RUS 181 SYLLABUS

Block 3, 2018-19: 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.

NOTE: Tuesdays & Thursdays 1:00-3:00 p.m. are reserved for regularly scheduled individual meetings.

# Classroom:

Beijing Room, Thomas Commons

# Instructor:

Professor Lynne Ikach, office 316 College Hall, [likach@cornellcollege.edu](mailto:likach@cornellcollege.edu)

319.895.4114 (office), 319.331.4024 (cell)

# Office Hours:

M, T, & Th 3:15-5:00 p.m., F 1:00-3:00 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 are in keeping with [Cornell College’s Educational Priorities and Outcomes](http://cornellcollege.edu/about-cornell/mission/index.shtml). This 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. The course thus emphasizes **communication**, and although you will work mostly on **written communication**, you will also practice **oral communication** through participation in whole class and small group discussions. The interactive, discussion-based classroom structure and expectations for behavior in and out of the classroom emphasize **ethical behavior** and **citizenship**.

During this course you will read 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 these texts and films as art, and to explore how form, style, and content merge to create unique portraits of the human condition. As you carry out these activities you will gain **knowledge** about Russian culture, and build your **intercultural literacy and inquiry** skills.

Whether or not you have a lot of experience studying film and literature, you certainly will have something to contribute to class discussions. I ask that you approach the works with an open mind, and in doing so I encourage you to bring to the discussions your knowledge of other fields.

# 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 class discussions and working groups. Class discussions will be based on the assigned readings and films, and you should be willing and able 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 (see below), 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 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 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 in-class work you miss as a result of unexcused absences**. **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](mailto: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.

# Writing Assignments:

You will have several different types of writing assignments in this course, including short response papers, analytical papers, and a creative writing assignment. You will submit draft and final versions of the two analytical papers. The final version of each paper should demonstrate that you considered and responded to comments on the first version. 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 in class as well.

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 (1 typed page = approximately 300 words) for all papers. 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](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/), which provides examples of citations and formatting for papers. **You must submit your papers via Moodle by the due date and time; I will not accept late papers, except with special permission.**

## Reading and Film Responses:

You will be required to write short responses to a number of the readings. 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 printout to class**, since we will them use for discussions and in-class writing workshops. These responses will serve several functions: to check your comprehension and understanding of class readings, to practice expressing your ideas in writing, and to prepare for class discussions.

### Basic Requirements for Response papers:

* Respond specifically to the assignment prompt.
* Express your ideas clearly.
* Include your name, date, and the prompt at the top of the page.
* Write at least 250 words.
* Submit the response by the due date and time.
* Type and double-space the paper.
* Run a spelling and grammar check.

Response papers will be assessed using the following guidelines:

**Full Credit (4 points)** = Paper fulfills all of the above Basic Requirements and shows a thoughtful and in-depth response to the prompt

**Partial Credit (2 points)** = Paper fulfills all or most of the above Basic Requirements but the response to the prompt is more general and less thorough

**Minimal Credit (1 point)** = Paper fulfills only some of the Basic Requirements, and the response to the prompt is minimal

**No Credit (0 points)** = Paper is not submitted or fails to address the prompt

## Prose Rewrite of “The Bronze Horseman” (3-4 pages**):**

For this assignment you will rewrite Pushkin’s poem in prose form. The purpose of this assignment is to think about the act of storytelling. Choose an audience for your work (e.g., adult, young adult, child). You should make an effort to tell the complete story, but it may not be possible to include every detail in your prose version. As you work on this assignment, consider the following questions:

* Who is your audience?
* How did this affect the choices you made?
* What did the story gain and what did it lose through the process of transformation into prose?
* What was easy, and what was difficult about the process?
* Are you satisfied with the end result? Why or why not?

You are required to write out answers to these questions and submit them as an introductory cover page along with your story. Use the “Cover Page for Prose Rewrite” file on Moodle to create your cover page.

## 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?” Then work to develop a thesis and select specific examples to support your argument. The **first version you submit should be a complete paper, not an outline or unfinished draft**. Based on my comments and your own reflections, you will develop, clarify, correct, and polish your initial version to create a final version, which should show evidence of revision. Keep copies of your notes and outlines and bring them to your paper conferences. **Your grade will be based on a combination of the first and final versions**.

### **Comparative Analysis (4-5 pages):**

For this paper you will compare the two main characters in Tolstoy’s story “Prisoner of the Caucasus” (Zhilin and Kostylin) with those in the film *Prisoner of the Mountains* [Ivan/Vanya (Gilin) and Sasha (Kostylin)]. Although the story is roughly the same, the overall mood and message of the works are different; this is a result of the way the main characters are portrayed, along with other elements. You should analyze how the similarities and differences between these sets of characters create two very distinct works of art with different themes and messages.

### **Film or Literary Analysis (5-6 pages):**

In this paper you will develop your own topic by choosing one of the films or literary works from the course and exploring its connection with the theme of the “other,” broadly conceived. For example, you may choose to focus on the various contrasts that the authors or filmmakers use to point out differences of various kinds. You may examine not only the content (plot, events, characters, etc.), but also stylistic aspects of the work (e.g., use of language, music, structure, design, etc.). Your analysis should go beneath the surface to examine the deeper significance of the elements you are analyzing. In other words, you should not only make observations, but also explain how they contribute to an understanding of the work.

# Final Examination:

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

# 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](https://www.cornellcollege.edu/academic-support-and-advising/disabilities/index.shtml).

# Grading:

Your overall course grade will consist of the following components:

* Response Papers, 15%
* Class Participation, 5%
* Prose rewrite of “Bronze Horseman,” 10%
* Comparative Analysis, 22%
* Literature or Film Analysis, 33%
* Final Examination, 15%

I will use the following guidelines when grading written work:

"A" = The paper presents a thoughtful, memorable, and in-depth analysis of the text or film with convincing evidence to back up all assertions. The paper’s organization is clear and logical, and the writing is smooth, clear, and concise, with a stylistic flare and elegance that sets it apart from a “B” paper. The paper’s format conforms precisely to MLA guidelines.

"B" = The paper contains a solid development of ideas, appropriate examples to prove assertions, good organization, and good writing overall, but lacks the sophistication and stylistic flare of an “A” paper. The paper’s format conforms precisely to MLA guidelines.

"C" = The paper presents ideas and examples, but the ideas are not as fully developed as in a “B” paper. The analysis stays on the surface, and the writing is generally coherent, but contains some writing and formatting errors.

"D" = The paper presents a rudimentary development of ideas and incomplete evidence to prove assertions. The writing contains serious writing and formatting errors.

"F" = The paper lacks focus, the ideas are undeveloped, the organization is unclear, and there are multiple, serious errors in writing and format.

# 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

| DAY | IN-CLASS ACTIVITY | ASSIGNMENTS (for next day) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Monday,September 24 | •Introduction to course  •Background material  •Film: “Hedgehog in the Fog”  •Writing Presentation: Using Evidence | •Read Laqueur, “After the Fall” and find information about 3 things in article (on your assigned page) to present to class  •Read Kendall, "Cultural struggle to define Russia's identity"  •**Write response to “Hedgehog in the Fog”** |
| Tuesday, September 25 | •Discuss response papers, readings | •Read “Peter the Great & Westernization”  •Read “The Bronze Horseman”  •**Write response to “Peter the Great”** |
| Wednesday,  September 26 | •Writing Presentation: Creating a Thesis  •Discuss responses, readings | •Read Gogol, “The Overcoat”  •Work on “Bronze Horseman” prose rewrite |
| Thursday,September 27 | •Discuss reading | •Read “Ivan the Terrible & the Time of Troubles, 1533-1618”  •Read “Eisenstein”  **•Finish “Bronze Horseman” paper** |
| Friday,  September 28 | •**“Bronze Horseman” paper due  by 3:00 p.m.**  •Film: *Ivan the Terrible*, Part I  •Discuss film | •Read: “Chechnya Profile,” “The Caucasus: One or Many,” “They Call It Home,” Tolstoy, “Prisoner of the Caucasus”  •**Write response to Caucasus readings** |
| Monday,  October 1 | •Discuss film & readings  •Film: *Prisoner of the Mountains* | •Work on Comparative Analysis paper  •Read Tolstoy, *Hadji Murat*, chapters I-VII (pp. 337-373) |
| DAY | IN-CLASS ACTIVITY | ASSIGNMENTS (for next day) |
| Tuesday,  October 2 | •Discuss papers  •Discuss reading | •**Finish Comparative Analysis paper**  **•Print out 1 page of your paper to bring to class**  •Read *Hadji Murat*, chapters VIII-XV  (pp. 373-416) |
| Wednesday,  October 3 | •Writing Presentation: Structure of Paragraphs  •Discuss reading  •1st Version of Comparative Analysis paper due by 4:00 p.m. | •Read *Hadji Murat*, chapters XVI-end  (pp. 417-464)  •**Write response to *Hadji Murat*** |
| Thursday,  October 4 | •Discuss reading  •PAPER CONFERENCES in afternoon | •Read background material on the Crimean War |
| Friday,  October 5 | •Film: *12*  •PAPER CONFERENCES in afternoon | **•Revise Comparative Analysis paper**  •Read Tolstoy, “Sevastopol in December” and “Sevastopol in May”  •Develop topic for literature/film analysis |
| Monday,  October 8 | •Discuss readings  •Final Version of Comparative Analysis paper due by 4:00 p.m. | •Read Tolstoy, “Sevastopol in August”  •**Write response to Sevastopol stories readings**  •Work on literature/film analysis |
| Tuesday,  October 9 | •Discuss reading | •Read “The Russian Revolutions”  •Work on literature/film analysis  **•Write description of topic and bring to class** |
| Wednesday,  October 10 | **•Hand in literature/film analysis topic description**  •Film: *Commissar*  •Discuss readings, film | •Read “Akhmatova background info. & portrait” and “4 poems of Akhmatova”  •Work on literature/film analysis |
| Thursday,  October 11 | •Discuss readings | **•Finish 1st version of literature or film analysis** |
| Friday,  October 12 | •Film: *My Perestroika*  •Discuss film  **•1st Version of Lit. or Film Analysis paper due by 5:00 p.m.** | •Read articles on contemporary issues (to be announced) •Prepare for Final Examination |
| Monday,  October 15 | **•**Final review discussion  **•**PAPER CONFERENCES in afternoon | •Work on revising literature/film analysis paper  •Prepare for Final Examination |
| Tuesday,  October 16 | •Final Examination  •PAPER CONFERENCES in afternoon | **•Finish revising literature/film analysis** **paper** |
| Wednesday,  October 17 | •Final Version of literature/film analysis paper due by 12:00 p.m. | •Relax and enjoy the break! |