



CIEE in St. Petersburg, Russia

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| Course name: | Analytical Readings, 20th Century Russian Literature |
| Course number: | LITT 3102 RLPR |
| Programs offering course: | Russian Language Program |
| Language of instruction: | Russian |
| U.S. semester credits: | 3 |
| Contact hours: | 45 |
| Term: | Spring 2019 |

Course Description

The course addresses the development of Russian literature in the twentieth century by focusing on eight authors, which exemplify key stages in the evolution of the Russian literary scene of the time. Course lectures provide students with the surveys of historical and cultural context of the time, the idiosyncrasies of each authors' creative process, and her/his works. During seminars, students are asked to read and analyze individual poems or short stories by the authors under consideration. Texts are chosen based on how they exemplify the individual style and main creative ideas of the writer, and his aesthetic position.

Learning Objectives

This course aims to teach students to analyze works of Russian literature, their text structure, to emphasize the main ideas of such works and their content, as well as to be able to analyze linguistic devices and the techniques of expressing intellectual ideas within a text. The knowledge gained through such analysis should improve the students' vocabularies and provide motivation to continue studying the Russian language.

Course Prerequisites

Students are placed in this course on the basis of their Russian level, as is determined by a language entry exam. Students must possess an advanced level of Russian.

Methods of Instruction

This analytical course consists of lectures and seminars. When a new topic is introduced, the first part of the lesson is lecture, which provides students with an overview of the writer's biography, her/his artistic style, peculiarities of the historic and cultural contexts, etc. Seminars focus on close textual reading and analyzing of particular literary works in small groups and in a larger group, as well as on the discussion of home assignments.

Assessment and Grading

Completing homework assigned is compulsory to frame the work done in class. Homework assignments take the form of assigned readings, vocabulary exercises, and the completion of a total of seven essays throughout the semester. Students may choose the topic of their essays from the list offered by the professor. Work on texts includes: preliminary analysis of new vocabulary, home reading, reading the work aloud (or its significant portions) during class, answering questions according to the text, the analysis of its



ideas, as well as reinforcing grammar and vocabulary exercises and retelling the story (in low level groups). Such methods aim to broaden students' practical skills.

Class Attendance

Students will be assessed according to the following criteria:

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| • Class participation | 20% |
| • Essays | 40% (10% for each essay) |
| • Midterm test | 20% |
| • Final exam | 20% |

TOTAL: 100%

Weekly schedule

Week 1.

Class 1. Introduction to the course. How to read Russian literature?

Ivan Bunin and the legacy of the nineteenth-century literature

Class 2. Ivan Bunin, "The Cold Autumn."

Week 2.

Class 1. Lecture: The life and work of Alexander Blok.

Class 2. Seminar: poems by Alexander Blok

Texts under analysis:

"The Girl Was Singing";

"The Stranger";

"On the Railway"

❖ Essay # 1 is due. Possible topics for the essay:

1. Symbolism of the title; main motifs of the short story.
2. The composition of the story and its role in revealing the story's ideological and artistic content.
3. Cross-cultural linguistic tools and their role in revealing the ideological and artistic content of the story.
4. Analysis of the imagery and the figurative and expressive means of one of the poems read.
5. Images of women in Blok's works.
6. What killed the heroine of the poem, "On the Railway?"

Week 3.

Class 1. Lecture: The Russian literature in exile. Evgeny Zamiatin

Class 2. Seminar: Evgeny Zamiatin, "The dragon"

Week 4.



Class 1. Lecture: Lyrics by Anna Akhmatova: imagery and figurative methods

Class 2. Seminar: in-class analysis of “The Statue in Tzarskoe Selo”

Week 5.

Class 1. Lecture: The life and works by Osip Mandelstam

Class 2. Seminar: St. Petersburg in the works by Mandelstam

Texts under analysis:

“Insomnia. Homer...”

“Leningrad”

❖ **Your essay# 2 is due. Possible topics for the essay:**

1. “Battle of the worlds” in the story “The Dragon.”
2. Symbolism in the story “The Dragon”
3. Analysis of the imagery, the figurative and expressive means in “The Statue in Tzarskoe Selo.”
4. Analysis of the imagery and the figurative and expressive means of one of the poems read.

Week 6.

Class 1. Lecture: Magical realism of Mikhail Bulgakov

Class 2. Seminar: Bulgakov's short story “The Psalm”

Week 7.

Class 1.

❖ **The Midterm test**

Class 2. Lecture: Socialist realism: the official method of Soviet literature
Vladimir Mayakovsky

Week 8.

Class 1. Seminar: in-class analysis of “The Good Attitude to the Horses”

Class 2.

❖ **Your essay #3 is due. Possible topics for the essay:**

1. “Battle of the Worlds” in the story, “The Dragon.”
2. Symbolism in the story “The Dragon.”
3. Recurring imagery in the story “The Dragon.”
4. Cross-cultural linguistic tools and their role in revealing the ideological and artistic content of the text in “The Good Attitude to the Horses”
5. Language and style of the story “The Psalm”

Week 9.



Class 1. Lecture: Understanding Boris Pasternak

Class 2. Poetry by Boris Pasternak

Texts under analysis:

“Hamlet”;

“The Winter Night”

❖ **Your essay #4 is due today. Possible topics for the essay:**

1. Analysis of the imagery and the figurative and expressive means of the poem by Mayakovsky, “The Good Attitude to the Horses”
2. Analysis of the imagery and the figurative and expressive means of one of the poems by Pasternak, “Hamlet” and “The Winter Night”

Week 10.

Class 1. Lecture: Alexander Solzhenitsyn: a view into life of the GULAG

Class 2. Seminar: Short stories by Alexander Solzhenitsyn

Texts under analysis:

“What a pity!”

Week 11.

Class 1. Lecture: Narratives and story-telling during the Perestroika

Class 2. Women writing their lives: short stories by Ludmilla Petrushevskaya

Texts under analysis:

“The Country”,

“The Family”.

Week 12.

Class 1. Seminar: Main trajectories of Russian literature and culture in the 20th century.

Course wrap-up

Class 2.

Final exam in form of the in-class essay on the topic:

Reflection on the evolution of the Russian Literature of the twentieth century

Course Materials

Required texts

Akhmatova, Anna. “The Statue in Tzarskoe Selo”

Blok, Alexander. “The Girl Was Singing”

Blok, Alexander. “The Stranger”

Blok, Alexander. “On the Railway”

Bulgakov, Mikhail. “The Psalm”

Bunin, Ivan. “The Cold Autumn”

Mandelshtam, Osip. “Insomnia. Homer...”



Mandelstam, Osip. "Leningrad".
Mayakovsky, Vladimir. "The Good Attitude to the Horses"
Pasternak, Boris. "Hamlet"
Pasternak, Boris. "The Winter Night"
Petrushevskaja, Liudmila. "The Country"
Petrushevskaja, Liudmila. "The Family"
Solzhenitsyn, Alexander. "What a pity!"
Zamiatin, Evgeny. "The Dragon"

Suggested readings

Clarence Brown, *The Portable Twentieth Century Russian Reader*. New York: Penguin Books, 1996
Victor Terras, *Handbook of Russian Literature*. Yale: Yale University Press, 1990.