Humanities 260/History 200/Slavic 255
Russian Culture in Revolution: From Lenin to Putin

Northwestern University, Fall 2017
Tues. & Thurs. 3:30-4:50PM, Annenberg Hall G21

Updated 11/2/17

Faculty Coordinator:
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Teaching Assistants:
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Lecturers:
John Bushnell (History) Christopher Pike (Slavic)
Clare Cavanagh (Slavic) Dassia Posner (Theatre)
Jordan Gans-Morse (Political Science) Gary Saul Morson (Slavic)
Christina Kiaer (Art History) Inna Naroditskaya (Music)
Ilya Kutik (Slavic) Alexandra Novozhenova (Art History)

COURSE SUMMARY

2017 is the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution. To make sense of the significance of this anniversary, this unique, team-taught lecture course integrates insights from Northwestern specialists in Russian and Soviet literature, visual art, music, theatre, film, graffiti, history, and politics. The course provides an introduction to modern Russia’s rich cultural history, from the revolutionary fervor of the 1920s to Stalinist repression, from the vitality of official and unofficial art during the post-Stalin “thaw” to the new artistic revolutions that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union. The course also grapples with fundamental questions such as how historical and political contexts shape the arts, how the arts have been and can be used to imagine new worlds, how foreign ideologies interact with national cultures, and how scholars’ distinct disciplinary tools and frameworks shape their approaches to the study of Russia’s history, politics, and artistic culture.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance at all lectures as recorded by the sign-in sheet circulated at the beginning of each class; preparation of readings for and active participation in all weekly discussion sections; satisfactory completion of all assignments, which, with the exception of exams, are due **both in hardcopy form and online via Canvas.** You must receive a passing grade on all coursework to pass the class (this includes Pass/Not Pass students).

All papers should be double-spaced and typed in 12-point font with 1-inch margins on all sides of each page and headings of no more than two lines. Papers not handed in on time will automatically be marked down a half-grade for every day late unless you have been previously granted an extension by your teaching assistant. The date and location of the final exam are fixed by the University; alternative arrangements will be permitted only in extenuating circumstances.

**Evaluation:** Evaluation in the course will be decided as follows:

- Midterm exam (20%) on **Thursday, October 26** in class
- 4-5 page paper (25%) due before class on **Tuesday, November 21**
- Final take home examination (30%) due on **Wednesday, December 6**
- 1-2 page précis, see below for details (10%)
- Participation in discussion section and class attendance (15%)

**Précis:** Course objectives include developing skills of active listening and critical visual analysis. You are therefore required to attend at least one of the local events/exhibitions related to the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution listed below and to write a 1-2 page précis – defined by Merriam-Webster as “a concise summary of essential points” – of the event or exhibition you attended. Your aim is to provide a compelling account that gives your reader a clear sense of the speaker(s)’ main arguments or the exhibition’s main claims and the kinds of evidence/objects used to make the case. You may attend more than one of these events and write a second précis for extra credit toward your participation grade. Your précis is due **within one week** of the date you attend the event or exhibition.

Note: Nearly all exhibitions and events are free with your student ID card. For events related to the ASEEES convention, we will reimburse the registration fee for students who attend.

**Exhibitions**

*Revolution Every Day*
September 14, 2017-January 14, 2018
The David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago
http://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/exhibitions/revolution-every-day/

*Revoliutsiia! Demonstratsiia! Soviet Art Put to the Test*
October 29, 2017-January 15, 2018
Regenstein Hall, Art Institute of Chicago
www.artic.edu/exhibition/revoliutsiia-demonstratsiia-soviet-art-put-test
Events

“Revolution Every Day: Dziga Vertov in the 1930s”
Film series presented by the Film Studies Center, University of Chicago
Friday evenings from October 6, 2017 to November 10, 2017
Logan Center for the Arts
https://filmstudiescenter.uchicago.edu/events/2017/revolution-every-day-dziga-vertov-1930s

“Was the Russian Revolution a Failure?”
Lecture by Sheila Fitzpatrick, Bernadotte E. Schmitt Distinguished Service Professor Emerita of Russian History, University of Chicago
7:00PM on Thursday, October 19, 2017
University Hall 122, Northwestern University

“Revolution Reconsidered: Memory, Utopia and Deferral”
Symposium organized by Kate Baldwin, Professor of Communications Studies and Rhetoric, and Dilip Gaonkar, Professor of Rhetoric and Public Culture, Northwestern University
October 24-25, 2017
Hagstrum Room, University Hall, Northwestern University
Note: This is a multi-day event; please choose at least one talk to attend

“Building a New World: Amerikanizm in Russian Architecture”
Fall Warnock Lecture in Art History, Jean-Louis Cohen, Sheldon H. Solow Professor in the History of Architecture, New York University
5:00PM on Wednesday, November 1, 2017
Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, Northwestern University
https://artscircle.northwestern.edu/visual-arts/elizabeth-and-todd-warnock-lecture-series-jean-louis-cohen-institute-fine-artsnyu

Public conversation at the Revolution Every Day exhibit
Christina Kiaer, Associate Professor of Art History, Northwestern University and Maria Gough, Joseph Pulitzer, Jr. Professor of Modern Art, Harvard University
5:00PM on Thursday, November 2, 2017
The David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago
Note: If you attend the exhibition and talk, you may write two précis and receive extra credit

Title TBA
Lecture by Maria Gough, Joseph Pulitzer, Jr. Professor of Modern Art, Harvard University
12:00PM on Friday, November 3, 2017
Fullerton Hall, Art Institute of Chicago

“Revolutionology Workshop: The Bolshevik Contagion”
Workshop at the Neubauer Collegium for Culture and Society
November 3-4, 2017
Neubauer Collegium, University of Chicago
http://neubauercollegium.uchicago.edu/events/uc/the_bolshevik_contagion/
Note: This is a multi-day event; please choose at least one talk to attend

‘Walking’ Roundtable with Curators of Revoliutssia! Demonstratsiia! Exhibition
5:30PM on Thursday, November 9, 2017
Ryerson and Burnham Libraries, Art Institute of Chicago
Note: requires registration for the Assoc. for Slavic, E. European & Eurasian Studies Convention

Roundtable with Curators of Revolution Every Day Exhibition
3:45PM on Saturday, November 11, 2017
Marriott Downtown Chicago
Note: requires registration for the Assoc. for Slavic, E. European & Eurasian Studies Convention

The Suicide
A play by Nikolai Erdman adapted and directed by Sergey Zhenovach
Stage on Screen Series
2:00PM on Saturday, November 11, 2017
Josephine Louis Theater, Wirtz Center for the Performing Arts, Northwestern University
https://www.wirtz.northwestern.edu/stage-on-screen/the-suicide

“The Russian Revolution as Utopian Leap”
Lecture by Mark D. Steinberg, Professor of History, University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign
3:00PM on Saturday, November 11, 2017
Fullerton Hall, Art Institute of Chicago
http://tickets.chicagohumanities.org/categories/politics%20and%20society

IN-CLASS ELECTRONICS POLICY

Please turn all phones off before the lecture. Note that this implies no texting as well as no calls. Laptops may be used for note taking only. Use of email, Facebook, or other activities unrelated to lecture is strictly prohibited and may result in a grade deduction.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Instructors are required by university policy to report violations of academic integrity standards to the Dean’s Office. A non-exhaustive list of behaviors that violate standards of academic integrity includes: cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, obtaining an unfair advantage, aiding and abetting dishonesty, falsification of records and official documents, and unauthorized access to computerized academic or administrative records or systems. Note that even unintentional plagiarism is still plagiarism. If you are unsure about whether to cite or how to cite a source, then confer with the professor or teaching assistant. Information about Northwestern’s academic integrity policies can be found at http://www.northwestern.edu/provost/students/integrity/.

You are strongly encouraged to take issues of academic integrity seriously. Nearly 20 Northwestern students were suspended last year due to violations of academic integrity standards. Such violations can end up on your academic record and may become a red flag for employers and graduate schools.
ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

All necessary accommodations will be made for students with disabilities. Please contact the professor at the beginning of the term so that we can work together with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (Accessible NU) to make arrangements.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, the aim is that you will have:

• Achieved an understanding of the chronology of and principal developments in Soviet and post-Soviet Russian history;
• Developed an understanding of how historical context and politics shape artistic and cultural production, and vice versa;
• Gained an understanding of how “Russian” culture interacts with international influences;
• Furthered your understanding of how scholars’ disciplinary tools shape their insights;
• Built a vocabulary to articulate the development of Soviet culture, focusing on artistic movements (e.g., Futurism, Constructivism, Socialist Realism) and aesthetic techniques (e.g., estrangement, biomechanics, montage);
• Honed the skills of close reading, critical visual analysis, active listening, engaged discussion, and making clear, well-reasoned arguments in writing and speaking.

COURSE MATERIALS

The following three books are required and can be purchased at Norris Center Bookstore or online:


**Make sure to buy these specific editions.**

All other readings will be made available through Canvas.
COURSE SCHEDULE

Tuesday, September 19
Lecture 1: Introduction
Lecturer: Jordan Gans-Morse (Political Science)

PART I: THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Thursday, September 21
Lecture 2: The Russian Revolution as Pan-European Revolution and Civil War
Lecturer: John Bushnell (History)

Readings:

• Introduction and Chapters 1-3 in Sheila Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution (Oxford University Press, 2008)

Tuesday, September 26
Lecture 3: Russian Art in Revolution
Lecturer: Christina Kiaer (Art History)

Readings:

Primary documents


Article

Supplemental readings (optional)


Thursday, September 28
Lecture 4: Gender and Revolution through Literature
Lecturer: Clare Cavanagh (Slavic Literature)

Readings:


Tuesday, October 3
Lecture 5: Revolutionary Theater
Lecturer: Dassia Posner (Theatre)

Readings:


Thursday, October 5
Lecture 6: Shostakovich’s Lady Macbeth and Nose
Lecturer: Inna Naroditskaya (Music)

Readings and Film:

- Watch Dmitri Shostakovich’s Lady Macbeth: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lVbbRQgQaII

**PART II: THE STALIN ERA**

**Tuesday, October 10**  
*Lecture 7: Stalinism*  
Lecturer: John Bushnell (History)

Readings:

- Chapters 4-6 in Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution* (Oxford University Press, 2008)

**Thursday, October 12**  
*Lecture 8: Art Under Stalin*  
Lecturer: Christina Kiaer (Art History)

Readings:

*Primary documents*


*Article*


**Tuesday, October 17**  
*Lecture 9: Dostoevsky Foresees Stalinist Terror*  
Lecturer: Gary Saul Morson (Slavic Literature)

Readings:

Thursday, October 19
Lecture 10: Literature and the Great Terror
Lecturer: Clare Cavanagh (Slavic Literature)

Readings:

- Lydia Chukovsky, Sofia Petrovna (Northwestern University Press, 1994)

Tuesday, October 24:
Lecture 11: Soviet Film
Lecturer: Ilya Kutik (Slavic Literature)

Readings and Film:

- Watch Mikhail Kalatozov’s The Cranes Are Flying (1957)
- Essays on The Cranes are Flying by Donato Totaro at Offscreen.com (Vol. 7, Issue 5, May 2003) and by Chris Fujiwara at The Criterion Collection (April 29, 2002) and short commentary by Haskell Wexler at The Criterion Collection (August 22, 2011)

Supplemental readings (optional)

- Chapter 2 in Jeremy Hicks, Dziga Vertov: Defining Documentary Film (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2007)

Thursday, October 26: MIDTERM EXAM
PART III: THE LATE SOVIET ERA

Tuesday, October 31
Lecture 12: Post-Stalin Politics and Life Practices
Lecturer: John Bushnell (History)

Readings:

- Chapter 5 in Alexei Yurchak, *Everything was Forever until it was No More* (Princeton University Press, 2005)

Thursday, November 2
Lecture 13: Socialist Realism and the Soviet Novel
Lecturer: Christopher Pike (Slavic Literature)

Readings:


Tuesday, November 7
Lecture 14: Music in the Non-Russian Republics
Lecturer: Inna Naroditskaya (Music)

Readings:


PART IV: THE SOVIET COLLAPSE, THE POST-SOVIET ERA, AND PUTIN

Thursday, November 9
Lecture 15: Disintegration of the Soviet Union & Rise of Post-Soviet Russia
Lecturer: Jordan Gans-Morse (Political Science)

Readings:

- Excerpt from Chapter 3 (pp. 80-84) and Chapters 4-5 in Timothy Colton, *What Everyone Needs to Know About Russia* (Oxford University Press, 2016)

Supplementary reading (optional)

**Tuesday, November 14**  
*Lecture 16: The Crisis in Late Soviet Society as Illuminated by Graffiti*  
Lecturer: John Bushnell (History)

Readings:


**Thursday, November 16**  
Lecturer: Alexandra Novozhenova (Art History)

Readings:


*These last two essays are not yet published and so should not be circulated outside this class*

**Tuesday, November 21**  
*Lecture 18: Commemorating the Russian Revolution*  
Lecturer: Jordan Gans-Morse (Political Science)

Readings:

• James Richter, “Taming the Revolution: The Politics of Memory One Hundred Years After October,” Working Paper, Department of Politics, Bates College

**Tuesday, November 21: PAPER DUE BEFORE CLASS (3:30PM)**

**Wednesday, December 6: TAKE HOME EXAM DUE BY 1:00PM**