

Fall 2020

MON/WED
2-3:15pm
ONLINE



RUST 300: GENDER & SEXUALITY IN RUSSIAN CULTURE

Dr. Irina Erman

Office:
JC Long, 421
Office Hours:
Mon-Fri online by
appointment

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NOTE: No previous knowledge of Russian literature and/or feminist and gender criticism is necessary to succeed in this class.

This course surveys roughly two centuries of Russian cultural production – we will be reading novels, memoirs, philosophy, poetry, and watching a number of films – starting in the early 19th century and finishing with internationally regarded contemporary female authors, such as Tatyana Tolstaya and Lyudmila Petrushevskaya. The class includes short works by authors who are considered “classics” of world literature, such as Fyodor Dostoevsky and Lev Tolstoy, as well as by authors who are less well known for a variety of reasons: whether due to lack of access to the literary marketplace for female writers or due to

homophobic repression during Soviet times.

We will analyze the ways in which our texts and films represent gender, sexual identity, and sexual relationships. By taking a historical perspective, we will be able to see how these representations change, and the kinds of additional layers of significance they take on in different historical and political contexts. Turn-of-the-century love triangles, for example, resolve themselves very differently from the love triangle we will encounter in the 1927 *Bed and Sofa*, since this film must already take into account Stalin’s prescriptions for Soviet womanhood.

Required Work:

3 online quizzes

- You may use your notes and the texts on the quizzes. You may not use the internet or any other sources.
- You will have an hour from the time you open the quiz on OAKS to answer the short essay questions and submit your response.

2.5 pg response paper

- Topic: Durova or Gippius
- 12 point Times New Roman font
- double spaced, 1in margins
- Due by 10pm Oct 9 to Dropbox on OAKS

6 pg final research paper:

- topic developed in consultation with me
- same formatting as response paper
- it must include a bibliography with at least 3 academic sources, which can be articles or books
- Due by 10pm on Dec 10th to Dropbox on OAKS

Evaluation:

30% Quizzes
15% Response Paper
20% Class Participation
5% Final Topic Presentation
30% Final Research Paper

Texts to Purchase:

Evgeny Zamyatin, *We*
(Modern Library Classics)
ISBN 9780812974621

Other texts and films will be available through the library and OAKS

Late Work

will not be accepted. I will, however, consider brief extensions for written assignments due to extenuating circumstances, such as illness or other unforeseen events. Note that extension requests must be made via email, before the deadline.



Course Policies:

Participation:

20% of your grade will be based on your participation in the class discussion. You are expected to have read the class material and to contribute to discussion constructively, in a thoughtful and informed way.

Attendance:

You are expected to attend our Zoom sessions regularly and I will keep attendance records as part of the participation grade.

You have six free absences during the semester to use as you see fit. You do not need to email me and I do not require any excuse documentation for single absences.

If you miss more than six classes, it can negatively impact your participation grade. So, please do email me if you have to miss class for an extended period of time due to illness or any other exigent circumstances.



Religious Accommodations:

CofC supports reasonable accommodation for religious observance in regard to class attendance, but students are responsible for satisfying all academic requirements.



Grading Scale:

100-94(A)
93.9-90(A-)
89.9-88(B+)
87.9-84(B)
83.9-80(B-)
79.9-78(C+)
77.9-74 (C)
73.9-70(C-)
69.9-68(D+)
67.9-64(D)
63.9-60.1(D-)
60-0(F)

Honor Code:

I enforce without exception the College's Honor System and Classroom Code of Conduct. By choosing to enroll in this course, you indicate that you understand the Honor Code and are going to abide by it. The academic honor code forbids lying, cheating, and plagiarism. Plagiarism is defined as presenting the work of others as your own and copying sources without citation. Plagiarism or cheating can result in an XXF grade for the course.

Equal Access:

I am happy to work with all students to ensure that they have equal access to the educational experience of this class. The College will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should apply at the Center for Disability Services / SNAP, located on the first floor of the Lightsey Center, Suite 104. If you are approved for accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible. All such discussions will be held in confidence unless you stipulate otherwise.

Please Read This Part:

(well, maybe not the Gen Ed thing, that just had to go somewhere)

EMAIL: “Hi, Dr. Erman” is a better start than “Hey, Dr. Erman” and much better than “Hey.” I’ll answer in any case, but I’ll think you’re more polite if you address me appropriately. I also appreciate getting a quick “Thank you” in response when I help you work on something intensive over email.

ZOOM FACE: The “Zoom Face” struggle is real. We are all facing the challenge of connecting to each other through a screen. It is our collective responsibility to create the classroom that we all enjoy being a part of. Practice active listening (being attentive, nodding, contributing to the group chat to second someone when they make a good point, posting a “thumbs up”) for others in the class.

DOING OTHER THINGS DURING CLASS: Please don’t.

ZOOM CHAT: Please contribute to the group chat freely. It will count for your participation points equally with verbal participation. I do not record meetings because I think Big Brother is creepy, but if you have another Zoom class and it might be recorded - keep in mind that private chats are sent to the meeting host with the meeting transcript. So it’s best to keep those to a minimum.

VIDEO: Since this is a discussion-focused class, I would like for you have your video on. That being said, I do understand privacy concerns and I am not going to insist on anything that makes you uncomfortable. I encourage the use of virtual backgrounds. If you choose to have video on, feel free to pause your video at any point during class to take a bathroom or a water break.

General Education Student Learning Outcomes for Humanities:

1. Students analyze how ideas are represented, interpreted, or valued in various expressions of human culture.
2. Students examine relevant primary source materials as understood by the discipline and interpret the material in writing assignments.

Both of these outcomes will be assessed by the final paper.





COURSE EVALUATIONS:

You will have an opportunity to evaluate this course and the quality of instruction via an online evaluation form. We will take time in the last week of classes to fill out evaluations in class.

If you have any comments or concerns about the class, please do not feel like you have to wait until the final day. You are always welcome to come and talk to me about anything I can do to improve your learning experience and to help you succeed in the class.



Schedule

*Subject to change due to special circumstances

Week 1. Setting the Scene

Wed 8.26
Introduction

Week 2. Men are from Mars, Women are from the Countryside

Mon 8.31
Nikolai Karamzin, "Poor Liza" (1792) on OAKS

Schedule

Week 2. Men are from Mars, Women are from the Countryside

Wed 9.2

Vasily Pichul, *Little Vera* (1988) film available to stream through link on OAKS

Week 3. The 19th Century Hero and the Failed Rendezvous

Mon 9.7

Ivan Turgenev, "Asya" (1857) on OAKS

Wed 9.9

Ivan Turgenev, "Asya" (1857) on OAKS

Nikolay Chernyshevsky, "The Russian Man at the Rendezvous" (1858) on OAKS

Also read the summary of Chernyshevsky's *What is to Be Done?* linked on OAKS

Fri 9.11

Quiz 1 on Chernyshevsky and "Asya" due at 5pm on OAKS

Week 4. What is to be Done?

Mon 9.14

Fyodor Dostoevsky, "The Meek One" (1876) on OAKS

Wed 9.16

Fyodor Dostoevsky, "The Meek One" (1876) on OAKS

Week 5. Whose Fault?

Mon 9.21

Leo Tolstoy, "The Kreutzer Sonata" (1889) on OAKS

Wed 9.23

Sofiya Tolstoy, "Whose Fault?" (written 1891-4, published 1994) on OAKS

Recommended link on OAKS: <http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/sofiya-tolstoys-defense>

Fri 9.25

Quiz 2 on "The Meek One" and "Kreutzer Sonata" due at 5pm on OAKS

Schedule

Week 6. Definitely Not the Meek One

Mon 9.28

Excerpt 1 from Nadezhda Durova, *The Cavalry Maiden* (1836) on OAKS

Wed 9.30

Excerpt 2 from Nadezhda Durova, *The Cavalry Maiden* (1836) on OAKS

Additional reading TBA

Week 7. Sex in the *Fin de Siècle*: Symbolist Woman vs. Woman as Symbol

Mon 10.5

Zinaida Gippius, selected poems on OAKS

Olga Matich, "The Symbolist Meaning of Love" [pp. 24-50] on OAKS

Wed 10.7

Zinaida Gippius, *Madwoman* (1906) on OAKS

Short selection from Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic* on OAKS

Fri 10.9

Response paper for Durova or Gippius due by 10pm via Dropbox on OAKS

Week 8. Sex in the *Fin de Siècle*: Eros and Revolution

Mon 10.12

Mikhail Artsybashev, *Sanin* (1907) [Introduction and pp. 15-85, 92-99]

Recommended: Laura Engelstein, "Eros and Revolution" in *The Keys To Happiness*, [pp. 215-25, 232-40, 248-53] on OAKS

Wed 10.14

Excerpt from *Wings* or "Virginal Victor"

Simon Karlinsky, "Russia's Gay Literature and Culture: The Impact of the October Revolution" [pp. 165-182] on OAKS

Schedule

Week 9. Terrible Perfection

Mon 10.19

Maxim Gorky, "26 Men and One Girl" (1899) on OAKS

Barbara Heldt, *Terrible Perfection: Women and Russian Literature* [pp. 1-24] on OAKS

Tue 10.20

Midterm Grades available online at noon

Wed 10.21

Watch Abram Room and Viktor Shklovsky, *Bed and Sofa* (1927) available to stream through link on OAKS

Eric Naiman, "Historectomies: On the Metaphysics of Reproduction in a Utopian Age" [pp. 255-276] on OAKS

Week 10. Constructing Utopian Spaces: Sex by the Numbers

Mon 10.26

Evgeny Zamiatin, *We* (1929) [PGS 1-88]

Wed 10.28

Evgeny Zamiatin, *We* (1929) [PGS 89-203]

Last day to withdraw with a grade of "W"

Week 11. Writing Homosexual Identity in the Homogenous State

Mon 11.2

Evgeny Zamiatin, *We* (1929) [PGS 89-203]

Tue 11.3

Election Day

Wed 11.4

Evgeny Kharitonov (1941-1981), "The Oven," "The Leaflet" on OAKS

Revisit: Simon Karlinsky, "Russia's Gay Literature and Culture: The Impact of the October Revolution" [pp. 165-182] on OAKS

Fri 11.6

Quiz 3 on *We* due at 5pm on OAKS

Schedule

Week 12. Deconstructing the Mother of all Mythologies

Mon 11.9

Lyudmila Petrushevskaya, "Our Crowd" on OAKS

Helena Goscilo, "Mother as Mothra: Totalizing Narrative and Nurture in Petrushevskaya" [pp. 102-113] on OAKS

Wed 11.11

Film TBA

Week 13. Comparisons

Mon 11.16

Anton Chekhov, "The Darling" (1899) on OAKS

Wed 11.18

Tatiana Tolstaya, "Sonya" (1990's) on OAKS

Course Evaluations

Week 14.

Mon 11.23

Film TBA based on class interests

Wed 11.25

No Class - Thanksgiving Break

Week 15. Final Paper Topic Presentations

Mon 11.30

Student Presentations

Wed 12.2

Student Presentations

Final Papers are due by 10pm on December 10th via Dropbox on OAKS