

RUS 181 SYLLABUS

Block 3, 2019-20: Introduction to Russian Culture through Literature and Film: Russian Encounters with the “Other”

Class Meeting Times:

Monday-Thursday, 9:00-11:00 a.m. & 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Friday, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Classroom:

118 College Hall

Instructor:

Professor Lynne Ikach, office 316 College Hall, likach@cornellcollege.edu
319.895.4114 (office), 319.331.4024 (cell)

Office Hours:

M-Th 3:15-5:00 p.m.

I am also available at other times. Please talk to me after class or e-mail me to arrange an appointment.

PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of this course adhere to [Cornell College’s Educational Priorities and Outcomes](#). The course provides an introduction to academic writing and an opportunity for you to develop your writing skills through guided practice in all parts of the writing process, including critical reading, generation of ideas, development of an argument, documentation of sources, and refinement of writing style. This course emphasizes **communication**, and although you will work mostly on **written communication**, you will also practice **oral communication** through participation in large and small group discussions. As you carry out the course activities you will gain **knowledge** about Russian culture, and build your **intercultural literacy** and **inquiry** skills. The interactive, discussion-based classroom structure and expectations for behavior in and out of the classroom emphasize **ethical behavior**.

In this course you will read, discuss, and write about works of Russian literature and film in which the characters encounter—often in violent ways—those who are different. Encounters with those who are different from ourselves allow us to reflect on who we are. Such encounters—with those from other cultures, classes, or political views—can help us confirm and question our own identity. Although the works are fictional, most are based to a certain extent on actual historical events, and they have been selected for this course because they speak to some of the enduring issues within Russian culture, such as the conflict between Russia and the peoples of the Caucasus region. You will read background material that will help you understand the historical context of the films and literary works, but this is not a history course. Rather, our purpose is to examine and analyze the texts and films as art, and to explore how form, style, and content merge to create unique portraits of the human condition. Whether or not you have a lot of experience studying film and literature, you will be able to contribute to class discussions. I ask that you approach all of the works with an open mind, and in doing so I encourage you to bring your knowledge of other fields to our discussions.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- Tolstoy, Leo *The Cossacks and Other Stories*, Penguin Classics
- Readings posted on Moodle

ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION:

This is a discussion-based course in which you will take part in both large and small group discussions. Class discussions will be based on the assigned readings and films, and you should be willing to make thoughtful comments and to ask and answer questions about the material. To prepare for class, **take notes as you read the assigned texts and watch the films**. Even if you are not writing a response paper to a particular work, you should nevertheless be prepared to discuss it in some detail, and this will be difficult to do without notes. **Bring paper and pen or pencil to each class session**. You may also bring your laptop to class for occasional in-class writing tasks, but please leave your laptop closed during discussions so that you are able to give your full attention to the rest of the class. I expect everyone to contribute effectively to class discussions. This includes not only sharing your own thoughts, but also listening and responding to one another. If you disagree with someone, express your difference of opinion respectfully. You should monitor yourself and your level of participation. For example, speaking only once during a 2-hour period is not enough, but speaking 20 times is probably too much. **Put away and silence cell phones** and other communication devices when class is in session.

Attendance is mandatory because we cover a great deal of material in each class period. If you miss class it will be difficult for you to succeed in the course; unexcused absences will have a negative affect on your grade, and you will not be allowed to make up any in-class work you miss as a result of an unexcused absence. If you are too ill to attend class or some emergency arises, you must contact me to explain the situation, preferably before the class period you miss. To contact me, send an e-mail (likach@cornellcollege.edu) or leave a text or voice mail on my cell phone (319-331-4024). It is your responsibility to get notes from another student for any class period you miss.

Assessment: You will receive participation points for each class session based on the following scale:

- Excellent (4 points) = attended class and participated actively and effectively, including listening and responding to other students without dominating the discussion (multiple, substantial comments and responses to others)
- Good (3 points) = attended class and participated moderately (several substantial comments)
- Basic (2 points) = attended class, but participated minimally (1 or 2 brief comments)
- Minimal (1 points) = attended class, but did not participate
- No Credit (0 points) = did not attend class or exhibited disrespectful behavior (e.g., responded rudely to others; did not pay attention to discussion; used cell phone or computer unrelated to class)

Goals: 1) to practice effective oral communication, 2) to develop your analytical and interpretative skills, 3) to help generate ideas for papers, and 4) to prepare for the final examination.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

You will have several different types of writing assignments in this course: response papers, analytical papers, and an essay examination. I will evaluate your papers both on what you write (content) and how you write (style). Descriptions of the writing assignments appear below, and we will discuss them further in class. I will assess your papers according to a grading rubric that you will receive as a separate handout.

The First-Year Writing Consultant (Jennifer Ferrell) will make a number of in-class presentations on topics related to these assignments and to writing in general. You will have individual conferences to discuss your longer papers; in addition, you should feel free to consult Jennifer, me, or other Writing Studio personnel for help at other times. You should use a 12-point font (Times New Roman or similar) with 1-inch margins for all papers (1 typed page = approximately 300 words). In this course, as in most humanities courses, you will format your papers and citations according to the **Modern Language Association (MLA) style**. There is a link here and on the course Moodle site to the [MLA Formatting and Style Guide from the Purdue Online Writing Lab](#), which provides examples of citations and formatting for papers.

RESPONSE PAPERS

You will be required to write 5 short response papers during the block. These will be **due by 9:00 a.m. on the day we will begin discussion of a particular work**. You must **submit your responses on Moodle, AND bring a hard copy printout to class**, since we will use them for discussions and in-class writing workshops.

Basic Requirements for Response Papers:

- Respond specifically to the assignment prompt.
- Write at least 300 words.
- Express your ideas clearly.
- Include your name, date, and the prompt at the top of the page.
- Type and double-space the paper.
- Run a spelling and grammar check.

Goal: 1) to gain practice in short, focused writing that will help you prepare for class discussions, papers, and the essay examination.

Assessment: Response papers will be assessed using the guidelines below:

- Excellent (4 points) = Fulfills all of the Basic Requirements and addresses the prompt specifically and thoroughly; demonstrates a clear understanding of the work; the writing conveys ideas clearly and is free of errors
- Good (3 points) = Fulfills all of the Basic Requirements and address the prompt, but somewhat less thoroughly; the writing is generally clear
- Basic (2 points) = Fulfills most of the Basic Requirements but the response does not answer the prompt completely, and/or does not demonstrate familiarity with the work; the writing does not always convey ideas clearly
- Minimal (1 point) = Fulfills only some of the Basic Requirements, and the response does not address the prompt directly; the writing does not convey ideas clearly
- No Credit (0 points) = Does not fulfill the Basic Requirements, does not address the prompt, and/or is not submitted on time.

ANALYTICAL PAPERS

For these papers you must develop an argument that you can support with evidence from the works you are analyzing. Start with your observations, and think about why they matter—always try to answer the question, “so what?” in your papers. Next, work to develop a thesis and select specific examples to support your argument. **You must submit your papers via Moodle by the due date and time; late papers will be graded down by a full letter grade for every 2-hour period they are late, unless permission is granted due to special circumstances.**

Goals: To gain practice in 1) creating a thesis, 2) developing and sustaining an argument using evidence from the text to support your claims, and 3) refining your writing through the process of revision.

“The Bronze Horseman” Essay (2-3 pages):

You have an assigned topic for this essay: **make a case for whether or not Evgeny is a sympathetic character, and describe how the portrayal of Evgeny contributes to the overall message of the work.** Find evidence from the poem to support your claim. Although you are presenting your own interpretation of the poem, do not use “I” in the essay. Make a convincing case using evidence from the text. The essay should contain all of the elements of an academic paper: title, introduction, thesis, evidence, analysis, and conclusion. You will submit only the final version, but you should write and revise the essay as needed prior to submission. I encourage you to visit the Writing Studio during the revision process.

For the next two longer papers you will submit **early and final versions**. The early version should be as complete as possible. The more you are able to show me in your initial version, the more I will be able to comment on it, and the better your final version is likely to be. Based on my comments and your own ideas for how to improve the paper, you will develop, clarify, correct, and polish your initial version to create a final version. Keep copies of your notes and outlines and bring them to your paper conferences. Although your grade will be based on the final version, failure to submit a substantial initial version will negatively affect your grade. Also, the final version of each paper must demonstrate that you responded to the comments and suggestions made on the early version.

Comparative Analysis Paper (4-5 pages):

For this paper you will compare the depiction of the indigenous people of the Caucasus in Tolstoy’s story “Prisoner of the Caucasus” with those in the film *Prisoner of the Mountains*. Although the story in both works is roughly the same, there are a number of differences in the way the people and the setting of the Caucasus region are portrayed. You should analyze how the similarities and differences between these depictions create two distinct works with different messages.

Literary/Film Analysis Paper (5-6 pages):

In this paper you will develop your own topic by choosing one or more of the films or literary works from the course and writing about something that interests you about it/them. You may examine the content (plot, events, characters, etc.), and/or stylistic aspects of the work (use of dialogue, setting, music, structure, etc.). Your analysis should go beneath the surface to examine how the elements on which you are focusing contribute to a deeper understanding of the work.

ESSAY EXAMINATION

You will have an in-class, written examination consisting of essay questions about the readings and films. You will receive study questions and a grading rubric before the examination to help you prepare for it.

Goals: (1) to gain an overview of the works and writers covered in the course and make comparisons among them, and (2) to practice organizing and conveying your ideas in writing within a limited time frame.

GRADING:

Your overall course grade will consist of the following components:

Response papers: 10%

Class participation: 5%

“Bronze Horseman” essay: 10%

Comparative analysis paper: 27%

Literary/film analysis paper: 33%

Essay examination: 15%

ACCOMMODATIONS:

Cornell College makes reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Students should notify the Coordinator of Academic Support and Advising and their course instructor of any disability related accommodations within the first three days of the term for which the accommodations are required, due to the fast pace of the block format. For more information on the documentation required to establish the need for accommodations and the process of requesting the accommodations, see [Disability Services and Resources](#).

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

Cornell College expects all members of the Cornell community to act with academic integrity. An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others. A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is her or his work unless there is a citation of a specific source. If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the College's requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty. The procedures regarding how the College deals with cases of academic dishonesty appear in the *Catalogue*, under the heading "Academic Honesty."

Academic dishonesty will result at the very least in no credit (0 points) for the particular assignment, and possibly a failing grade in the course. Throughout this course you will receive comments and suggestions on your papers from me, Writing Studio personnel, and perhaps from others, and you may—and should—use word processing tools that correct spelling and grammar. However, **you, and only you, are permitted to write or rewrite your papers.**

RUS 181 DAILY SCHEDULE

NOTE: Always read the notes and background information that accompany the literary works.

DAY	IN-CLASS ACTIVITY	ASSIGNMENTS (for next day)
Monday, October 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Introduction to course •Background material •Film: “Hedgehog in the Fog” •Writing Presentation: Using Evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Read “Why Writing Better Will Make You a Better Person” •Read Laqueur, “After the Fall” •Read Kendall, "Cultural struggle to define Russia's identity" •Write response to “Hedgehog in the Fog”
Tuesday, October 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •<u>Response to “Hedgehog in the Fog” due by 9:00 a.m.</u> •Discuss response papers, readings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Read “Peter the Great & Westernization” •Read background information on Pushkin •Read “The Bronze Horseman” •Write response to “Bronze Horseman”
Wednesday, October 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •<u>Response to “Bronze Horseman” due by 9:00 a.m.</u> •Discuss response papers, readings •Writing Presentation: Creating a Thesis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Read Gogol, “The Overcoat” •Read background information on Gogol after you read the story •Work on “Bronze Horseman” paper
Thursday, October 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Discuss reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Read “Ivan the Terrible & the Time of Troubles, 1533-1618” •Read “Eisenstein” •Finish “Bronze Horseman” paper
Friday, October 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •<u>“Bronze Horseman” paper due by 3:00 p.m.</u> •Film: <i>Ivan the Terrible</i>, Part I •Discuss film 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Read Tolmachev, “Russia’s Annexation of the Caucasus” •Read Barrett, “The Caucasus in Russian Popular Culture” •Read Tolstoy, “Prisoner of the Caucasus” •Write response to Caucasus readings
Monday, October 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •<u>Response to Caucasus readings due by 9:00 a.m.</u> •Discuss film & readings •Film: <i>Prisoner of the Mountains</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Work on Comparative Analysis paper •Read background information on Tolstoy •Read Tolstoy, <i>Hadji Murat</i>, chapters I-VII (pp. 337-373)
Tuesday, October 29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Discuss papers •Discuss reading •Writing Presentation: Structure of Paragraphs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Finish early version of Comparative Analysis paper •Read <i>Hadji Murat</i>, chapters VIII-XV (pp. 373-416)
Wednesday, October 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •<u>Early version of Comparative Analysis paper due by 9:00 a.m.</u> •Discuss reading •PAPER CONFERENCES in afternoon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Read <i>Hadji Murat</i>, chapters XVI-end (pp. 417-464) •Write response to <i>Hadji Murat</i>
Thursday, October 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •<u>Response to <i>Hadji Murat</i> due by 9:00 a.m.</u> •Discuss reading •PAPER CONFERENCES in afternoon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Read “What the original Crimean war was all about” •Read Tolstoy, “Sevastopol in December” •Revise Comparative Analysis paper

DAY	IN-CLASS ACTIVITY	ASSIGNMENTS (for next day)
Friday, November 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Film: <i>12</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Finish revising Comparative Analysis paper •Read Tolstoy, “Sevastopol in May” •Begin to develop topic for literary/film analysis paper
Monday, November 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Discuss film and readings •<u>Final version of Comparative Analysis paper due by 4:00 p.m.</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Read Tolstoy, “Sevastopol in August” •Write response to Sevastopol stories • Continue to develop topic for literary/film analysis paper
Tuesday, November 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •<u>Response to Sevastopol stories due by 9:00 a.m.</u> •Discuss reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Read “The Russian Revolutions” • Finalize topic for literary/film analysis and begin working on paper •Write description of topic and bring to class
Wednesday, November 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •<u>Hand in literary/film analysis paper topic description</u> •Film: <i>Commissar</i> •Discuss readings, film 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Read “Akhmatova background info. & portrait” and “4 poems of Akhmatova” •Work on literary/film analysis paper
Thursday, November 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Discuss readings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Finish early version of literary/film analysis paper
Friday, November 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Film: <i>My Perestroika</i> •Discuss film •<u>Early version of Literary/Film Analysis paper due by 5:00 p.m.</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Read articles on contemporary issues (to be announced) •Prepare for Final Examination
Monday, November 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Final review discussion •PAPER CONFERENCES in afternoon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Work on revising literature/film analysis paper •Prepare for Final Examination
Tuesday, November 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Final Examination, 9:00-11:00 a.m. •PAPER CONFERENCES in afternoon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Finish revising literature/film analysis paper
Wednesday, November 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •<u>Final version of Literary/Film Analysis paper due by 12:00 p.m.</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Relax and enjoy block break!