

Slavic Languages and Literatures

2017-18 Course Catalog

UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

Slavic 91R: Supervised Reading and Research

Justin Weir, Steven Clancy

Fall 2017 and Spring 2018

Instructor Permission Required

Course Notes: A graded course. Permission must be obtained from the Director of Undergraduate Studies and the instructor under whom the student wishes to study. Hours to be arranged.

Slavic 97: Tutorial - Sophomore Year

Aleksandra Kremer

Spring 2018

Schedule: TBD

An interdisciplinary introduction to major issues in the field of Slavic Languages and Literatures, including critical theory, modes of interpreting literary texts, the forces structuring national and regional identities, as well as great authors of the Slavic literary traditions, including Russian, Czech, and Polish works.

Instructor Permission Required

Course Notes: Required for Slavic Language and Literature concentrators. Open to non-concentrators provided they contact the instructor before the beginning of the semester.

Slavic 98: Tutorial - Junior Year

Vera Koshkina

Spring 2018

Schedule: TBD

In spring 2018, the Slavic junior tutorial will focus on the close reading of three works of the recipient of the 2015 Nobel Prize in Literature, Svetlana Alexievich.

Instructor Permission Required

Course Notes: Required of junior concentrators in Slavic Literatures and Cultures.

Slavic 99A and 99B: Tutorial - Senior Year

Justin Weir

Fall 2017 and Spring 2018

Schedule: TBD

For senior concentrators in Slavic Literature and Culture. Students work with a faculty advisor on a senior thesis or capstone project.

Instructor Permission Required

Course Notes: Required for senior concentrators in Slavic Literature and Culture. Students who wish to enroll must obtain the signature of the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Honors students must also complete Slavic 99b.

FOR UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE STUDENTS

Slavic 126: Structure of Modern Russian

Steven Clancy

2017 Fall

Schedule:

MWF 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Introduction to Russian phonetics, phonemics, morphophonemics, and inflectional and derivational morphology. Course goal is to give a deeper understanding and appreciation of the regularities and complexities of Russian through a close study of its sounds and words.

Instructor Permission Required

Recommended Prep: Russian B, BAB, BT or placement at the third-year level. No knowledge of linguistics required.

Slavic 130: Russian Poetry and Its Borders: Conference Course

Stephanie Sandler

2018 Spring

Schedule:

T 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Without borders, can there be poetry? A white paper border surrounds printed poems; digital poems are bounded by the screen on which they are read; national boundaries keep cultural and linguistic traditions distinct; and aesthetic conventions create genres and demarcate poetry from music or dance or film. How Russian poetry perversely challenges such limits, and how it thrives at the edges of the permissible, will be the subject of this course.

We will study the cultural practice of poetry as it crosses four kinds of borders –performative, linguistic, geographic, and aesthetic. That yields four large topics: poetry in public places (how does poetry speak of politics, and how does it write collective trauma?); poetry and translation (how does translation change poetic practice? how to read mixed-language poems?); poetry and emigration/ exile (what happens to identities and allegiances when poets cross geographical borders? What happens to the poet's language?); and poetry and the other arts (how have music, film, drama, paintings, photography, and the philosophical essay been felt in poetry? can poems become visual artifacts, or scripts for performance?).

Examples from the work of Aygi, Brodsky, Dragomoshchenko, Glazova, Kaminsky, Khlebnikov, Mandelstam, Mnatsakanova, Nabokov, Pushkin, Sedakova, Slutsky, Vvedensky. Comparisons to American poets, including Susan Howe and Anne Carson, and to films by Tarkovsky and others.

Recommended Prep: Reading knowledge of Russian

Slavic 146: Cultures of Russian Revolution

Kevin Platt

2017 Fall

Schedule:

M 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

A century ago this fall, Russia was transformed by the allied, twin forces of the October Revolution and modernist art and literature. In 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed amid nearly universal consensus that the communist project had failed, at a moment when artists and philosophers were declaring the death of modernism in the new age of the postmodern.

This interdisciplinary course will study the intertwined history and continuing legacy of the Russian artistic and political revolutions of 1917. Readings will include theoretical studies and classical texts of revolution and modernism (K. Marx, V. Lenin, L. Trotsky, H. Arendt, P. Bürger), documentary and historical accounts of the Russian revolution (V. Shklovsky, R. Stites), representations and responses to the October Revolution in art, literature and film from around the globe (S. Eisenstein, D. Rivera, I. Babel, E. Zamyatin), examination of revolutionary memory and commemoration in later years (G. Orwell, A. Sinyavsky, B. Pasternak, H. Frank), and consideration of the meaning of revolutionary history and practice in the present day (N. Tolokonnikova, N. Mikhailov, V. Putin).

Slavic 149: Soviet Film Realisms: Socialist Realism, Neorealism, Surrealism

Vera Koshkina

2018 Spring

Schedule: TBD

What is cinematic realism? What are the most effective techniques and genres for capturing the Soviet reality? From its inception in 1934 Socialist Realism was the dominant aesthetic style of the Soviet cinema. Soviet film, along with other arts aspired to a “historically concrete *representation* of reality in *its* revolutionary *development*.” In the course of subsequent fifty years interpretations of this formulation of Socialist Realism led to the development of a variety of “realisms” in Soviet cinema, all alternately representing the Soviet reality in its idealism, stark harshness or humorous absurdity.

This course surveys a broad selection of Soviet films and film realisms (Socialist Realism, Neorealism, Magical Realism, Surrealism) from the 1930s to 1980s. It combines considerations of film form and cinematic technique with the discussion of the ever-difficult concept of realism in art. Students will develop a familiarity with the history of Soviet cinema as well as ‘visual literacy’ –critical vocabulary and analytical tools that will enable them to respond to visual material critically and creatively. The screenings for this course will include musical comedies of Grigori Alexandrov, historical epics of Sergei Eisenstein, surrealist dreamscapes of Andrei Tarkovsky and Tengiz Abuladze as well as absurdist collages of Soviet reality of Kira Muratova among many others.

Slavic 152: Pushkin

William Todd

2018 Spring

Schedule: W 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

A survey of the lyrics, narrative poems, fiction, and critical prose of Russia's "national poet." Close reading of the texts; attention to contemporary cultural issues. Lecture and discussion.

Recommended Prep: Good reading knowledge of Russian.

Slavic 154: Nabokov

Justin Weir

2018 Spring

Schedule: T Th 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

This course explores Vladimir Nabokov's novels, focusing primarily on his Russian works in English translation (*Despair*, *Invitation to a Beheading*, *The Gift*) but concluding with his English language masterpiece *Lolita*. We will consider, among much else, themes of cross-cultural literature, self-translation, and emigration, and the course will pay particular attention to Nabokov's interest in cinema and film aesthetics.

Course Notes: No knowledge of Russian is required

Slavic 159: Chekhov

Yuri Corrigan

2018 Spring

Schedule: F 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

This course explores how Chekhov revolutionized the short story while simultaneously laying the foundations for modern drama. Reading his four major plays and a wide selection from his prose, we trace the arc of his career, looking closely at his aesthetic innovations, moral psychology, and philosophical perspective. Finally, we probe the relationship between the prose and drama by working together to dramatize his stories. Students will write, produce, and/or act in a final collective performance, thus retracing for ourselves Chekhov's steps in moving between art forms and inventing a new kind of psychological theater. All readings are in English translation.

Course Notes:

For students able to read in Russian, additional texts and discussions will be made available. Students will be required to attend occasional one-hour discussion sections where they will work in groups.

Slavic 175: Introduction to Polish Culture

Aleksandra Kremer

2017 Fall

Schedule: T Th 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Poland was one of the largest countries in Europe and a multi-ethnic commonwealth; just two centuries later, it had been erased from the map, occupied by three different empires and subjected to constant struggles for independence. Today, it is a medium-size monolithic nation state in the middle of Europe, closely watched for its political developments.

Our course will survey key topics in Poland's 10:00-year history by examining important works of literature, art, architecture, and film. We will consider how the past, both celebrated and contested, can shape a country's contemporary politics and cultural landscape. We'll also examine the interplay between local, national, and international geographies as we track Poland's ever-changing borders; students will create a personal travel guide and symbolic map of Polish culture, considering the contributions and histories of Poles, Jews, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Belarussians, Germans and Russians in what was one of Europe's most multi-ethnic and multi-confessional spaces.

Course Notes:

No prior knowledge of Poland required. All readings will be in English.

Slavic 177: Postwar Polish Poetry

Aleksandra Kremer

2018 Spring

Schedule: W 12:00 PM - 0159 PM

Czeslaw Milosz, Wislawa Szymborska, Zbigniew Herbert, and Adam Zagajewski have been widely read and translated by American poets and critics, who have identified a "Polish School of Poetry" oriented on witnessing history, ethics, and politics, and associated closely with the traumas of World War II and Communist rule. But how accurate is this picture, and what does Polish poetry look like "from the inside"?

In this course, we will combine these perspectives, confronting canonical authors with lesser-known, experimental and contemporary poets, and we will ask how Polish poetry has changed since the democratic transition of 1989. What shapes poetry's role in society? What makes poetry political? Are some kinds of poetry more "translatable" than others, and how does this shape the American reception of Polish poets? Our course discussions will combine close reading with consideration of social and political context (censorship and newspeak); we will also consider recordings and performances, translation and emigration, as well as larger themes of privacy, feminism, and religion.

Course Notes:

Intended for all students interested in poetry. No prior knowledge of Polish language or literature is required. All readings will be in English.

Slavic 181: Russian Poetry of the 19th Century

John Malmstad

2017 Fall

Schedule: W 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

The major themes and modes of Russian poetry from pre-Romanticism to 'pure art.' Selections from Zhukovsky, Batiushkov, Baratynsky, Yazykov, Lermontov, Tiutchev, Nekrasov, Fet, and others.

Instructor Permission Required

Slavic 182: The Political Novel*Jonathan Bolton*

2018 Spring

Schedule: TBD

What makes a novel “political,” and what contribution can novels make to political theories? How do novels manage to stage political debates rather than arguing clearly for one side or the other? How does narrative form reinforce or undermine ideology? What archetypal dramas –protest against authority, the loss of political innocence, the battle between tolerance and conviction –have shaped the political novel in its various traditions from the eighteenth century to the present? Readings may include Kleist, Pushkin, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Melville, Conrad, Olbracht, Gordimer, Coetzee, Atwood, Bolaño, Le Guin, Teju Cole, and others.

Slavic 183: Reading Anna Karenina*Justin Weir*

2018 Spring

Schedule: Th 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

In this course we will conduct a close reading of Tolstoy’s novel Anna Karenina —and a few additional short works of fiction and criticism. Readings are in Russian.

Instructor Permission Required**Recommended Prep:**

Reading knowledge of Russian required.

Slavic 189: The Other Russia: Twenty-First Century Films, Fictions, States of Mind*Stephanie Sandler*

2017 Fall

Schedule:

T Th 2:00 PM – 03:30 PM

Russia is in the news these days for its politics and espionage, but what about the daily lives of Russian people? Nothing gets at that reality in all its pettiness and grandeur better than Russian literature. The stories, poems, plays, movies, memoirs, and documentaries of the last twenty-five years are the subject of this course. We will trace the chaotic transitions of the 1990s, the disparities of wealth and polarized politics of the 2000s, the rise of religious thinking (Orthodox, Islam, Jewish), and the several conflicts at Russia’s borders. The impact of travel, diaspora, and the internet on breaking down old walls that once isolated the USSR will be as important as changes in the legal order. The different fates of former Soviet republics will be compared, with examples from Ukraine, the Caucasus, and the far North.

Writers include Svetlana Aleksievich, Joseph Brodsky, Elena Fanailova, Linor Goralik, Alisa Ganieva, Boris Khersonsky, Viktor Pelevin, Liudmila Petrushevskaya, Vladimir Sorokin, and Serhiy Zhadan. Films to include *Leviathan*, *Four*, *Alexandra*, *My Joy*, and *Maidan*. Students will also interview and create portraits (visual, verbal, and video) of émigrés from the former Soviet Union living in the Boston area, using the interviews as a context for the cultural representations of life in and beyond Russia.

Course Notes:

All readings in English, with added section for those able to read in Russian

Slavic 192: Literature as Institutions*William Todd*

2017 Fall

Schedule:

W 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

A study of literary production, dissemination, and reception in selected periods of Russian literature from the Middle Ages to the present. Readings in social theory, cultural studies, literary criticism, and imaginative literature.

Course Notes:

Open to advanced undergraduates and graduates.

Slavic 197: The Power of the Powerless: Dissidents from Socrates to Václav Havel

Jonathan Bolton

2017 Fall

Schedule: Th 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

From Socrates and Antigone to Pussy Riot and Ai Weiwei, we are fascinated by the courage of dissidents who oppose tyrannical regimes. But who are dissidents, and where do they gain the conviction, imagination, and political skill to stand up for their beliefs? In this course, we will investigate the role of non-violent dissent in political and cultural life, looking at both historical figures and political actors in the world today. After considering some classic statements of dissent (including Socrates' *Apology*, Sophocles' *Antigone*, and Martin Luther King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail"), we will turn to recent and contemporary dissidents to think about their paths into protest, their strategies of political and cultural protest, their complicated relationship with their fellow citizens, and their portrayal in domestic and international media.

Our focus will be on individuals rather than on social movements, and on non-violent rather than violent or revolutionary protest. Drawing examples from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe during the Cold War, contemporary Russia, China, and other countries, we will consider figures such as Václav Havel, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Vladimir Bukovsky, Liu Xiaobo, Ai Weiwei, Pussy Riot, and others.

Course Notes: All readings are in English.

COURSES OFFERED BY SLAVIC FACULTY IN OTHER DEPARTMENTS

FRESHMAN SEMINARS

Freshman Seminar 36G: The Creative Work of Translating

Stephanie Sandler

2017 Fall (4 Credits)

Schedule:

W 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Translation makes culture possible. Individual writers and thinkers draw sustenance and stimulation from works created outside their own cultures, and artists working in one format get ideas from those working in entirely different media. Translation between languages and between art forms will center our seminar's work. Taking a broad view of translation as a mental activity, we will study poems, fiction, film, photography, and music. We will stretch our own imaginative capacities by transposing material across media and genres, creating homophonic translations, and translating between languages. We will work individually as well as collaboratively. We will read a small amount translation theory, and some reflections by working translators. We will invite into our classroom a few practicing poets, artists, and translators and attend poetry readings and lectures at Harvard. The only requirement is some knowledge of a language besides English –and a readiness to play with languages, art forms, and texts. Readings from Kazim Ali, Walter Benjamin, Jorge Luis Borges, Joseph Brodsky, Anne Carson, Emily Dickinson, Forrest Gander, Susan Howe, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Velimir Khlebnikov, Vladimir Nabokov, Sappho, W. G. Sebald, Tracy K. Smith, Marina Tsvetaeva, Wang Wei, and the Bible; music by John Adams, David Grubbs, and others; artwork by Peter Sacks. Films to include *Despair* and *The Golem*.

Instructor Permission Required

Recommended Prep: Requires knowledge of one language besides English.

Requirements: Course open to Freshman Students Only

Freshman Seminar 60G

Word–Sound–Image: Poetry as a Language Laboratory (23:004)

Aleksandra Kremer

2017 Fall (4 Credits)

Schedule:

W 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Typical means of everyday communication, such as speaking, writing, or printing, can be taken to extremes in poetry. What sounds and images can we find in poetic texts? What materials and tools have been used to create poems? What happens on the borderlines between poetry and other arts? In our seminar we will study poems from different times and regions, with a special emphasis on the twentieth-century European and American experimental literature. We will discuss visual poetry from Ancient Greece and Renaissance England, poems about paintings by Rilke and Auden, avant-garde texts and performances of Futurist and Dadaist artists, postwar French sound poetry, international concrete poetry movement, contemporary artists' books, as well as recordings and readings of major poets. We will look for poetry in Harvard Art Museums and listen to recordings in the Woodberry Poetry Room. We will examine artists' books from Harvard libraries, attend a poetry reading in Cambridge, view electronic archives of poetry, analyze voices of poets performing their texts, and study poems which are barely legible. We will confront these poetic experiments with scholarly texts from such disciplines as sound studies, art history, acoustic phonetics, graphic design, and literary studies. Finally, we will ask what are the gains and challenges of using innovative techniques and technologies in poetry and art.

Instructor Permission Required

Requirements: Course open to Freshman Students Only

Freshman Seminar 61U

Reading the Novella: Form and Suspense in Short Fiction (205181)

Jonathan Bolton

2017 Fall (4 Credits)

Schedule:

T 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Short enough to read in a single sitting, but more complex and absorbing than short stories, novellas give us some of our most intense reading experiences. Indeed, many of the enduring classics of world literature, from Melville's *Benito Cereno* to Chekhov's *The Duel*, take advantage of the novella's compression and acceleration of plot—features that are also suited to horror, mystery, and other forms of "genre" fiction. In this seminar, we will read some of the great masters of the novella form, including Anton Chekhov, Henry James, Leo Tolstoy, Alice Munro, and Katherine Anne Porter, as well as other examples from around the world, including Eastern Europe, China, and Japan.

Readings of 50-125 pages a week (all of it in English) will allow us to work closely with some classics of modern fiction, going down to the level of word choice and sentence structure, but we'll also consider the way authors build and sustain suspense, the different forms of narrative resolution, and other questions of plotting and structure. We will also talk about how to get the most out of your weekly reading experiences—I'll ask you to set aside solitary time for your reading each week and, as far as possible, to read each novella in just one or two sittings. You'll keep a reading journal, including 2-3 pages of unstructured writing each week; a number of creative assignments and a final paper will help you understand the choices made by authors as they shape their stories for this most demanding and exciting of fictional forms.

Instructor Permission Required

Requirements:

Course open to Freshman Students Only

Freshman Seminar 62C

The Revolution Will Not Be Televised (Russian Revolution Imagined, Documented, Advertised) (205532)

Vera Koshkina

2017 Fall (4 Credits)

Schedule: T 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Political change takes place in images and on screens as much as on the streets. Activists, artists and politicians have long understood that pictures speak to global audiences beyond spoken language. However images serve to expose and document as much as to mask and suppress other realities. This seminar examines the role images played in the Russian Revolution of 1917 in its attempts to fundamentally transform existing social order. The 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution in the fall of 2017 serves as an occasion to explore it as one of the first political uprisings in which modern media—photography, poster art, moving images—were used to imagine, document, represent and suppress revolutionary change. Even before 1917, Russian artists ignited revolutionary imagination in breaking with representational conventions and bringing new media into their creative work. The Soviet State subsequently adapted their representational strategies and new technologies. In 1918, the so-called Soviet agitation trains traveled to remote villages bringing documentary footage of the Russian Revolution to mostly illiterate peasant audiences, spreading the visual story of revolution before the coming of television. We will consider the legacy of the imaginings, transmissions and visual manipulations of history, looking at photography, visual art, documentary and feature film, folk art, children's drawings, propaganda posters, and public spectacles and festivals. We will also read theoretical texts by artists, writers, filmmakers and politicians who imagined the new world and the role of visual art and new media in its transformation. What kind of social conditions made the new aesthetic choices relevant? Who is doing the depicting and what is and is not shown? What does it mean to visualize politics more broadly?

Instructor Permission Required

Course Notes:

The seminar includes required trips: a visit to the Harvard Art Museum to examine original artwork, special screenings of 35mm films at the Harvard Film Archive, and a visit to view the rare books collection at the Houghton Library.

Requirements:

Course open to Freshman Students Only

GENERAL EDUCATION

Aesthetic & Interpretive 60: Literature and Art in an Era of Crisis and Oppression: Modernism in Eastern Europe

George Grabowicz

2017 Fall

Schedule:

M 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

The course will examine seminal literary works (with forays into film and art) from Eastern Europe in the first half of the 20th century with special attention to their response to convention, censorship and totalitarian strictures as well as "high modernist" experimentation and a "low modernist" focus on popular genres and a new poetics of trash. Focus on Kafka, Zamiatin, Bulgakov, Capek, Nabokov, Platonov, Witkacy, Schulz, Gombrowicz, Kulish, Xvyl'ovyi, Vertov, Dovzhenko and others.

Course Notes:

All texts can be read in English translation.

Culture & Belief 38: Apocalypse Then! Forging the Culture of Medieval Rus'

Michael Flier

2017 Fall

Schedule:

MW 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

When the natives of Medieval Rus (later Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians) accepted Orthodox Christianity in the 10th century, their nature-based paganism gave way to a powerfully sensual belief system that made good use of the visual and the verbal to prepare these newest Christians for the coming Apocalypse and Last Judgment. We investigate this transformation from the conversion of Saint Vladimir and the excesses of Ivan the Terrible through the Time of Troubles and the modern turn of Peter the Great. The class features close analysis of architecture, icons and frescoes, ritual, folklore, literature, and history to understand this shift in worldview, including the role of women. Special attention is devoted to the ways in which Medieval Rus is portrayed in film, opera, and ballet.

Course Notes:

All readings in English. This course fulfills the requirement that one of the eight General Education courses also engage substantially with Study of the Past.

Ethical Reasoning 28: Moral Inquiry in the Novels of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky

Justin Weir

2017 Fall

Schedule:

TR 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

This course considers how Tolstoy and Dostoevsky take up moral inquiry in their fiction, introduces students to philosophical texts that informed their major fiction, and asks why the novel as a literary genre may be a good forum for the discussion of ethics. We will read Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground* and *The Brothers Karamazov*, as well as selected texts from Rousseau, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and others.

GRADUATE COURSES

Slavic 201: Introduction to East Slavic Linguistics

Michael Flier

2017 Fall

Schedule:

M 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Introduction to the structure and history of Russian, Ukrainian, and Belarusian.

Requirements:

Prerequisite: Linguistics 250

Slavic 223: 19th-Century Ukrainian Poetry

George Grabowicz

2017 Fall

Schedule:

W 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

A survey of the major poets: Kotljarevs'kyj, Hulak and the pre-Romantics, Shevchenko, Kulish, Rudans'kyj, Franko, and Lesja Ukrajinka.

Recommended Prep:

Reading knowledge of Ukrainian.

Slavic 300: Direction of Doctoral Dissertations

Jonathan Bolton, Julie A. Buckler, Michael Flier, George Grabowicz, Daria Khitrova, Aleksandra Kremer, Stephanie Sandler, William Todd, Justin Weir

Fall 2017 and Spring 2018

Schedule: N/A

Instructor Permission Required

Slavic 301: Reading and Research

Jonathan Bolton, Julie A. Buckler, Steven Clancy, Michael Flier, George Grabowicz, Daria Khitrova, Aleksandra Kremer, Stephanie Sandler, William Todd, Justin Weir

Jonathan Bolton

Fall 2017 and Spring 2018

Schedule: N/A

Instructor Permission Required