

**RUSSN-GA 2121  
Defining Russia**

**T 6:20 PM  
19 University Place Room 224**

**Office Hours:  
{in person in Room 503  
and on Skype chat)  
Tuesday 12-1  
Wednesday 12-1**

**Or by appointment  
19 University Place, Room 503**

**Prof. Eliot Borenstein  
Russian & Slavic Studies  
19 University Place, Room 210  
998-8676 (w)  
[eb7@nyu.edu](mailto:eb7@nyu.edu)**

**East Asian Studies  
19 University Place, Room 503**

**Skype: eliotb2002**

This course is an introduction to Russian and Slavic Studies on the graduate level, with sessions led by most of NYU's Russian & Slavic Faculty.

**NYU Classes and the Internet.** NYU Classes, which is accessible through the "Academics" tab of NYU Home, is an important part of course, facilitating announcements and the distribution of course materials.

Please keep in mind that, by default, NYU Classes uses your NYU email account. Many of you may have other email accounts that you use. If so, it is a quite simple matter to arrange for your email from one account to be forwarded automatically to the other. I strongly urge you to do so. It is **your responsibility** to make sure that you are receiving official email sent to your NYU account.

To access the system:

1. Go to: <http://home.nyu.edu>
2. Log in.
3. Click on the tab labeled "Academics."
4. Log in to NYU Classes. There you'll find a link to the course "Narrative, Media, and Technology"
5. Click on this link.
6. Once you're in the site for the course, click on the tab labeled "Resources."
7. The texts you need will be there.

**Course Requirements:** It is essential that you keep up with the reading and viewing assignments and come to class prepared either to make observations or ask questions. Attendance is, of course, mandatory.

**Assignments:**

**1) Class participation.** Most class periods will be a mix of lecture and discussion; only occasionally will I spend the entire class giving a lecture. Attendance and active participation are mandatory.

**2) Discussion Questions.** Every week, you must come up with at least three questions to ask about the text. These questions should not be evaluative (“Did you like the story?”), and they should not be about summarizing or providing faculty information. Rather they should be about the repercussions, problems, or ideas that the text raises. These questions must be sent to me by 6 PM Sunday night.

**3) Papers.** The papers are research projects, whose topic you will select in consultation with me. You have two options: one 20-25 page paper, due on the last day of class, or two 10-12 page papers, the first due on November 3, the second on the last day of class.

**4) Presentations.** On the last day of class, you will give a ten-minute presentation on your research.

**Electronic submission of written assignments.** Please do not submit hard copies of your short and long papers; I prefer to receive students' papers electronically. Please send me your assignments by email, as attachments. The preferred format is any version of Word (97 or above, any platform)--such documents usually take the ".doc" or ".docx" extension. Failing that, .rtf files (which can be generated by most word processing programs) are also fine. I can open most other formats as well, including Word Perfect (.wpd), but this requires some extra effort on my part. Please feel free to consult with me about file format questions.

When you submit a paper electronically, please give it a descriptive filename. I have dozens of students, and if all of you send me files called "Defining Russia Assignment" this will be confusing and frustrating.

The preferred (but not required) format for file names is <Student last name> <Type of assignment> <Assignment number> <Topic >. Examples: if Bonnie Tyler has written a paper on Austin the file should be something like "Tyler Paper 2 (Austin).doc". If Eric Roberts has written a paper on Freud then the file should be something like "Roberts Paper 1 (Freud).doc".

Finally, please note that I have multiple email accounts. Please do not send email to all accounts at once ("cc"); if you do, I will end up with three copies of your message. Any of my accounts will do.

**Final Grade.** Your final grade will be determined as follows:

Class Participation/Presentation	20%
Paper(s):	75%
Questions:	5%

### Useful Reference Material:

For writing papers and citation formats (you may choose any citation format so long as you use it consistently):

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

\*\* This site reproduces much of the information located in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*.

Turabian, Kate. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

*MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed.

Strunk, William & White, E.B. *The Elements of Style*. Needham Heights: Allyn and Bacon, 2000)

Williams, Joseph. *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed.

**Editions:** Many of these books come in different editions and different translations, and I understand that you might prefer to buy used copies of these editions to save money. Therefore I am including my recommendations/warnings about the various editions of each of these books.

### **Required Texts, Part One (NYU Book Store)**

Lenin, Vladimir. *State and Revolution*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2015.

Strayer, Robert. *Why Did the Soviet Union Collapse? Understanding Historical Change*. New York: Routledge, 1998.

Wolff, Larry. *Inventing Eastern Europe*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999.

Zamyatin, Yevgeny. *We*. Translated by Clarence Brown. New York: Penguin, 1993.

### **Required Texts, Part Two (DIY)**

Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *Crime and Punishment*. Translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. New York: Vintage, 2008.

### **Required Texts, Part Two (On NYU Classes)**

The rest of the readings for this class will be available on NYU Classes.

Aitmatov, Chingiz. *Jamila*.

Appelbaum, *Gulag: A History*. New York: Anchor Books, 2004. (excerpts)

Bernstein, Frances. "Envisioning Health: The Politics of Gender in Sexual

- Enlightenment Posters." *The Dictatorship of Sex: Lifestyle Advice for the Soviet Masses*. DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 2007. 100-128.
- Borenstein, Eliot. "About That: Sex and Its Metaphors." *Overkill :Sex and Violence in Contemporary Russian Popular Culture*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008. 24-50.
- Borenstein, Eliot. "Introduction: Brothers and Comrades." *Men Without Women: Masculinity and Revolution in Russian Fiction, 1917-1929*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000. 1-43.
- Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West*. Boston: MIT, 2002. Preface and Part One
- Cohen, "Was the Soviet System Reformable?" *Slavic Review* 63.3 (2004): 459-488.
- Figes, Orlando. *Revolutionary Russia 1891-1991: A History*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2014. (excerpts)
- Figes, Orlando and Boris Kolonitskii. *Interpreting the Russian Revolution: The Language and Symbols of 1917*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*. New York: Vintage, 1990. 1-73.
- Gogol, *Taras Bulba* (1836 version)
- Gogol, *Taras Bulba* (1842 version)
- Gorer, Geoffrey. "Development of the Swaddling Hypotheses." Margaret Mead and Geoffrey Gorer (eds). *Russian Culture* (Oxford: Berg, 2001): 135-153.
- Gorer, Geoffrey "The Psychology of Great Russians" Margaret Mead and Geoffrey Gorer (eds). *Russian Culture* (Oxford: Berg, 2001): 71-134.
- Gorky, *The Belomor Canal* (excerpts)
- Holquist, Peter. *Making War, Forging Revolution: Russia's Continuum of Crisis, 1914-1921*. Boston: Harvard University Press, 2003. (excerpts)
- Iskander, Fazil. *Sandro of Chegem*. New York: Vintage, 1983. (excerpts)
- Kolonitskii, Boris. "Russian Historiography of the 1917 Revolution: New Challenges to Old Paradigms?" *History and Memory* 21.2 (2009): 34-59.
- Naiman, Eric. "Introduction." *Sex in Public: The Incarnation of Early Soviet Ideology*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997. 1-26.
- Naiman, Eric. "Chapter Seven. The Case of Chubarov Alley: Collective Rape and Utopian Desire." *Sex in Public: The Incarnation of Early Soviet Ideology*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997. 250-288.
- Slezkine, Yuri. "The USSR as Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism." *Slavic Review* 53.2 (1994): 414-452.
- Suny, Ronald G. "Revision and Retreat in the Historiography of 1917: Social History and Its Critics." *Russian Review* 53.2 (1994): 165-182.
- Ugresic, Dubravka. "Nice People Don't Mention Such Things." *The Culture of Lies: Antipolitical Essays*. Translated by Celia Hawksworth. State College, PA: Penn State University Press, 1998. 236-252.
- Verdery, "Theorizing Socialism," *American Ethnologist* 18, no. 3 (1991): 419-439 (esp. 419-428).
- Verdery, "The Étatisation of Time in Ceausescu's Romania," *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 39-57.

### Required Texts, Part Three: On-Line Sources

Boym, Svetlana. "Dubravka Ugresic."

<http://bombmagazine.org/article/2498/dubravka-ugre-i>

Boym, Svetlana. "A Soviet Drop-Out's Journey to Freedom."

<http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-arts-and-culture/books/176945/camp-tale>

Pipes, Richard. "Reflections on the Russian Revolution."

<http://www.alexanderpalace.org/palace/pipesrevolution.html>

Finally, please note that you must **bring the texts with you to class.**

### Video

Lemberg, Alexander (dir.) *Belomor-Baltiiskii kanal*

Cherkasov, A. *Solovki* (1928)

*Taras Bulba* (2009)

*Taras Bulba* (excerpts)

## CLASS SCHEDULE

### September 8 (T) Introduction

### September 15 (T) Russia and the East (Rossen Djagalov)

- ▼ For Today
- ✦ Read Aitmatov, Chingiz. *Jamila*.
- ✦ Read Iskander, Fazil. *Sandro of Chegem* (excerpts)
- ✦ Read Slezkine, Yuri. "The USSR as Communal Apartment."

### September 22 (T) Research Methods (Diana Greene and Alla Roylance)

### September 29 (T) Crime and Punishment (Ilya Kilger)

- ▼ For Today:
- ✦ Read Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *Crime and Punishment*.

### October 6 (T) Sex, Gender, and Revolution (Eliot Borenstein)

- ❖ In Class:
- ▼ For Today:
- ✦ Read Foucault, The History of Sexuality (excerpts)
- ✦ Read Naiman, "Introduction"
- ✦ Read Naiman, "Chapter Seven"
- ✦ Read Borenstein, "Introduction"
- ✦ Read Bernstein, "Envisioning Health"
- ✦ Read Borenstein, "About That"

### October 13 (T) Legislative Day (Monday Schedule) NO CLASS

### October 20 (T) Eastern Europe and Western Europe (Larry Wolff)

- ▼ For Today:
- ✦ Read Wolff *Inventing Eastern Europe* (Introduction, Chapters 1-3)
- ✦ Read Ugresic, "Nice People Don't Mention Such Things."
- ✦ Read Boym, "Dubravka Ugresic."
- ✦ Read Boym, "A Soviet Drop-Out's Journey to Freedom."

### October 27 (T) The Revolutions of 1917 (Anne O'Donnell)

- ▼ For Today:
- ✦ Read Pipes, "Reflections on the Russian Revolution."
- ✦ Read Suny, "Revision and Retreat in the Historiography of 1917."
- ✦ Read Figes & Kolonitskii. *Interpreting the Russian Revolution*. Chapters 1-2
- ✦ Read Holquist, *Making War, Forging Revolution*. Introduction, Chapters 1, 7, 8, Conclusion.
- ✦ Read Kolonitskii, "Russian Historiography of the 1917 Revolution."
- ✦ Read Figes, *Revolutionary Russia* (excerpts)

### November 3 (T) The Soviet World, Anthropologically (Bruce Grant)

- ▼ For Today:
- ✦ Read Gorer, "The Psychology of Great Russians."
- ✦ Read Gorer, "Development of the Swaddling Hypothesis."
- ✦ Read Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and the Catastrophe* Preface and Part One
- ✦ Read Verdery, "Theorizing Socialism"
- ✦ Read Vedery, "The Etatization of Time"

### November 10 (T) Why Did the Soviet Union End? (Stephen Cohen)

- ▼ For Today:
- ✦ Read Strayer, *Why Did the Soviet Union Collapse?*
- ✦ Read Cohen, "Was the Soviet System Reformable?"

### November 17 (T) Soviet Utopian and Dystopian Thought (Yanni Kotsonis)

- ▼ For Today:
- ✦ Read Lenin, *State and Revolution*
- ✦ Read Zamyatin, *We*

**November 24 (T) Representing the Camps  
(Cristina Vatulescu)**

- ▼ For Today:
- ✦ Read Gorky, *The Belomor Canal* (excerpts)
  - ✦ Read Applebaum, *Gulag* (excerpts)
  - ✦ Watch *Belomor-Baltiiskii kanal*
  - ✦ Watch *Solovki*

**December 1 (T) Symbolic Geographies  
(Anne Lounsbery)**

- ▼ For Today:
- ✦ Read Gogol, *Taras Bulba* (1836 version)
  - ✦ Read Gogol, *Taras Bulba* (1842 version)
  - ✦ Watch *Taras Bulba* (2009)
  - ✦ Watch *Taras Bulba* (excerpts)

**December 8 (T) Wrap Up**

- ▼ For Today:
- ❖ **In Class:**  
Presentations