



## CIEE St. Petersburg, Russia

<b>Course name:</b>	Analytical Readings, 20th Century Russian Literature
<b>Course number:</b>	LITT 3102 RLPR
<b>Programs offering course:</b>	Russian Language Program
<b>Language of instruction:</b>	Russian
<b>U.S. semester credits:</b>	3
<b>Contact hours:</b>	45
<b>Term:</b>	Spring 2020

### **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 at teaching students ways to analyze works of Russian literature, structure of the text, 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. In-class work includes: preliminary analysis of new vocabulary, 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).

### **Assessment and Final Grade**

Students will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- Class participation 20%
- Essays 40% (10% for each essay)



- Midterm test 20%
- Final exam 20%

TOTAL: 100%

### **Course requirements**

Class participation. Students are expected to come prepared to the class, i.e. having done the readings and homework assigned for that class.

Essays. Students will be asked to write an essay after the completion of each larger topic of this course. The total number of essays is seven. Students may choose the topic of their essays from the list offered by the professor.

Final exam aims at testing the students' knowledge acquired during the course: biographical and historic data about authors and their works, as well as key concepts and ideas discussed at lectures and seminars.

Midterm test aims at testing the students' knowledge acquired during the first part of the course. It will be a combination of multiple-choice and open questions. Multiple-choice questions will ask about biographical and historic data. Most open questions will prompt students to analyze ideas, images and concept expressed in literary works under consideration.

Final exam aims at testing the students' knowledge acquired during the course: biographical and historic data about authors and their works, as well as key concepts and ideas discussed at lectures and seminars.

### **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. 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 Autumnn."

#### **Week 2.**

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

Class 2. Seminar: poems by Alexander Block  
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”

❖ **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**

#### **Readings**

##### **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”

Mandelstam, 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.