sex, gender and sexuality: essentialism vs. social constructionism**
  Reading:
  Judith Butler, “Gender as Performance,” pp. 109-125

- **Masculine and feminine images in Russian folklore**
  Reading: Joanna Hubbs, *Mother Russia*, pp. 24-51

**Week 2**
- **Gender and family order in pre-Petrine Russia**

- **Women, family and public life in eighteenth-century Russia**

**Week 3**
- **The ‘woman question’ in nineteenth-century Russia**
  Reading: Richard Stites, *The Women’s Liberation Movement in Russia*, pp. 3-37; 89-99

- **Russian urbanization and shifting patterns of family life**

Week 4
- **Gender bending, sexual transgressions in nineteenth-century Russia**
  Reading: Nadezhda Durova, *The Cavalry Maiden: Journals of a Russian Officer in the Napoleonic Wars*, pp. 3-34;

- **Gender politics and state socialism: the new Soviet man and woman**
  Reading: Elizabeth Wood, *The Baba and the Comrade: Gender Politics in Revolutionary Russia*, pp. 1-12; 68-98.
  ❖ Quiz #1

Week 5
- **Sexual revolution of the 1920s**
  Naiman, Eric, *Sex in Public*, pp. 45-56; 148-180

- **Marriage and family life in the era of NEP**
  Assignment: watch *Bed and Sofa* (1927), dir. Abram Room

Week 6
- **Soviet masculinities in the making**
  Assignment: watch *Sickle and Hammer* (1994), dir. Sergey Livnev
  Isaac Babel, “My first goose,” “Salt,” Sashka Christ,” *The Life Story of Pavlichenko*

- **Women and war**
  Handouts: Soviet posters from the time of World War II, 1941-1945
Week 7
- **Parameters of gender contract during the “Thaw”**
  Reading: Melanie Ilić, *Women in the Khrushchev Era*, pp. 5-28; 149-176
- **The changing parameter of femininity and masculinity under socialism**
  Assignment: Watch *July Rain* (Dir. Marlen Khutsiev, 1967)
  ✔ Student presentations

Week 8
- **Women writing their lives: Perestroika and women’s prose**
  Olga Kuzmina, *Women writing*, in *Russian Life* (Summer 2013)
- **The collapse of socialism and the revision of gender order**
  ✔ Quiz #2

Week 9
- **Female subjectivity in film and visual arts. Russian women artists.**
  Reading: Margarita Tupitsyn, “Unveiling Feminism: Women’s Art in the Soviet Union,” in *Arts Magazine* (December 1990), 63-37
  ✔ Student presentations
- **Site visit:** The State Russian Museum, collections of Russian avant-garde art and socialist realism

Week 10
- **Female subjectivity in film and visual arts. Women film directors.**
  ✔ Student presentations
- **Bodies and sexualities**


Week 11

- **Sexuality, nationhood, citizenship**

- **Site visit:** Museum of Contemporary Art Erarta (https://www.erarta.com/)

Week 12

- **Gendered subjectivities and activism**
  Reading: Hashamova Yana et al, eds., *Transgressive Women in Modern Russian and East European Cultures*, pp. 1-10; 165-191.

- **Student presentations**

- **Concluding discussion:** What comes next? Post-socialist gendered identities and formations

- **Final test**

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**Course Materials**

**Readings**


Online Resources

http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/_generate/RUSSIA.html

http://www.awsshome.org/links.html

https://pages.shanti.virginia.edu/russian/works-of-contemporary-russian-women-writers/

http://www.gwi-boell.de/en

http://researchguides.library.vanderbilt.edu/russian-lit/womens-studies