CIEE St. Petersburg, Russia

Course name: The Cultural Myths and Realities of St.Petersburg
Course number: RUSI 3001 RASU
Programs offering course: Summer Russian Area Studies Program
Language of instruction: English
U.S. Semester Credits: 3 credits
Contact Hours: 45 hours
Term: Summer 2019

Course Description

In the course the “splendid yet tragic” city is recreated as a cultural “myth.” Architectural landmarks, works of poetry and literature, Russian opera and famous Soviet movies are transformed into the emblems of the city. The course examines the “Petersburg text”, which consists of the literary works, paintings and drawings, music and theatrical productions, philosophical and moral ideas connected with Petersburg’s special place in Russian past and present.

Learning Objectives

Through a thorough examination of the many layers of legend that have been built upon St. Petersburg, students will at the end of the course be able to critically analyze the intersection of history and memory, while constructing their own vision of the Petersburg mythos through the series of discussions and debates.

Methods of Instruction

Class meetings consist of question-and-answer sessions, lectures, student presentations, short quizzes, and class discussion. Students are required (1) to view films at home; (2) to complete reading assignments if necessary; (2) to give ONE presentation; (3) to take four quizzes administered throughout the term (the lowest grade to be dropped); (4) to participate actively and intelligently in class discussions.

Grading

Grades will be based on the quality of student performance in:
- in-class participation 40%
- quizzes 30% (the lowest grade will be dropped)
- essay 30%

TOTAL 100%

Attendance

This course combines lecture and discussion format. Since attendance is critical to course performance, more than ONE unexcused absences will result in a lower grade.

Course Requirements

Students are required (1) to participate actively, intelligently and regularly in class discussions; (2) to read 8-10 pages of a verbal text for each class meeting; (3) to take 2 quizzes; (4) submit one two-page essay.
Weekly Schedule

Week One. St. Petersburg: A Hero

Introduction: St. Petersburg as a time-machine
Syllabus, practical matters.

Chaos and Cosmos

Topic:
The Triton City and its Sacrificial Legend
Reading: Alexander Pushkin Bronze Horseman
TV project: Bronze Horseman (1974, Michail Tsarev, Illustrations by Alexander Benois)

Palmyra of the North

Topic:
Shoreless world awaiting discovery

Minerva the Great

Reading:
Catherine’s social rules for herself and her guests at the Hermitage, from Russia, abridged from the French of the Marquis de Custine

Week Two. St. Petersburg: A Monster

Fatum

Topic:
Herman Hermann, Russian Gambler
Reading: Alexander Pushkin Dame of Spades (extracts)

Dance Macabre

Topic
Opera: Dame of Spades, Pyotr Tchaikovskii;
Reading: Michael Lermontov Masquerade (extracts)
Film: Masquerade (1941, dir. by Sergei Gerasimov)

Chronos

Topic:
Imperial Petersburg Deconstructed
Reading: Nikolai Gogol Overcoat (selected extracts)
Film: Overcoat (1927) dir. By Kozintsev and Trauberg
**Week Three.** St. Petersburg: A Rebel

**Russian Superman**

Topic:  
A Rebel with a Cause: Rodion Raskolnikov  
Reading: Feodor Dostoevsky Crime and Punishment (selected extracts)  
Film: Crime and Punishment (1969, dir. by Lev Kulidzhanov)

**Red Prophet**

Topic:  
Devil of the Swamps  
Reading: Vladimir Mayakovsky Vladimir Iliych Lenin (extracts)  
Cartoon: 25th, the First Day (1967, Yuri Norstein)

**Week Four.** St. Petersburg: A Martyr

**City Renamed**

Topic:  
After a saint, after a devil  
Reading: Joseph Brodsky A Guide to a Renamed City

**Terror Antiquus**

Topic:  
Revolution portrayed  
Reading: Alexander Blok The Twelve  
Film: The End of St. Petersburg (1927, dir. by Vsevolod Pudovkin)

**New Troy, Undefeated**

Topic:  
Noble Heroism of the Siege  
Reading: Anna Ahmatova A Poem Without A Hero (extracts)

**Conclusions**  
New Atlantis and the Art of Nostalgia  
Film: Russian Ark (2003, dir. by Alexander Sokurov)

**Course Readings**

**Required Texts**


Recommended Texts