

LLSL 2351 A
Major Russian Novels
Spring 2012

MW 12-1:40
Johnson/Kaplan
66 West 12th, Room 619

Prof. Eliot Borenstein
Russian & Slavic Studies
19 University Place, Room 203

Office Hours:
T 1:30-2:30
W 2:00-3:00
Or by appointment

998-8676 (w)
eb7@nyu.edu

Course Description. This seminar is an exploration of some of the most important and fascinating literary works produced in Russia. While Russian literature is rich and varied, its welcome reception in the West has been based largely on a reputation for psychological depth, political/ideological engagement, and, most of all, a facility for engaging in the "big questions" in a fully-realized fictional context. While all of these aspects will be treated in this class, we will also pay attention to those aspects of the Russian literary tradition that do not fit this model: works that deal with the prosaic aspects of everyday life as well as those that engage in fantasy, magic, and the supernatural. While we concentrated largely on the nineteenth century, by the end of the semester will have moved into the early Soviet period.

Blackboard and the Internet. Blackboard is an important part of the course, facilitating announcements and the distribution of course materials.

Please keep in mind that, by default, Blackboard uses your New School 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 New School account.

Course Requirements: Students should come to class having read the assigned materials and ready to discuss them. Class participation is a required and graded part of the class.

No knowledge of any foreign language is expected, as all works will be read and discussed in English. It is essential that you keep up with the reading assignments and come to class prepared either to make observations or ask questions. Attendance is, of course, mandatory.

Writing Assignments: There will be three short papers, a midterm paper (5-7 pages), and a final paper (8-10).

The *short analysis papers* may be no longer than *three* pages, and they can be about any of the works we are reading. These papers are a tool to help you think about an aspect of

the text that interests you, and any ideas you generate in the course of these assignments would be welcome contributions to class discussion. You must turn in the short paper by the beginning of the last class during which the text is being discussed. That is, if you want to write a short paper about *The Tales of Belkin* you must turn this paper in no later than **January 30**. If we are only spending one class period on the work, then you must turn in the short paper at the beginning of that class. **Late short papers will be lowered by one letter grade. Short papers turned in on a day you are absent will also be lowered one letter grade.**

Your papers must **NOT** be direct expressions of your emotions, semi-autobiographical essays about your past, works of fiction or poetry. Avoid referring to yourselves in your papers if at all possible.

Do not compare the texts to some vaguely-defined "real world" or "society today." A paper on "Prisoner of the Caucasus" that digresses into a discussion of current wars in the Middle East or Afghanistan, for example, cannot help but be superficial. The papers are to be thesis-driven, which means they are structured as argument, not opinion. These are analytical assignments.

Writing Deadlines. You may not wait until December to turn in three short papers. The semester has been divided into two parts, and you must write one short paper by each of these two deadlines. That is, your first short paper must be turned in no later than **February 8**, your second is due no later than **April 9**, and the third must be submitted by **May 7**. Though you are not allowed to wait to do all the short papers until the end of the course, if you feel you would rather do your short papers earlier (turning two short papers during the first segment of the course), you are free to do so.

The topics of your *midterm paper* and *final paper* are yours to choose, but you must come talk to me about them in advance. It is hoped that the short papers will lead you toward topics for your longer papers. Both your mid-semester and your final papers can be based on two-page papers, as long as you are not tapping the same paper for both longer works.

The midterm paper is due on **October 25** and the final must be turned by **December 22**.

I welcome full or partial drafts of any of these writing assignment. Drafts of the papers must be shown to me no later than one week before the due date..

Electronic submission of written assignments. You are welcome to submit hard copies of your short and long papers. However, I prefer to receive students' papers electronically. Blackboard has a "digital drop box" feature, but I have not found it to be particularly reliable. Therefore, 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" 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 "Words Assignment" or "Gogol Paper," this will be confusing and frustrating. After the first time you make this mistake, I will not accept another paper with an unidentifiable file name.

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 second short paper on Dostoevsky the file should be something like "Tyler Short Paper 2 (Dostoevsky).doc". If Eric Roberts has written a midterm paper on Mikhail Bulgakov then the file should be something like "Roberts Midterm (Bulgakov).doc". A final paper on Mikhail Lermontov by Scott Baio would be "Baio Final (Lermontov).doc".

Finally, please note that I have multiple email accounts (NYU, the New School, and MobileMe). 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 the three accounts will do.

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

Class participation:	20%
Two-page papers:	30%
Midterm paper:	20%
Final paper:	30%

Class participation. Most class periods will be a mix of lecture and discussion; only occasionally will I spend the entire class giving a lecture. Everyone is encouraged to participate in discussion, which will be facilitated by questions that I will be distributing in advance over electronic mail, and by the short papers.

Active and constructive class participation can significantly improve your final grade. Frequent absences will have a negative effect on your final grade (see below).

Plagiarism Policy Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else's work as one's own in all forms of academic endeavor (such as essays, theses, examinations, research data, creative projects, etc), intentional or unintentional. Plagiarized material may be derived from a variety of sources, such as books, journals, internet postings, student or faculty papers, etc. This includes the purchase or "outsourcing" of written assignments for a course. A detailed definition of plagiarism in research and writing can be found in the fourth edition of the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, pages 26-29. Eugene Lang College's full Policy on Academic Honesty details the procedures for allegations of plagiarism and for penalties and can be found in the Lang catalog at <http://www.newschool.edu/lang/subpage.aspx?id=374>

Disabilities. In keeping with the University's policy of providing equal access for students with disabilities, any student requesting accommodations must first meet with

Student Disability Services. Jason Luchs or a designee from that office will meet with students requesting accommodations and related services, and if appropriate, provide an Academic Adjustment Notice for the student to provide to his or her instructors. The instructor is required to review the letter with the student and discuss the accommodations, provided the student brings the letter to the attention of the instructor. This letter is necessary in order for classroom accommodations to be provided. Student Disability Services is located at 79 Fifth Avenue - 5th Floor. The phone number is (212) 229-5626. Students and faculty are expected to review the Student Disability Services webpage. The webpage can be found at <http://www.newschool.edu/studentaffairs/disability/> and the office is available to answer any questions or concerns.

Policy on Attendance and Lateness Absences may justify some grade reduction and a total of four absences mandate a reduction of one letter grade for the course.

- More than four absences mandate a failing grade for the course, unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as the following:
 - an extended illness requiring hospitalization or visit to a physician (with documentation)
 - a family emergency, e.g. serious illness (with written explanation)
 - observance of a religious holiday

The attendance and lateness policies are enforced as of the first day of classes for all registered students. If registered during the first week of the add/drop period, the student is responsible for any missed assignments and coursework.

For significant lateness, the instructor may consider the tardiness as an absence for the day. Students failing a course due to attendance should consult with an academic advisor to discuss options.

Incompletes: A grade of incomplete may be assigned by the instructor for students unable to complete the final assignment on time. A student who has received a grade of incomplete has a maximum of 4 weeks after the last day of classes to complete and submit to the instructor the final assignment. An incomplete becomes an “Unofficial Withdrawal and Failure” (WF) if the work is not submitted in the allotted time.

Required Texts, Part One
(At the Barnes & Noble Bookstore)

- Babel, Isaac. *Red Cavalry and Other Stories*. Translated by David McDuff. New York: Penguin Classics, 2006.
Either of the other translations is fine.
- Bulgakov, Mikhail. *The Master and Margarita*. Translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. New York: Penguin Classics, 2001.
There are three other translations. The Burgin and O'Connor translation is also very good, but avoid the Ginsberg and the Glenny.
- Chekhov, Anton. *The Complete Short Novels*. Translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. New York: Vintage, 2005.
Avoid the Constance Garnett translation.
- Dostoevsky, Fyodor. *The Brothers Karamazov*. Translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002.
Avoid the Constance Garnett translation.
- Gogol, Nikolai. *Dead Souls*. Translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. New York, Vintage, 1997.
Avoid the Constance Garnett translation.
- Lermontov, Mikhail. *A Hero of Our Time*. Translated by Marian Schwartz. New York: Random House, 2004.
The Paul Foote (Penguin) translation is also good.
- Platonov, Andrei. *Soul and Other Stories*. Translated by Robert Chandler and Olga Meerson. New York: NYRB Classics, 2007.
- Pushkin, Alexander. *Tales of Belkin*. Translated by Joshua Billings. New York: Melville House, 2009.
Avoid the Constance Garnett translation.
- Zamyatin, Yevgeny. *We*. Translated by Clarence Brown. New York and London: Peguin, 1993.
There are at least four translations of this novel, and several editions in print. However, Clarence Brown's translation is *much* better than all the others. Please use only this one. At the very least, avoid Zilboorg's.
- Tolstoy, Leo. *The Death of Ivan Ilyich and Other Stories*. Translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. New York: Vintage, 2010.
Avoid the Constance Garnett translation.
- Turgenev, Ivan. *Fathers and Children*. Translated by Michael R. Katz. New York: Norton, 2008 (Second Edition).
Avoid the Constance Garnett translation.

CLASS SCHEDULE

January 23 (M) Introduction	February 29 (W) Turgenev 2 ▼ For Today: ⊛ Read Turgenev, <i>Fathers and Children</i> (finish)
January 25 (W) Pushkin 1 ▼ For Today: ⊛ Read Pushkin, <i>Tales of Belkin</i> ("The Shot"; "The Snowstorm")	March 5 (M) Dostoevsky 1 ▼ For Today: ⊛ Read <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i> (Books I -III)
January 30 (M) Pushkin 2 ▼ For Today: ⊛ Read Pushkin, <i>Tales of Belkin</i> (finish)	March 7 (W) Dostoevsky 2 ▼ For Today: ⊛ Read <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i> (Books IV-V) <i>Mid-semester Paper Due</i>
February 1 (W) Lermontov 1 ▼ For Today: ⊛ Read Lermontov, <i>A Hero of Our Time</i> (Part I)	March 12-March 18 Spring Break
February 6 (M) Lermontov 2 ▼ For Today: ⊛ Read Lermontov, <i>A Hero of Our Time</i> (finish)	March 19 (M) Dostoevsky (3) ▼ For Today: ⊛ Read <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i> (Books VI-IX)
February 8 (W) Tolstoi 1 ▼ For Today: ⊛ Read "Prisoner of the Caucasus" Final Deadline for Short Paper #1	March 21 (W) Dostoevsky 4 ▼ For Today: ⊛ Read <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i> (Books X-XI)
February 13 (M) Gogol 1 ▼ For Today: ⊛ Read Gogol, <i>Dead Souls</i> (Chapters 1-3)	March 26 (M) Dostoevsky 5 ▼ For Today: ⊛ Read <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i> (finish)
February 15 (W) Gogol 2 ▼ For Today: ⊛ Read Gogol, <i>Dead Souls</i> (Chapters 4-6)	March 28 (W) Tolstoi 2 ▼ For Today: ⊛ Read "The Death of Ivan Ilyich"
February 20 (M) Presidents' Day ▼ In Class ▼ For Today: ⊛ NO CLASS	April 2 (M) Tolstoi 3 ▼ For Today: ⊛ Read <i>Hadji Murat</i>
February 22 (W) Gogol 3 ▼ For Today: ⊛ Read Gogol, <i>Dead Souls</i> (Chapters 7-11)	April 4 (W) Tolstoi 4 ▼ For Today: ⊛ Read <i>The Kreutzer Sonata</i>
February 27 (M) Turgenev 1 ▼ For Today: ⊛ Read Turgenev, <i>Fathers and Children</i> (Chapters 1-17)	April 9 (M) Chekhov 1 ⊛ Read "The Duel" Final Deadline for Short Paper #2

April 11 (W) Chekhov 2

▼ For Today:

⊛ Read "The Story of an Unknown Man"

April 16 (M) Zamyatin 1

▼ For Today:

⊛ Read Zamyatin, *We*
(Records 1-25)

April 18 (W) Zamyatin 2

▼ For Today:

⊛ Read Zamyatin, *We* (finish)

April 23 (M) Babel 1

▼ For Today:

⊛ Read Babel, *Red Cavalry*
(through "Beresteczko")

April 25 (W) Babel 2

▼ For Today:

⊛ Read Babel, *Red Cavalry* (finish)

April 30 (M) Platonov 1

▼ For Today:

⊛ Read Platonov, "Soul"
(Chapters 1-9)

May 2 (W) Platonov 2

▼ For Today:

⊛ Read Platonov, "Soul"(finish)

May 7 (M) Bulgakov

▼ For Today:

⊛ Read Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita* (Chapters 1-12)

**Final Deadline for Short
Paper #3**

May 9 (W) Bulgakov

▼ For Today:

⊛ Read Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita* (Chapters 13-18)

May 14 (M) Bulgakov

▼ For Today:

⊛ Read Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita* (finish)

FINAL PAPER DUE