RUSS 4500 Russian Intercultural Seminar

Russia and the West: Cultural Models and Political Fault Lines

Topic Syllabus

This course is structured around a series of topical case studies (listed below), each of which will be discussed in terms of historical evidence, historiographic debates, generative cultural model, and the ongoing fault lines these form within Russian national identity. Readings will include historical primary sources, historiography, cultural artifacts, and newspaper articles. Assessment will be based on participation, research presentations and papers. The course is conducted in Russian.

Week 1 -- The West as a challenge for Russian identity

Week 2 -- The Norman theory and the formation of the Russian state. Norman debates in Russian, Soviet and post-Soviet times.

Week 3 -- The conversion of Rus and the Byzantine heritage

Week 4 -- Russia's historical martyrdom part 1: saving the West from the Tatar yoke

Week 5 -- Ivan and enemies from the West

Week 6 -- The Petrine reforms

Week 7 -- Westernizers and romantic nationalism

Week 8 -- The Decembrists and Chaadaev

Week 9 -- Slavophile and Westernizer debates

Week 10 -- Were the Bolsheviks Westernizers?

Week 11 -- Stalin and the West

Week 12 -- Russia's historical martyrdom part 2: saving Europe from Hitler

Week 13 -- The dissident movement and a new fascination with the West

Week 14 -- Putin's anti-Westernism

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** | Students will demonstrate oral proficiency at the intermediate or advanced level through class discussion and debate |
| **ML Learning Outcome 2:** Demonstrate effective presentation skills in the target language | Students will demonstrate the ability to make coherent formal research presentations of 10 minutes without written text and to engage audience into discussion |
| **ML Learning Outcome 3: Demonstrate writing proficiency in the target language** | Students will demonstrate writing proficiency in Russian at the advanced level, engaging a broad range of authentic target-culture texts in various media |
| **ML Learning Outcome 4:**  Demonstrate proficiency in comprehension of authentic written texts in the target Language | Students will improve reading comprehension, focusing on reading authentic texts such as historical primary sources, historiography, literary texts, and newspaper articles |
| **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 select focus areas of Russian history and culture |
| **ML Learning Outcome 6:**  Demonstrate the ability to analyze an issue from target-culture perspective(s) | Students will critically reflect on the complexity of current Russian intellectual and political debates on Russian history. |
| **ML Learning Outcome 7:**  Demonstrate critical reflection on cultural complexity and context | Students will develop the ability to make sophisticated comparisons of perspectives and practices both within Russian/Soviet culture and between Russian and American cultures |