

ELR250.xxxx 20th Century Russian Literature in Translation (Russian Lit in Trans)

INSTRUCTORS_NAME <instructors_email@lagcc.cuny.edu>
<http://faculty.lagcc.cuny.edu/instructor>

SEMESTER

Saved on: 3:52 AM Friday, January 21, 2022

Instructor's Information

Instructor: INSTRUCTORS_NAME
Homepage: <http://faculty.lagcc.cuny.edu/instructor>
Email: instructors_email@lagcc.cuny.edu
Tel: 718-482-5460
Office: B-234
Office Hours: xxx
Preferred communication: E-mail is preferred, with which you should expect my response within 24 hours.
Class Schedule: xxx (Room: xxxx) & xxx (Room: xxxx)

Course goals and objectives

Catalog Course Description: This course is an introduction to Russian literature of the twentieth century in English translation. Selected texts covering the major genres and movements will be read, discussed, and explored. Texts are analyzed in terms of their ethical implications in the context of local and national ideologies of Russia in the 20th century. Works will be interpreted as reflecting norms and values of social and individual facts of the time. Knowledge of Russian is not required.

Section Description: In this course we will cover the major styles and movements of twentieth-century Russian literature, including poetry, fiction, journalism and theater as seen in movements such as futurism, conceptualism, OBERIU, samizdat, and socialist realism. Tracing the dynamic history of Russia/the Soviet Union in the twentieth century, we will examine literary works as they existed alongside and as a part of this history. Students are encouraged to incorporate ideas and theories from a variety of disciplines, including psychology, history, politics, sociology, journalism, and philosophy.

Pre/Corequisites: ENA/ENC/ENG101

Flexible Core Objectives: World Cultures and Global Issues

The course bears 3 credits that count as Flexible Core (World Cultures and Global Issues) of the CUNY's new general education curriculum (Pathways).

In this course you will:

- Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.
- Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.
- Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring the relationship between the individual and society, including, but not limited to, anthropology, communications, cultural studies, history, journalism, philosophy, political science, psychology, public affairs, religion, and sociology.
- Examine how an individual's place in society affects experiences, values, or choices.
- Articulate and assess ethical views and their underlying premises.
- Articulate ethical uses of data and other information resources to respond to problems and questions.
- Identify and engage with local, national, or global trends or ideologies, and analyze their impact on individual or collective decision-making.
- Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.

More specifically, by the end of the semester, you will be able to:

- identify the major works of Russian literature of the twentieth century and how the works reflects the characteristics of the author, time, place, and culture surrounding them
- illustrate the peculiarities and universality of the major genres and movements of twentieth-century Russian literature
- identify themes and historical contexts of important works of twentieth-century Russian literature
- analyze and discuss Russian literature to develop critical thinking skills when reading literary works
- write analytically and lucidly about literary works in formal assignments with bibliographies
- research and dynamically present what they have discovered through in-class presentations

Textbook, grading, and other class logistics

Textbooks: The following textbooks are required for this class.

- Brown, Clarence, ed. *The Portable Twentieth-Century Russian Reader*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1985.
- Notebook, folder, pens and pencils to create and keep student work
- USB/Flash drive for storing electronic copies

Note. To help students save money in their textbook purchases, CUNY has created a web page called “How to Save Money on Textbooks.” This resource provides links to websites that sell discounted new and used books, eBooks, open source materials, and rental options. The web page can be found at:
<http://www.cuny.edu/about/resources/student/textbook-savings.html>.

Grades: Your final grade will be determined based on the following evaluation points.

Short papers (2, 20% each)	40%
Final paper	30%
Participation	15%
In-class presentation	15%

- **Grade distributions:** **A:** 95-100%, **A-:** 90-94%, **B+:** 86-89%, **B:** 83-85%, **B-:** 80-82%, **C+:** 76-79%, **C:** 73-75%, **C-:** 70-72%, **D+:** 66-69%, **D:** 63-65%, **D-:** 60-62%, **F:** -59%, **WU:** Unofficial withdraw (\approx F), **W:** Withdraw

Weekly schedule (subject to change)

Week One

Introductions and Syllabus

Background of Russian Literature leading into the twentieth century

Chekhov – “Misery,” “Anna on the Neck”

Week Two

Silver Age poetry: selections from Akhmatova, Mandelstam, Mayakovsky, Tsvetaeva

Bely – selection from “Petersburg”

Week Three

Oberiu: Kharms – “The Connection,”

Vvedensky – “An Invitation for me to Think,” “The Gray Notebook”

Bulgakov – selection from “The Master and Margarita”

Short Paper One proposal due

In-class presentations (2-3 students)

Week Four

Early Soviet Union: Bunin – “Light Breathing,” Babel – “My First Goose,”

Olesha – “Envy”

Short Paper One draft due

In-class presentations (2-3 students)

Week Five

The Purge: Trifonov – “House on the Embankment,”

selection from Chukovskaya – “Sofia Petrovna”

Short Paper One due [20%]
In-class presentations (2-3 students)

Week Six

Socialist Realism: Gorky – “Recollections of Leo Tolstoy,” selection from “Mother”
In-class presentations (2-3 students)

Week Seven

War: Grossman – “The Old Man,” “The Hell of Treblinka”
Short Paper Two proposal due
In-class presentations (2-3 students)

Week Eight

The Thaw/Soviet Reality: Trifonov – “Another Life,”
Baranskaya – “A Week Like Any Other”
Short Paper Two draft due
In-class presentations (2-3 students)

Week Nine

Samizdat and Gulag: Shalamov – “Prosthetic Appliances,” and
Solzhenitsyn – “Matryona’s Home”
Short Paper Two due [20%]
In-class presentations (2-3 students)

Week Ten

Writers in exile: Nabokov – “A Matter of Chance,” “The Visit to the Museum” and
poems by Brodsky
Final Paper Proposal Due
In-class presentations (2-3 students)

Week Eleven

Glasnost: Iskander – “Belshazzar’s Feasts,” and Bitov – “Life in Windy Weather”
In-class presentations (2-3 students)

Week Twelve

Into the 21st century: Tolstaya – “Night,” Petrushevskaya – “Our Crowd”
Final Paper rough draft due

Week Thirteen

Final Paper due [30%]

Assignments

All papers will go through a writing process which includes a proposal, a first draft, and a final draft. Students will write analytical papers exploring course texts and are encouraged to draw from their own cultural perspectives as well as methodologies and theories drawn from anthropology, journalism, history, philosophy, religion, and sociology.

Paper 1 (2-3 pages)

Discuss the effects of the Revolution on at least two works/writers from the first third of the course. What response did writers in the early Soviet period have to the political and historical events of the time? For this paper, students may choose to write about Akhmatova, Mandelstam, Mayakovsky, Tsvetaeva, Bely, Kharms, Vvedensky, Bulgakov, Bunin, Babel, Olesha, or a combination of two or more of these authors.

Proposal due: Week 3

First draft due: Week 4

Final paper due: Week 5

Paper 2 (2-3 pages)

Discuss Soviet reality as it appears in at least two works we've read. How did the writers of the mid-twentieth century Soviet Union respond to the restrictions of Soviet life, the shifts in political landscape, or the fallout from going against the rules of Soviet life? This can be in terms of cultural development, daily life, prison life, censorship, or another area to be discussed with the professor. For this paper, students may choose to write about Trifonov, Baransky, Chukovskaya, Gorky, Grossman, or a combination of two or more of these authors.

Proposal due: Week 7

First draft due: Week 8

Final paper due: Week 9

Final Paper (4-6 pages)

Write a 4-6 page paper developing themes from the course. For this paper, students may choose to write about any of the authors read and discussed in class, drawing from course texts.

Topic: Discuss 2-3 works from the course or anthology in terms of one of the following:

- a. the psychological development of the main character(s)
Suggested authors: Olesha, Trifonov, Bely, Bitov
- b. the role of women in Soviet/Russian society
Suggested authors: Trifonov (Another Life), Baranskaya, Akhmatova, Tolstaya, Tsvetaeva
- c. the role of criminality or exile in Soviet society
Suggested authors: Brodsky, Nabokov, Shalamov, Solzhenitsyn, Grossman
- d. the East/West divide in Soviet/Russian thought
Suggested authors: Bely, Iskander, Petrushevskaya, Akhmatova

Proposal due: Week 10

First draft due: Week 11

Final paper due: Week 12

Oral Presentation (7-10 minutes)

Prepare a 7-10 minute presentation based on a story in the anthology not discussed in class. Your presentation should include some visual element: a handout or digital imagery using the computer/projector. Students may choose to present on the following authors: Tolstoy, Teffi, Zamyatin, Khlebnikov, Platonov, Pasternak, Zoshchenko, Sinyavsky, Kazakov, Vladimov, Voinovich, or Sokolov. The presentation should identify:

- a. the author
- b. the year of publication
- c. the style and movement of the work
- d. brief (two minute maximum) summary of the plot
- e. main characters
- f. why you chose this work and what you learned from it
- g. how this story fits in to the themes and movements of other works before and after it
- h. how this story relates to the cultural history of the Soviet Union/Russia

You will be evaluated on:

- | | |
|--|-----|
| a. poise, presence, eye contact, delivery | 30% |
| b. graphics, accuracy of information | 30% |
| c. incisiveness of your analysis and conclusions | 40% |

In-class Discussions

We will discuss each of the works of the syllabus in class, using the following questions as a starting point. Please come prepared to answer these questions for each of the works read.

Characterization

- Who are the main characters?
- How does the author develop the characters?
- How do the major and minor characters function in the work?
- Why has the author presented the characters in this way?

Action-Structure-Plot

- What are the chief dramatic incidents?
- Where and when does the action take place?
- What are the conflicts? What are the resolutions of the conflicts (if any)?
- Why do you think the author chose to present the events this way?

Point of View

- What is the author's/narrator's point of view?
- What is the effect on the reader?

Language

- Are there metaphors, similes? Why might the author have used these devices?
- Are other literary devices used? Is there any use of irony?

Individual and Society

- Do the characters face any challenges because of who they are (wealthy, poor, female, homosexual, Jewish, Polish, etc.)
- Are there any conflicts that arise because of a character's political beliefs? What are these?
- How does this work reflect the cultural situation of the Soviet Union/Russia at the time?
- Do you think this work has universal appeal? Can its lessons and ideas be translated outside the world of the Soviet Union or Russia?

Policies

Classroom policies: The following policies have been instituted to ensure an optimal learning experience for all students:

- Please arrive on time.
- Please prepare for each class meeting by completing all writing/reading assignments beforehand.
- Please turn your cell phone to silence during class.
- Please turn off your cell phone during the exam and the quiz.

Valuing LaGuardia's Diversity: As a college community we represent a world of perspectives on race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, religion, and nationality, to name a few. I concur with **the College's Declaration of Pluralism**, if you have any suggestions in helping me to create a welcoming classroom environment, please tell me.

Rules for Personal Conduct: You are expected to obey the rules and regulations of the College about conduct. Disorderly or indecent behavior is not appropriate in a college setting. It is a violation of college rules and is not acceptable.

The student attendance policy: As stated in the college catalog: "Attendance in class is a requirement and will be considered in the evaluation of student performance. Instructors are required to keep an official record of student attendance. The maximum number of unexcused absences is limited to 15\% of the number of class hours. Note: Absences are counted from the first day of class even if they are a result of late registration or change of program" (117).

The academic dishonesty policy: As stated in the catalog: "Academic Dishonesty is prohibited in the City University of New York and is punishable by penalties ranging from a grade of 'F' on a given test, research paper or assignment, to an 'F' in the course or suspension or expulsion from the College. Academic Dishonesty includes:

- Cheating
- Plagiarism
- Internet Plagiarism
- Obtaining Unfair Advantages
- Falsification of Records and Official Documents
- Misconduct in Internships (117)

Policy on assigning the grade of Incomplete: As stated in the college catalogue: "The Incomplete grade may be awarded to students who have not completed all of the required course work but for whom there is a reasonable expectation of satisfactory completion. A student who is otherwise in good standing in a course defined as complying with the college

attendance policy and maintaining a passing average but who has not completed at most two major assignments or examinations by the end of the course may request an incomplete grade. To be eligible, such a student must provide, before the instructor submits grades for the course, a documented reason, satisfactory to the instructor, for not having completed the assignment on time. Instructors giving IN grades must inform students in writing of the conditions under which they may receive passing grades. Departments may designate certain courses in which no incomplete grades may be awarded." (120).

Declaration of pluralism: The Education and Language Acquisition Department embraces diversity. We must respect each other regardless of race, culture, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation, disability and social class. For detailed information regarding the policy, please refer to Student Handbook 2011-2012 (p.89).