



CIEE St. Petersburg, Russia

Course name: Mentality, Social Behavior and the Representations of Russia
Course number: RUSI 3010 RLPR
Programs offering course: Russian Language Program
Language of instruction: Russian
U.S. semester credits: 3
Contact hours: 45
Term: Spring 2020

Course Description

This course analyzes issues of social behavior as they emerge in the representation of contemporary Russia. Topics covered include intellectual life, religion, gender, living conditions, Us/Them Mentality as well as some topical current events. The course focuses mainly on specific patterns that shape individual values and attitudes of the Russians, such as: Just, Family, Communal Survival and others.

Learning Objectives

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Discuss issues of social behavior in Russian;
- Demonstrate understanding of language of Russian newspapers and magazines as presented in class and in home reading texts.

Methods of Instruction

Class meetings consist of lectures, question-and-answer sessions, class discussions, and screenings.

Assessment and Final Grade

Students will be assessed according to the following criteria:

• class participation	20%
• tests (Midterm and Final)	30% (15% each)
• essay	25%
• in-class presentation	25%
TOTAL:	100%

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. Seminar Syllabus, practical matters.

Class 2. Lecture: "Russian Mindset Part1" (Geography and Culture)

Screening: episodes from "Born in the USSR. Age 28"

Readings: Andrei Sinyavskiy "Holy Fools", "Skomorokh"

Week 2

Class 1. Lecture: "Russian Mindset Part 2" (Politics, Philosophy and Religion)

Class 2. Seminar: Cultural determinism of Russian Mindset

Screening: episodes from "Born in the USSR. Age 28"; "Island"

Reading: Nancy Ries, *Our Fairy-Tale Life*

Week 3

Class 1. Lecture: "Anthropology of Russian Childhood"

Class 2. Seminar: Political, Philosophic and Religious Determinism of Russian Mindset

Film: episodes from TV Series: "Fizruk", "School"

Reading: Yurchak Alexei "Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More," pp. 13-27.



Week 4

Class 1. Lecture: "Radicalism and Hooliganism in Russia"
Part 1: Political Radicalism

Class 2. Seminar: Russian Childhood: Games, Toys, Habits
Screening: episodes from TV Series: "Fizruk", "School"
Reading: from Yurchak Alexei "Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More," pp. 45-67

Week 5.

Class 1. Lecture: Radicalism and Hooliganism in Russia
Part 2: Religious Radicalism, Street Art

Class 2. Seminar: Brain-drain, emigration and "image of the future"
Screening: episodes from "Revolution that wasn't"
Reading: articles from contemporary Russian press (to be distributed by the instructor)

Week 6.

Class 1. Seminar: Radicalism in Russia
Reading: articles from contemporary Russian press (to be distributed by the instructor)

Class 2.

❖ **Midterm test**

Week 7

Class 1. Us/ Them Mentality: Russia and Former Soviet Republics (lecture)

Class 2. Seminar: Russia after 2014
Screening: excerpts from the film *Maidan*
Reading: articles from contemporary Russian press (to be distributed by the instructor)

Week 8

Class 1. Lecture: Us/ Them Mentality: Russia and "The West"

Class 2. Seminar: Inferiority Complex in Russian Society
Home assignment: watch film: *Brother*, Part 2 (dir. A. Balabanov)

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

Week 9

Class 1. The Emergence of civil society in Russia (lecture)

Class 2. Patriots and Foreign Agents (seminar)
Screening: episodes from the film *Event* (dir. Sergei Loznitsa)
Reading: Sinyavsky Andrei "Soviet Civilization"

Week 10

Class 1. Russian Society: Trust and Confrontation (seminar)
Reading: articles from contemporary Russian press (to be distributed by the instructor)



Class 2.

❖ **Essay is due**

Week 11

Class 1. Lecture: Problems of civil society in contemporary Russia

Screening: excerpts from film *Leviathan*

Reading: Mitrokhin Nikolai *Ruskaia Pravoslavnaia tserkov: sovremennoje sostojanie i aktualnie problemi*

Kaariainen Kimmo, Furman Dmitry (ed.) *Novye tserkvi, starie veruyuschie: religia v postsovetskoi Rossii*

Class 2. Seminar: Religion in Contemporary Russia

Film: "Pussy Riot: Punk Prayer"

Week 12

Class 1. Seminar: Religion in Contemporary Russia

Reading: from Mitrokhin Nikolai "Ruskaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov: sovremennoje sostojanie i aktualnie problemi"

Seminar: Russian Orthodoxy and Human Rights (15.05.2017)

Class 2.

❖ **Final Test**

Course materials

Readings

Boym Svetlana *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia*. Boston: Harvard University Press, 1994.

Kaariainen Kimmo, Furman Dmitry (ed.) *Novye tserkvi, starie veruyuschie: religia v postsovetskoi Rossii*. SPb 2007/Ries, Nancy. *Russian talk: culture and conversation during Perestroika*. Cornell University Press, 1997

Mitrokhin Nikolai "Ruskaia Pravoslavnaia Tserkov: sovremennoje sostojanie i aktualnie problemi M, 2006

Sinyavsky Andrei. *Soviet Civilization: A Cultural History*. Arcade pub., 1991

Yurchak, Alexei. *Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2006

On-line materials

The Calvert Journal: A Guide to the New East. Assessed January 25, 2019.

<https://www.calvertjournal.com/>