

RUSSN-GA.2135
Reading Post-Socialist Russia
19 University Place, Room

W 6:20-8:40
19 University Place
Room 224

Office Hours:
(in person and on Skype chat)
Tuesday 12-1
Wednesday 12-1

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Or by appointment

Course description: This course examines Russian culture after 1991, through film, fiction, and television, as well as through the growing scholarship on postsocialism. Particular attention will be paid to the discourses of sexuality, crime, catastrophe, and nostalgia, as well as to the impact of economic and political change on both mass and elite culture.

This course will give graduate students a greater familiarity with the various debates that are unfolding in contemporary scholarship, as well as a deeper understanding of the cultural dynamics of postsocialism in Russia.

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. All writing and class discussion will be in English.

Participation and presentations. This class will be conducted as a seminar. Class time will be devoted primarily to discussion, and every student will be responsible for presenting the material and leading discussion once during the semester.

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.

Writing Assignments: There will be three short analysis papers and a final seminar paper.

The *short analysis papers* may be no longer than *three* pages, and they can be about any of the works we are reading or viewing. 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 an analysis of Jennifer Patino's book chapters, you must turn this paper in on February 19. 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. No late short papers will be accepted under any circumstances.

You may not wait until April to turn in three short papers. The semester has been divided into three parts, and you must write one short paper by each of these three deadlines. That is, your first short paper must be turned in no later than **February 19**, your second short paper is due no later than **March 2**, and the third short paper is due no later than **April 30**. 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 or second segments of the course), you are free to do so.

The topic of the *final paper* is yours to choose, but you must come talk to me about it in advance. It is hoped that the short papers will lead you toward topics for your longer paper. Your final paper may be based on a short paper.

The final paper must be turned in on **May 7**.

I welcome full or partial drafts of any of these writing assignments. Drafts of the short papers must be shown to me no later than one week before the due date; drafts of the long papers must be submitted no later than two weeks before the due date.

Leading Class Discussions. Each student must pick one of the books from which we are only reading excerpts, read the whole book, and lead a discussion on it.

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. Do not send me .pdf files. 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 "Post-Socialism Assignment" or "Goscilo 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 Robski, the file should be something like "Tyler Short Paper 2

(Robski).doc". If Eric Roberts has written a midterm paper on *Brother*, then the file should be something like "Roberts Midterm (Brother).doc". A final paper on Lipovetsky by Scott Baio would be "Baio Final (Lipovetsky).doc".

Finally, please note that I have multiple email accounts. Please do not send email to more than one account at a time ("cc"); if you do, I will end up with three copies of your message.

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

Short papers:	30%
Leading class discussion:	10%
Class participation/presentation:	20%
Final paper:	40%

Required Texts (NYU Bookstore):

- Borenstein, Eliot. *Overkill: Sex Violence, and Russian Popular Culture after 1991*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008.
- Morozov, Evgeny. *The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom*. New York: Public Affairs, 2012.
- Oushakine, Serguei P. *The Patriotism of Despair*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009.
- Ries, Nancy. *Russian Talk*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997
- Shevechenko, Olga. *Crisis and the Everyday in Postsocialist Moscow*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008.

Required Texts, Part Two:

NYU Classes

- Agadjanian. "Exploring Russian Religiosity as a Source of Morality Today." Zigon, Jarrett (ed.) *Multiple Moralities and Religions in Post-Soviet Russia*. New York: Bergahn Books, 2011.
- Baer, Brian. *Other Russias: Homosexuality and the Crisis of Post-Soviet Identity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. Chapters 1 & 2.
- Balzer, "Routinization of the New Russians?" *Russian Review* 62.1 (2003): 11-36.
- Bassin, Marc. "Nature Is Nurture: Lev Gumilev and the Ecology of Ethnicity." *Slavic Review* 68.4 (Winter 2009): 872-897.
- Bernstein, Anya. "An Inadvertent Sacrifice: Body Politics and Sovereign Power in the Pussy Riot Affair." *Critical Inquiry* 40.1 (Autumn 2013): 220-241.
- Borenstein, Eliot. "Holy appropriate: why Pussy Riot and the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour are a match made in heaven." *The Calvert Journal* (2014).
<http://calvertjournal.com/comment/show/1983/christ-the-saviour-moscow-pussy-riot>. January 22, 2014.
- . "Public Offerings: MMM and the Marketing of Melodrama." Adele Barker (ed.). *Consuming Russia*. Duke University Press, 1999. 49-75.
- . "Suspending Disbelief: 'Cults' and Postmodernism in Post-Soviet Russia." Adele Barker (ed.). *Consuming Russia*. Duke University Press, 1999. 437-462.
- Boym, Svetlana. *Common Places: Mythologies of Everyday Life in Russia*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1994. Chapter 4 & Conclusion.
- The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books, 2001. Introduction, Chapters 1, 6, 8, 9.
- Buck-Morss, Susan. *Dreamworld and the Catastrophe. The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000. (Chapter 6) (214-278).
- Cassiday, Julie A. and Emily Johnson, "A Personality Cult for the Postmodern Era: Reading Vladimir Putin's Public Persona." Goscilo, Helena (ed.). *Putin as Celebrity and Cultural Icon*. BASEES/Routledge, 2012. 37-64..
- Clowes, Edith W. *Russia on the Edge: Imagined Geographies and Post-Soviet Identity*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011. Introduction, Chapters 2 & 6.
- Collier, Stephen J. . *Post-Soviet Social: Neoliberalism, Social Modernity, Biopolitics* . Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011. Chapter 1, 3-6, 9
- Condee, Nancy and Vladimir Padunov. "Perestroika Suicide: Not by Bred Alone." Freidin, Gregory (ed.). *Russian Culture in Transition. Selected Papers of the Working Group for the Study of Contemporary Russian Culture, 1990-1991*. Stanford Slavic Studies 7 (1993). 91-122.
- Dolgoplov, Greg. "Night Watch: Transmedia, Game and Nation." *Digital Icons* (8).
<http://www.digitalicons.org/issue08/greg-dolgoplov/>

- Epstein, Mikhail. "Minimal Religion." Mikhail N. Epstein, Alexander A. Genis, and Slobodanka M. Vladiv-Glover. *Russian Postmodernism: New Perspectives on Post-Soviet Culture*. New York: Berghahn Books, 1999. 163-171.
- "Post-Atheism: From Apophatic Theology to 'Minimal Religion.'" Mikhail N. Epstein, Alexander A. Genis, and Slobodanka M. Vladiv-Glover. *Russian Postmodernism: New Perspectives on Post-Soviet Culture*. New York: Berghahn Books, 1999. 345-393.
- Gessen, Masha. *The Man without a Face: The Unlikely Rise of Vladimir Putin*. New York: Riverhead Press, 2013. Chapters 1-2, 6-8.
- Goscilo, Helena. "Introduction: A Label Designed to Libel versus Mimetic Modeling and Parthenogenesis." *Russian Review* 62.1 (2003): 1-10.
- "New Members and Organs: The Politics of Porn." *Dehexing Sex: Russian Womanhood During and After Glasnost*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996. 134-170.
- "Putin's Performance of Masculinity: The Action Hero and Macho Sex-Object." Goscilo, Helena (ed.). *Putin as Celebrity and Cultural Icon*. BASEES/Routledge, 2012. 180-207.
- Graham, Seth. "The Wages of Syncretism: Folkloric New Russians and Post-Soviet Popular Culture." *Russian Review* 62.1 (2003): 37-53.
- Grigoryeva, Anna. "Observing Okkupai: Practice, Participation, Politics in Moscow's Movable Protest Camp." *Laboratorium* 2 (2012).
<http://soclabo.org/index.php/laboratorium/article/view/40/117>
- Hann, Chris, Caroline Humphrey and Katherine Verdery (2002) "Introduction: Postsocialism as a Topic of Anthropological Investigation." Hann, Chris. (ed.) *Postsocialism: Ideals, Ideologies and Practices in Eurasia*, pp. 1—28.
- Healy, Dan. "Active, Passive, and Russian: the National Idea in Gay Men's Pornography." *Russian Review* 69.2 (2010): 210-230.
- Horowitz, Gernot. "Metro 2033 – More Than a Cinegame?." *Digital Icons* (8).
<http://www.digitalicons.org/issue08/gernot-howanitz/>
- Humphrey, *The Unmaking of Everyday Life: Everyday Economies after Socialism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002. Chapters 3-6, 9.
- Knox, Zoe. "Religious Freedom in Russia: The Putin Years." Mark Steinberg & Catherine Wanner (eds). *Religion, Morality and Community in Post-Soviet Societies*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008. 281-314.
- Laurrelle, Marlene. *Russian Eurasianism: An Ideology of Empire*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012. Introduction, Chapter 2, 4, Conclusion.
- Ledeneva, Alena V. *How Russia Really Works : The Informal Practices that Shaped Post-Soviet Politics and Business*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006. Chapters 1, 5, 7.
- Lipovetsky, Mark. "New Russians as a Cultural Myth." *Russian Review* 62.1 (2003): 54-71.
- "Post-Sots: Transformations of Socialist Realism in the Popular Culture of the Recent Period." *Slavic and East European Journal* (48.3): 356-377.
- Matich, Olga. "Mobsters' Gravestones in 1990s Russia." *Global Crime* 7.1 (2006): 79-104.
- McMichael, Polly. "Defining Pussy Riot Musically: Performance and Authenticity in New Media." *Digital Icons* (9).
- Mikhailova, Tatiana. "Putin as the Father of the Nation: His Family and Other Animals." Goscilo, Helena (ed.). *Putin as Celebrity and Cultural Icon*. BASEES/Routledge, 2012. 65-81.

- Morenkova, Elena. "(Re)Creating the Soviet Past in Russian Digital Communities: Between Memory and Mythmaking." *Digital Icons* (7)
<http://www.digitalicons.org/issue07/elena-morenkova/>
- Oushakine, Serguei. "We're nostalgic, but we're not crazy: Retrofitting the Past in Russia." *The Russian Review* (66.3): 451-482.
- Patico, Jennifer. *Consumption and Social Change in a Post-Soviet Middle Class*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008. Chapters 1 & 2.
- Robski, Oksana. *Casual*. Translated by Antonina W. Bouis. New York: William Morrow, 2006.
- Roesen, Tine. "www.snob.ru: A Social Network Site for the Elite." *Digital Icons* (6).
<http://www.digitalicons.org/issue06/tine-roesen/>
- Rutten, Ellen. "The Faces and Spaces of a Russian Culture-News Portal, www.openspace.ru." *Digital Icons* (6). <http://www.digitalicons.org/issue06/ellen-rutten/>
- Ryazanova-Clark, Lara. "The Discourse of Spectacle at the End of the Presidential Term." Goscilo, Helena (ed.). *Putin as Celebrity and Cultural Icon*. BASEES/Routledge, 2012. 104-132.
- Stites, *Russian Popular Culture. Entertainment and Society since 1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. Chapter 7 & Conclusion.
- Strukov, Vlad. "Possessive and Superlative: On the Simulation of Democracy and Nationhood in Russia" *Digital Icons* (1).
<http://www.digitalicons.org/issue01/issue1/vlad-strukov.php?lng=Englis>
- "Pussy Riot: From Local Appropriation to Global Documentation." *Digital Icons* (9).
- Verdery, Katharine. *What Was Socialism and What Comes Next*. (excerpts)
- Volkov, *Violent Entrepreneurs. The Use of Force in the Making of Russian Capitalism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002. Chapters 1-3.
- Voronina, Olga G. "Pussy Riot's Punk Prayer on Trial Online and in Court." *Digital Icons* (9).
- Yurchak, Alexei. "American Styob"
 --- "Post-Post Communist Sincerity Pioneers." Lahusen, Thomas and Peter H. Solomon, Jr. (eds). *What Is Soviet Now? Identities, Legacies, Memories*. Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2008. 258-276.
 --- "Russian Neoliberal: The Entrepreneurial Ethic and the Spirit of 'True Careerism.'" *Russian Review* 62.1 (2003): 72-90.
- Zigon, Jarrett. "Multiple Moralities: Discourses, Practices, and Breakdowns in Post-Soviet Russia." Zigon, Jarrett (ed.) *Multiple Moralities and Religions in Post-Soviet Russia*. New York: Bergahn Books, 2011.

Films:

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|---|--|
| Balabanov, Alexei (dir.) <i>Brother</i>
(Amazon Instant) | Pichul, Vasily (dir.) <i>Little Vera</i> (1989) (on YouTube) |
| Balabanov, Alexei (dir.) <i>Cargo-200</i> (2008)
(Amazon Instant) | Pozdorovkin, Maxim (dir.) <i>Pussy Riot – A Punk Prayer</i> (2013) |
| Bekmambetov, Timur (dir.) <i>Night Watch</i>
(2008) (Amazon Instant/Netflix) | |

CLASS SCHEDULE

January 29 (W) Introduction

February 5 (W) Perestroika

- ▼ For Today:
 - ✦ Read Stites, *Russian*, (Ch. 7, Conclusion)
 - ✦ Read *Russian Talk* (Introduction, Chapters 1-3)
 - ✦ Read Condee & Padunov
 - ✦ Read Buck-Morss (Ch. 6)
 - ✦ Read Borenstein (Introduction)
 - 📺 Watch *Little Vera*

February 12 (W) Post-Socialism: Theorizing the Ad Hoc

- ▼ For Today:
 - ✦ Read Boym, *Common Places* (Chapter 4)
 - ✦ Read Collier (Chapter 1)
 - ✦ Read Oushakine (Chapter 1)
 - ✦ Read Yurchak (Post-Post Communist Sincerity Pioneers"; "American Styob")
 - ✦ Read Verdery (Intro, Chapters 1) (3-38)

February 19 (W) It's the Economy: Money, Labor, Consumption

- ▼ For Today:
 - ✦ Read Ledeneva Chs 1-4
 - ✦ Read Patino Ch 1 & 2
 - ✦ Read Humphrey, Chs 3-6, 9
 - ✦ Read Collier, Chs 6-7
 - ✦ Read *Russian Talk* (Chapter 4)
 - ✦ Read Borenstein, "Public Offerings" (Barker 49-75)
- 📺 Watch *Tycoon*

Final Deadline for Short Paper#1

February 19 (W) New Russians and Conspicuous Consumption

- ▼ For Today:
 - ✦ Read Goscilo, "Introduction"
 - ✦ Read Balzer, "Routinization"
 - ✦ Read Graham, "Wages"
 - ✦ Read Lipovetsky, "New Russians"
 - ✦ Read Yurchak, "Russian Neoliberal"
 - ✦ Read Robski, *Casual*

March 5 (W) The Russia We Have Lost: Nostalgia

- ▼ For Today:
 - ✦ Read Boym, *Common Places* (Conclusion)
 - ✦ Read Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, (Introduction, Chapter 1, Chapter 6, Chapter 8, Chapter 9)
 - ✦ Read Oushakine "We're Nostalgic"
 - ✦ Read Oushakine (Chapter 2)
 - 📺 Watch *Cargo-200*

March 12 (W) The Discourse of Crisis

- ▼ For Today:
 - ✦ Read Shevechenko
 - 📺 Watch *Night Watch*

March 19 (W) Spring Break

March 26 (W) Violent Crime for Fun and Profit

- ✦ Read Humphrey (Chapter 5)
- ✦ Read Volkov (Chapters 1-3)
- ✦ Read Borenstein, *Overkill* (Chapters 5-7)
- ✦ Read Matich, "Mobsters Gravestones"
- 📺 Watch *Brother*

March 2 (W) Sex and Its Metaphors

- ▼ In Classes:
 - 📺 Watch *About That* (excerpts)

- ▼ For Today:
 - ✦ Read Goscilo, "New Members"
 - ✦ Read Baer Chapters 1 & 2
 - ✦ Read Healey, "Active, Passive"
 - ✦ Read Borenstein, *Overkill* Chapters 1-3
- Final Deadline for Short Paper #2**

April 9 (W) Religion

- ▼ For Today:
 - ✦ Read Epstein "Minimal Religion"
 - ✦ Read Epstein "Post-Atheism"
 - ✦ Read Borenstein "Suspending Disbelief"
 - ✦ Read Agadjanian, "Exploing"
 - ✦ Read Zigon, "Multiple Moralities"
 - ✦ Read Knox, "Religious Freedom"

April 16 (W) Russian and Other Ideas

- ▼ For Today:
- ✦ Read Lipovetsky, "Post-Sots"
 - ✦ Read Bassin, "Nurture Is Nature"
 - ✦ Read Laruelle (Introduction, Chapter 2, Chapter 4, Conclusion)
 - ✦ Read Clowes (Introduction, Chapter 2, Chapter 6)

April 23 (W) The Internet

- ▼ For Today:
- ✦ Read Dolgoplov, "Night Watch"
 - ✦ Read Horowitz, "Metro 2033"
 - ✦ Read Morenkova, "(Re)creating"
 - ✦ Read Morozov, *The Net Delusion* (Introduction, Chapters 2-3, 6, 9)
 - ✦ Read Rosen, "www.snob.ru"
 - ✦ Read Rutten, "The Faces and Spaces"
 - ✦ Read Strukov, "Possessive and Superlative"

April 30 (W) Putin & Putinism

- ▼ For Today:
- ✦ Read Hall
 - ✦ Read Gessen, *The Man Without a Face*
- Chapters 1, 2, 6-8
- ✦ Read Cassidy and Johnson, "A Personality Cult"
 - ✦ Read Mikhailova, "Putin as the Father"
 - ✦ Read Gorham, "Putin's Language"
 - ✦ Read Ryazanova-Clark "The Discourse of Spectacle"
 - ✦ Read Goscilo "Putin's Performance of Masculinity"
 - ✦ Read Grigoryeva, "Observing Okkupai"
- Final Deadline for Short Paper #3**

May 7 (W) Pussy Riot

- ▼ For Today:
- ✦ Read Bernstein, "An Inadvertent Sacrifice."
 - ✦ Read Borenstein, "Holy Appropriate"
 - ✦ Read McMichael, "Defining Pussy Riot Musically"
 - ✦ Read Strukov, "Pussy Riot"
 - ✦ Read Voronina, "Pussy Riot's Punk Prayer"
- ☞ Watch *Pussy Riot: A Punk Prayer*
- FINAL PAPER DUE**