

HUMA 6001Z Selected Topics in Russian Literature and Literary Theory Spring 2019

Time:	Wednesday	15:00 – 17:50
Venue:	1104	
Instructor:	Xiaolu Ma	Rm.3377; hmxlma@ust.hk
Office hours:	By appointment	

Course Description

This graduate course explores classics of Russian literature and Russian literary theory in their own right and as material meant to prompt comparative analysis with each student's area of academic interest. The course considers major Russian literary texts which exemplify key trends in Russian literary culture – the fantastic and the absurd in literary mythmaking (the “St. Petersburg myth”); Realism, revolutionary utopianism, and its discontents; the Soviet experience from revolutionary avant -garde modernism to Stalinist Socialist Realism. The course will also explore relevant works of Russian literary criticism by noted critics of the 19th century, Russian Formalists, Soviet Semioticians, and others.

The focus of this semester is the Russian literature of the nineteenth century. The school that we closely examine is Russian realism.

Intended learning outcomes:

1. Analyze particular literary texts, identify their authors, literary techniques, cultural impact, and, and socio-historical condition
2. Use a professional vocabulary from literary criticism and theory to discuss texts
3. Sharpen critical thinking and enhance perceptive insights of Russian literary traditions and comparisons to other national traditions.
4. Develop a strong sense of teamwork in group projects
5. Conduct independent research and write research papers

Schedule

Week 1 (Feb 12)

Introduction: What is realism?

Week 2-3 Nikolai Gogol and the Russian Everyday (Feb 19, 26)

Gogol, Nikolai Vasil'evich. “The Overcoat,” “Diary of A Madman”

Hutchings, Stephen C., *Russian Modernism: The Transfiguration of the Everyday*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. (Chap 2)

Week 4-6 Russian realism and revolutionary utopianism: Chernyshevsky and Soviet Semiotics (Mar 4, 11, 18)

Chernyshevsky, Nikolai. *What Is to Be Done?* Translated by Michael R. Katz and William G. Wagner. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014. (Rakhmetov, Vera's dreams)

Chernyshevsky, "The Aesthetic Relation of Art to Reality"

Paperno, Irina., *Chernyshevsky and the Age of Realism: A Study in the Semiotics of Behavior*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988. (Intro, Chap 3)

Week 7-9 Realism and revolutionary dystopia: Dostoevsky, Mikhail Bakhtin (Mar 25, Apr 1, 8)

Feodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from the Underground*

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/600/600-h/600-h.htm>

Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (Chapter 2,5)

Week 10-12 Psychological Realism: Tolstoy (Apr 15, 22,29)

Leo Tolstoy, *The Kreutzer Sonata*

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/689/689-h/689-h.htm>

Georg Lukács, *Studies in European Realism* (Chapter 8)

War and Peace (Dir: Sergei Bondarchuk 1966-67)

Week 13 Discussion (May 6)

Course Assessment

Class Participation	30%
Midterm Paper (March 27)	20%
Final Paper (June 6)	50%

Course Requirements

Class participation

This is a seminar course. You are expected to attend all classes and stay for the entire class. You are allowed two absences without penalty. Each additional absence lowers your final grade by 2%. However, you can make up your absences by submitting a one-page analysis of the readings of that week. Any student with 5 absences or more will fail this course. There will be close reading of selected passages and thorough analysis of critical issues related to the texts. Students should read the assigned materials before class. I measure class participation based on the following criteria: arriving to class on time, completing required reading, engaging in class discussion, and respectfully listening when your classmates speak.

Midterm paper

3 pp in length. Times New Roman size 12 font, double line spacing, 1-inch margins, and half-inch indentations at the beginning of each paragraph. Critical analysis of one or more of our readings. Please submit it by 8pm of the due date. Please submit it in Word format and make sure that the file is readable. Unreadable files will not be counted as successful submission. Late

submission will be accepted as late as two days after the due date but will receive half credit unless permission from the instructor is obtained before the due date.

Final paper

7 pp in length. (10 pp for Mphil students) Times New Roman size 12 font, double line spacing, 1-inch margins, and half-inch indentations at the beginning of each paragraph. Critical analysis of one or more of our readings. Please submit it by 8pm of the due date. Please submit it in Word format and make sure that the file is readable. Unreadable files will not be counted as successful submission. Late submission will be accepted as late as two days after the due date but will receive half credit unless permission from the instructor is obtained before the due date.

Academic Honesty

Acts of academic dishonesty are prohibited. Please go to our university webpage on academic dishonesty policy (<http://ugadmin.ust.hk/integrity/index.html>), and read definitions of plagiarism and acts of dishonesty. Acts of dishonesty will lead to a failing grade in this course.