**RUSS 1250 Vampires and Memory of Stalinism in Post-Soviet Russia**

Over the last 30 years a new distinctive trend has become apparent in fiction and the visual arts, which is often referred to as the “horror genre”. However, the specificity of this genre as well as a coherent explanation of its popularity has not been delivered yet by cultural studies. On the contrary, there are multiple explanations of the current popularity of vampires. Analyses of particularities of the “horror genre” and vampire fiction and movies will help conceptualize this new trend as ‘Gothic aesthetics’.

In the first part of the course we will consider the importance of vampires as the most popular nonhumans. Post-Soviet and the US vampire bestsellers will be compared to analyze what the figure of monster signifies in contemporary culture. In contrast to US productions, post-Soviet fiction and movies populated by all kind of nonhuman monsters reveal the work of the suppressed memory of Stalinism and describe a new social order emerging in post-Soviet Russia. The course will consider post-Soviet fiction and movies as a particular source to study historical memory.

The second part of the course will be focused on the origins of Gothic Aesthetics and will examine post-Soviet fiction to discern patterns of the emerging Gothic Society. Assessment on the basis of participation, presentation and papers.

Course will be taught in English.

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| Week 1 | Horror genre, vampire genre, fantasy – the problem of definition |
| Week 2 | Cultural Studies on the explanations on the contemporary popularity of vampires |
| Week 3 | Vampire/human relations: Post-Soviet vampire novels: Sergei Lukyanenko *Night Watch*; Victor Pelevin *Empire V* |
| Week 4 | Vampire/human relations: American vampire sagas: Stephenie Meyer *Twiligh*t and *The Vampire Diaries* |
| Week 5 | Vampire/human relations: Classical vampire text - Alexey Tolstoy *Vurdalak,* Bram Stoker *Dracula* |
| Week 6 | Gothic novel, Preromanticism, and philosophical debates about the definition of humanity in 18th and 19th century England |
| Week 7 | Thesis of human exceptionalism in contemporary social science and humanities |
| Week 8 | Vampire sagas and the genre of the coming-of-age novel |
| Week 9 | Post-Soviet and American society as depicted in vampire sagas |
| Week 10 | Russian Gothic Society |
| Week 11 | Historical memory of Stalinism in post-Soviet Russia |
| Week 12 | Putin’s memory politics |
| Week 13 | Gothic Aesthetics: the living dead and nightmares |
| Week 14 | Presentations |
| Week 15 | Presentations |

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| **ML PERFORMANCE GOAL #1: PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION** | |
| **ML Learning Outcome 1 : Demonstrate oral and aural proficiency in the target language** | N/A |
| **ML Learning Outcome 2:** Demonstrate effective presentation skills in the target language | N/A |
| **ML Learning Outcome 3: Demonstrate writing proficiency in the target language** | N/A |
| **ML Learning Outcome 4:**  Demonstrate proficiency in comprehension of authentic written texts in the target Language | N/A |
| **ML PERFORMANCE GOAL #2: INTERCULTURAL SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE** | |
| **ML Learning Outcome 5: Demonstrate in-depth knowledge of a *specific* target-language country or region** | Students will cultivate in-depth knowledge of selected terms related to Russian historical memory of the terror, debates on memory issues and terminology of popular culture |
| **ML Learning Outcome 6:**  Demonstrate the ability to analyze an issue from target-culture perspective(s) | Students will critically reflect on the role that horror genre and vampire sagas play in contemporary culture, emphasizing its influence over the concept of humanity |
| **ML Learning Outcome 7:**  Demonstrate critical reflection on cultural complexity and context | Students will develop the ability to make sophisticated comparisons of Russian and American fiction and films, discovering differences in the attitudes to social and political practices rooted in the differences in the attitude to the historical past. |