

RUSSIAN AND EASTERN EUROPEAN STUDIES (REES)

REES 0010 Central and Eastern Europe: Cultures, Histories, Societies

The reappearance of the concept of Central and Eastern Europe is one of the most fascinating results of the collapse of the Soviet empire.

The course will provide an introduction into the study of this region - its cultures, histories, and societies - from the foundation of the Holy Roman Empire to the enlargement of the European Union. Students are encouraged to delve deeper into particular countries, disciplines, and sub-regions, such as Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and the Balkans, through an individual research paper and class presentations.

Spring

1 Course Unit

REES 0011 The Power of Language: A Linguistic History of Central and Eastern Europe

This course traces the history of languages in Central and Eastern Europe, exploring how they have shaped the region's cultural and political landscapes. From the early roots of linguistic traditions to the multilingual empires and the emergence of national languages, we will examine how language has been both a force for unity and a source of division. Through historical texts, maps, and case studies, we will uncover the ways in which language has created cultural communities, influenced identities, fueled state-building efforts, and played a role in political struggles. By the end of the course, students will gain a richer understanding of how language has been at the heart of Central and Eastern Europe's history.

1 Course Unit

REES 0100 Portraits of Old Rus: Myth, Icon, Chronicle

Three modern-day nation-states – Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus – share and dispute the cultural heritage of Old Rus, and their political relationships revolve around interpretations of the past. Has the medieval Rus state been established by the Vikings or by the local Slavs? Is early Rus a mother state of Russia or of Ukraine, and, therefore, should it be spelled 'Kyivan Rus' or 'Kievan Rus' in English? Has the culture of Russian political despotism been inherited from the Mongols, or is it an autochthonous ideology? The constructed past has a continuing importance in modern Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus, and it is keenly referenced, often manipulatively, in contemporary social and political discourse. For example, President Putin invaded Ukraine under a pretense that its territory has "always" been an integral part of Russia and its history. The course covers eight centuries of cultural, political, and social history of the lands that are now within the borders of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus, from early historical records through the 18th century, a period that laid the foundation for the Russian Empire and the formation of modern nations. Students gain knowledge about formative events and prominent figures, as well as social and cultural developments during this period. The course takes multidisciplinary approach by combining the study of textual sources, objects of art and architecture, music, ritual, and film in their social and historical contexts. Students learn to analyze and interpret primary sources (historical documents and literary texts), identify their intellectual issues, and understand the historical, cultural, and social contexts in which these sources emerged. While working with these primary sources students learn to pose questions about their value and reliability as historical evidence. By exposing students to the critical examination of "the uses of the past," the course aims to teach them to appreciate the authoritative nature of historical interpretation and its practical application in contemporary social and political rhetoric. The study of pre-modern cultural and political history through the prism of nationalism theories explains many aspects of modern Belarusian, Russian, and Ukrainian societies, as well as political aspirations of their leaders. At the end of the course, students should develop understanding of the continuity and change in the history of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, their belief systems, and nationalistic ideologies, and will be able to speak and write about these issues with competence and confidence.

Fall

Also Offered As: HIST 0724

Mutually Exclusive: REES 6100

1 Course Unit

REES 0105 Portraits of Tsarist Russia: Intrigue, Innovation, Institution

This course covers the history, literature, and culture of Russia from the accession of Ivan IV "the Terrible" in 1547 to the death of Catherine II "the Great" in 1796, representing the monumental period of transition whereby the Tsardom of Russia became the Russian Empire. It is organized chronologically in week-long units that each explore an aspect of social and cultural history through a primary focus on a single literary text, film, or historical document. Main texts will be supplemented with additional materials, including paintings, icons, historical readings, cultural-analytical readings, excerpts from other literary works, &c. Our aim is not only to understand the social codes and rituals that informed early modern Russian life as such, but also to investigate the symbolic value later taken on by the monarchs, historical events, and social conflicts of this era, employing a dual focus on literary interpretation and social history throughout.

1 Course Unit

REES 0110 Portraits of Russian Society: Art, Fiction, Drama

This course covers 19C Russian cultural and social history. Each week-long unit is organized around a single medium-length text (novella, play, memoir) which opens up a single scene of social history birth, death, duel, courtship, tsar, and so on. Each of these main texts is accompanied by a set of supplementary materials paintings, historical readings, cultural-analytical readings, excerpts from other literary works, etc. The object of the course is to understand the social codes and rituals that informed nineteenth-century Russian life, and to apply this knowledge in interpreting literary texts, other cultural objects, and even historical and social documents (letters, memoranda, etc.). We will attempt to understand social history and literary interpretation as separate disciplines yet also as disciplines that can inform one another. In short: we will read the social history through the text, and read the text against the social history.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: HIST 0823

1 Course Unit

REES 0130 Portraits of Soviet Society: Literature, Film, Drama

How can art and literature open a window on Russian lives lived over the course of the tumultuous twentieth century? This course adopts a unique approach to questions of cultural and social history. Each week-long unit is organized around a medium-length film, text or set of texts by some of the most important cultural figures of the era (novella, play, memoir, film, short stories) which opens up a single scene of social history: work, village, avant-garde, war, Gulag, and so on. Each cultural work is accompanied by a set of supplementary materials: historical readings, paintings, cultural-analytical readings, excerpts from other literary works, etc. We will read social history through culture and culture through history.

Spring

Also Offered As: HIST 0825

1 Course Unit

REES 0131 Putin's Russia: Culture, Society and History

Winston Churchill famously said that Russia "is a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma." Strikingly, today many informed Russians would agree: no one can provide definitive answers concerning what has driven Russian public life and politics over the past decade, as it ricocheted from the mass protests of 2011 and 2012, into the Pussy Riot scandal, then the intense patriotism that drove the Russian annexation of Crimea and intervention in Ukraine. In this course we will examine how Russians themselves communicate about and represent Russia and what this reveals about this complex society and its development. We will consider print journalism, novels, films, televised media, and the internet, paying close attention both to particular representations and to social institutions for their production, dissemination and consumption. Topics of special concern will include: conspiracy theories, representations of Russian history, collective identity and patriotism, intellectuals and elites, gender and sexuality, consumption and wealth. Putin's Russia is an introductory level course for which no prior knowledge of Russian history, culture or society is required. All readings and screenings will be in English.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

REES 0149 World Socialist Literature and Film

In 1989-1991, a whole world, perhaps many worlds, vanished: worlds of socialism. In this course we will investigate key works of literature and film spanning the socialist world(s), focused around the USSR, which was for many the (not uncontested) center of the socialist cosmos for much of the twentieth century. Further, we will study the cultural and political interrelationships between the socialist world(s) and anticolonial and left movements in the developing and the capitalist developed nations alike. Finally, we will investigate the aftermaths left behind as these world(s) crumbled or were transformed beyond recognition at the end of the twentieth century. Our work will be ramified by consideration of a number of critical and methodological tools for the study of these many histories and geographies. The purview of the course is dauntingly large—global in scale—and therefore "coverage" will of necessity be incomplete. Readings and viewings may include works by: Tengiz Abuladze, Bertolt Brecht, Slavenka Drakulić, Sergei Eisenstein, Howard Fast, Ritwik Ghatak, Langston Hughes, Audre Lorde, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Pablo Neruda, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Sembène Ousmane, Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet, Rabindranath Tagore, Christa Wolf, Zhang Meng, and others.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: COML 0149, ENGL 1460

1 Course Unit

REES 0150 Prague: The Making of a European Nation

The focus of the proposed course is Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic and the geographical center of Europe. From the 14th century, when it became a seat of the Holy Roman Emperor, to the Hussite Revolution; from the 19th-century national revival and the birth of the independent Czechoslovakia in 1918, to the "Prague Offensive," the last major operation of the Soviet Army in World War II and the re-appearance of the Soviet tanks after the "Prague Spring" in 1968, to the "Velvet" Revolution in 1989, and on to the present day as an EU member, Prague has been the site of major European developments and is where the Czech national identity was forged. Today a popular tourist destination with a uniquely preserved historical center that is part of the UNESCO World Heritage List, Prague combines national character with an increasingly cosmopolitan flavor. Focusing on what makes Prague a national capital, we will note how the "national" negotiates its place with the "global." As a cultural hub and political center, Prague is the repository of a cultural collective memory and of historical and emotional records. It thus presents an excellent case study of how a national identity could be formed around a single urban center. The study of the many layers of Prague's urban landscape allows us to observe how history is built into the physical environment, while the analysis of literary and artistic production reveals how the city has become perceived as a national shrine, embodied in word and image. Students will read the "Prague text" as humanists, anthropologists, and historians. They will learn to apply methods of literary, cultural, and historical analyses, and will ask questions of what it means to be a Czech, a Central European, a European, and even, perhaps, an American.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

REES 0170 Europe: From an Idea to the Union

Employing the methods from the humanities and social sciences this interdisciplinary seminar will explore the variety of factors that contributed to dividing and uniting Europe. The continent will be considered as a geographical and cultural space and the construction of its identity will be examined through several historical periods from the Middle Ages to Modernism—comprising the rich layer of pan-European civilization across the ethnic or national borders. Finally, the structure of the European Union will be scrutinized including its institutions, decision-making mechanism, monetary union, collective security, Brexit, and Europe's changing relationship with Russia. Participants will be encouraged to select a particular topic in European studies and research it through assigned readings, film, literature, and other media

1 Course Unit

REES 0171 The Socialist City

This course will explore the ideology and politics of the socialist city in the Soviet Union, East Europe, and the Second World. We will focus on how design professionals, politicians, and residents realized utopian socialist values in the face of national design traditions, local politics, and limited resources. Beginning with the Soviet case, the course will consider how planners and architects addressed modernization, multi-family housing, and neighborhood units in new city plans. We will consider capitals, like Moscow, as well as less well-known regional centers that had strong local identities, such as Tashkent, Belgrade, and Prague. We will examine the state's use of public spaces for commemorations and preservationists' reinterpretation of existing historic sites. In addition, we will consider how everyday residents experienced the socialist city, such as multi-family housing, shopping centers, and subway systems. We will address how citizens circumvented official state channels to obtain state housing and illegally build homes for themselves, sometimes in a folk style. The course will center on Soviet and East European cities, but also address socialist cities in Cuba and Africa whose design was influenced by transnational exchanges. Most broadly, this course explores the question, what was the socialist city? How did its planners, architects, and politicians understand it, and what did they intend to construct? And, what resulted? In the past fifteen years, North American scholars have begun to take seriously the study of the socialist city, and this course draws on the emerging scholarship on this exciting, cross-disciplinary topic. How do scholars understand the socialist city today? We will examine the shared legacies that socialist cities across East Europe shared with their Western European counterparts, as well as the particularities of design that have sparked North American scholars' debates on what distinguished the socialist city from ones that emerged in a capitalist context. In our discussions, we will seek to understand how socialist design professionals understood their work and the emerging cities at the time, as well as how North American scholars view the socialist city today. Disciplinarily, the focus of the call will fall at the intersection of architectural history and politics.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: URBS 0171

1 Course Unit

REES 0172 Madness and Madmen in Russian Culture

Is "insanity" today the same thing as "madness" of old? Who gets to define what it means to be "sane," and why? Are the causes of madness biological or social? In this course, we will grapple with these and similar questions while exploring Russia's fascinating history of madness as a means to maintain, critique, or subvert the status quo. We will consider the concept of madness in Russian culture beginning with its earliest folkloric roots and trace its depiction and function in the figure of the Russian "holy fool," in classical literature, and in contemporary film. Readings will include works by many Russian greats, such as Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Chekhov, Bulgakov and Nabokov.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: COML 1097

1 Course Unit

REES 0180 Saints and Devils in Russian Literature and Tradition

This course is about Russian cultural imagination, which is populated with "saints" and "devils": believers and outcasts, the righteous and the sinners, virtuous women and fallen angels, holy men and their most bitter adversary - the devil. In Russia, where people's frame of mind has been formed by a mix of Eastern Orthodox Christianity and earlier pagan beliefs, the quest for faith, spirituality, and the meaning of life has invariably been connected with religious matters. How can one find the right path in life? Can a sinner be redeemed? Should one live for God or for the people? Does God even exist? In "Saints and Devils," we read works of the great masters of Russian literature and learn about the historic trends that have filled Russia's literature and art with religious and mystical spirit. Among our readings are old cautionary tales of crafty demons and all-forbearing saints, about virtuous harlots and holy fools, as well as fantastic stories by Nikolai Gogol about pacts with the devil, and a romantic vision of a fallen angel by Yuri Lermontov. We will be in awe of the righteous portrayed by Nikolai Leskov and follow the characters of Fedor Dostoevsky, Leo Tolstoy and Anton Chekhov, as they ponder life and death and search for truth, faith, and love. In sum, over the course of this semester we will talk about ancient cultural traditions, remarkable works of art, and the great artists who created them. In addition to providing a basic introduction to Russian literature, religion, and culture, the course introduces students to literary works of various genres and teaches basic techniques of literary analysis. (No previous knowledge of Russian literature necessary. All readings are in English).

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: COML 2013, RELS 0180

1 Course Unit

REES 0190 Russia and the West

This course will explore the representations of the West in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Russian literature and philosophy. We will consider the Russian visions of various events and aspects of Western political and social life: Revolutions, educational system, public executions, resorts, etc. within the context of Russian intellectual history. We will examine how images of the West reflect Russia's own cultural concerns, anticipations, and biases, as well as aesthetic preoccupations and interests of Russian writers. The discussion will include literary works by Karamzin, Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Leskov, and Tolstoy, as well as non-fictional documents, such as travelers' letters, diaries, and historiographical treatises of Russian Freemasons, Romantic and Positivist thinkers, and Russian social philosophers of the late Nineteenth century. A basic knowledge of nineteenth-century European history is desirable. The class will consist of lectures, discussion, short writing assignments, and two in-class tests.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: COML 2020, HIST 0824

1 Course Unit

REES 0191 Imagining Asia: Russia and the East

This course examines the important role of the East in Russian literature and nationalism. Focusing specifically on the Caucasus, Central Asia, Iran, and Turkey, this course will analyze how Russian writers connected the East to Russian identity, and how their approaches implicate different artistic periods (Romanticism, Realism, Socialist Realism, Post-Modernism) and different political atmospheres (Tsarist Russia, Soviet Union, Post-Soviet). Students will also ascertain how Russian literature on the East has affected and influenced literature and political movements produced in the East. In particular, students will analyze how Soviet Central Asian writers, Iranian Socialists, and contemporary Turkish writers were influenced by Russian literature and Soviet ideology. Ultimately, this course examines the impact of Russia's cultural and political history in 20th century Central Asia and the Middle East. Readings will include works by: Pushkin, Lermontov, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Platonov, Chingiz Aitmatov, Sadek Hedayat, Orhan Pamuk, and others. All readings in English.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

REES 0230 Eastern and Central European Art, 1917 to the Present

This is a survey course examining the prolific and significant artistic production of the region in four parts: the rise and fall of the Avant-Garde (1917-1934), the development of Socialist Realism (1934-1953), the embrace of post-war Nonconformism (1953-1989); and the proliferation of contemporary art (1989 - 2023). The course will include Russian artists, where applicable; however, it will intentionally recenter the narrative around artists from the satellite states (Poland, Hungary, Romania) and republics of the Soviet Union (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and Ukraine). In light of the war in Ukraine, additional emphasis on Ukrainian art will be provided. Subtopics will include architecture and graphic design; monuments and memory; colonialism and postcolonialism; feminism and LGBTQAI+; the environment; protest. All readings and lectures will be in English

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 2879

Prerequisite: n/a

1 Course Unit

REES 0240 Russian and East European Art and Cinema since 1900

Since the turn of the twentieth century, art and politics have been uniquely intertwined in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and its successor states. In the first decades of the century, across these territories, radical artistic movements such as suprematist abstraction, productivism, constructivist architecture, Bauhaus modernism, and, finally, Stalinist socialist realism sought to support revolutionary social transformation by literally reshaping the social world and human perception. Cinema, too, played its part—Vladimir Lenin, the Communist revolutionary founder of the Soviet Union, famously said that “of all the arts the most important for us is the cinema.” Propelled by this vision, the early USSR became a laboratory for cutting-edge film that sought to transform viewers into a new kind of person. Yet as the century wore on and Soviet socialism gave way first to state terror and then to moribund bureaucratism and cultural conservatism, it was non-conformist underground artists who took the lead in experimental and politically radical art in the region. Finally, in the post-Soviet era, art and cinema in these territories embraced democratic freedoms and market institutions, before finally, in some quarters, returning to revolutionary roots in response to rising authoritarianism. In this broad survey course, we will trace the history of art and film of the region through a series of case studies, including: Erik Bulatov, Sergei Eisenstein, Miloš Forman, Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, Oleg Kulik, Emir Kusturica, El Lillzitsky, Kazimir Malevich, Jiří Menzel, Kira Muratova, Pussy Riot, Aleksandr Rodchenko, Varvara Stepanova, Dziga Vertov, Andrzej Wajda, and others.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 2951, CIMS 0274

1 Course Unit

REES 0270 Russian History in Film

This course draws on fictional, dramatic and cinematic representations of Russian history based on Russian as well as non-Russian sources and interpretations. The analysis targets major modes of imagining, such as narrating, showing and reenacting historical events, personae and epochs justified by different, historically mutating ideological postulates and forms of national self-consciousness. Common stereotypes of picturing Russia from “foreign” perspectives draw special attention. The discussion involves the following themes and outstanding figures: the mighty autocrats Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great, and Catherine the Great; the tragic ruler Boris Godunov; the brazen rebel and royal impostor Pugachev; the notorious Rasputin, his uncanny powers, sex-appeal, and court machinations; Lenin and the October Revolution; images of war; times of construction and times of collapse of the Soviet Colossus.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 2750

Mutually Exclusive: REES 5270

1 Course Unit

REES 0275 Montage and Revolution: Conceptual Cinema of Sergei Eisenstein

The 1917 Russian Revolution was to inaugurate a new epoch in human history. Working with and within this time of political and cultural upheaval, Sergei Eisenstein inaugurated a revolution in montage technique that would usher a new age of cinema, a new practice of art, and a new way of thinking in images. Eisenstein's cinematic techniques aimed at producing concepts in the language of film. It also sought modes of expression inaccessible to discursive thought. Navigating a tenuous line between art and politics, Eisenstein's works explore the social and political power of affectivity and expressivity, and the cinematic potential for both representing and eliciting emotion in individual viewers and masses alike. In conversation with the tumultuous political and cultural shifts of the Soviet society from the revolutionary 1920s to the age of Stalinism and the World War II, this course will follow Eisenstein's filmography, from his monumental reconstruction of the revolutionary Petersburg in October to the engagement with representations of history during the Stalinist era in *Ivan the Terrible*. We will engage with Eisenstein's theoretical writings, his cartoons and sketches, public speeches, and his lost and unrealized projects, such as his collaboration with Hollywood and a plan to film Marx's *Capital*. In this process, we will learn basic tenets of film and aesthetic theory, while practicing the analysis of film with attention to form and content. Following the lead of Eisenstein's artistic and theoretical production, we will engage with questions his work raises: How can cinematography elicit and manipulate the emotions of its viewer? What is expressivity? Can film represent philosophical concepts? What is cinema's relation to propaganda and politics? What is revolutionary about the medium of film, and what is film's role in the revolution? No prior knowledge of Russian history, culture or society is required, nor is specialized knowledge of film history or film analysis. All readings will be in English, and all films will be subtitled in English.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: CIMS 0275, COML 0275

1 Course Unit

REES 0280 Andrei Tarkovsky: Cinema, Spirit and the Art of the Long Take

Andrei Tarkovsky is universally acknowledged to be the greatest Soviet filmmaker of the last half of the twentieth century. Kurosawa claimed that Tarkovsky had "no equal among film directors alive now." Bergman called his work "a miracle." His films are beautiful, intellectually challenging, and spiritually profound. They also represent a prolonged exploration of the potential of the long take - unusually extended, continuous shots. Tarkovsky's works range from *"Ivan's Childhood"*, a study of wartime experience through the eyes of a child; to *"Solaris"*, a philosophical essay in the form of a science-fiction thriller; to *"Andrei Rublev"*, an investigation of the power of art and spirituality. In this course, we will study Tarkovsky's films and life, with attention to his formal and artistic accomplishments, his thought and writings, and the cultural and political contexts of his work. Each student will learn to analyze film form and content and write two short and one longer paper on some longstanding aspect of Tarkovsky's work of the student's choice.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 2501

1 Course Unit

REES 0310 The Rise and Fall of the Russian Empire, 1552-1917

How and why did Russia become the center of the world's largest empire, a single state covering one-sixth of the world's land surface, encompassing eleven time zones and over a hundred ethnic groups? To answer this question, we will explore the rise of a distinct political culture beginning in medieval Muscovy, its transformation under the impact of a prolonged encounter with European civilization, and the various attempts to re-form Russia from above and below prior to the Revolution of 1917. Main themes include the facade vs. the reality of central authority, the intersection of foreign and domestic issues, the development of a radical intelligentsia, and the tension between empire and nation.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: HIST 0240

Mutually Exclusive: HIST 5240

1 Course Unit

REES 0311 The Soviet Century, 1917-1991

Out of an obscure, backward empire, the Soviet Union emerged to become the great political laboratory of the twentieth century. This course will trace the roots of the world's first socialist society and its attempts to recast human relations and human nature itself. Topics include the origins of the Revolution of 1917, the role of ideology in state policy and everyday life, the Soviet Union as the center of world communism, the challenge of ethnic diversity, and the reasons for the USSR's sudden implosion at the end of the century. Focusing on politics, society, culture, and their interaction, we will examine the rulers (from Lenin to Gorbachev) as well as the ruled (peasants, workers, and intellectuals; Russians and non-Russians). The course will feature discussions of selected texts, including primary sources in translation.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: HIST 0290

1 Course Unit

REES 0410 Masterpieces of 19th-Century Russian Literature

A bronze monument to an all-powerful emperor comes to life and pursues a poor everyman through the streets, driving him to his death. A studious young man kills an old woman as a philosophical experiment. A young woman at the height of aristocratic society abandons her husband and young son to devote herself to her lover. These and other tales from the classics of nineteenth-century Russian literature will touch and delight you, get under your skin, and even attempt to show you how to live.

We will read these tales in order to understand how books can become events in their own right, how Russian literature gained such power and prestige, and what it can still teach us today. Authors include Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Pavlova, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and others.

Fall

1 Course Unit

REES 0411 First-Year Seminar: Masterpieces of 19th-Century Russian Literature

A bronze monument to an all-powerful emperor comes to life and pursues a poor everyman through the streets, driving him to his death. A studious young man kills an old woman as a philosophical experiment. A young woman at the height of aristocratic society abandons her husband and young son to devote herself to her lover. These and other tales from the classics of nineteenth-century Russian literature will touch and delight you, get under your skin, and even attempt to show you how to live.

We will read these tales in order to understand how books can become events in their own right, how Russian literature gained such power and prestige, and what it can still teach us today. Authors include Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Pavlova, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and others.

Fall

Mutually Exclusive: REES 0410

1 Course Unit

REES 0430 Masterpieces of 20th-Century Russian Literature

"Only in Russia is poetry respected. They kill you for it," famously quipped the poet Osip Mandelstam, who died in Joseph Stalin's concentration camps. Russia is a society that takes literature seriously—one in which the pen is assumed to have direct historical consequences. In this course, we will study how twentieth century Russian literature actively participated in war, revolution, totalitarian dictatorship, and resistance.

The masterworks we will study open windows into worlds of revolutionary rapture, moral uplift in the face of tyranny, courageous subversion of the repressive state, and historical reflection on its failures. Our readings will range from an avant-garde play intended to rewire your mind, to an epic representation of revolutionary social transformation, to surreal and absurdist representations of a world gone mad. In other words: fasten your seatbelts low and tight across your waist; turbulence ahead!

Spring

1 Course Unit

REES 0470 Poetics of Screenplay: The Art of Plotting

This course studies screenwriting in a historical, theoretical and artistic perspective. We discuss the rules of drama and dialogue, character development, stage vs. screen-writing, adaptation of nondramatic works, remaking of plots, auteur vs. genre theory of cinema, storytelling in silent and sound films, the evolution of a script in the production process, script doctoring, as well as screenwriting techniques and tools.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 1110, COML 1018

1 Course Unit

REES 0471 Russian Short Story

This course studies the development of 19th and 20th-century Russian literature through one of its most distinct and highly recognized genres – the short story. The readings include great masters of fiction such as Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Solzhenitsyn, and others. The course presents the best works of short fiction situating them in a larger cultural-political context. The students learn about the historical formation, poetic virtue, and thematic characteristics of major narrative modes such as sentimentalism, romanticism, utopia, realism, modernism, and socialist realism. We study literary devices, styles, and trends of storytelling such as irony, absurd, satire, grotesque, anecdote, etc. Main topics include culture of the duel; the role of chance; the riddle of death; anatomy of madness; imprisonment and survival.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

REES 0478 Banned Books: Writing Against Censorship

This course offers a broad survey of banned, censored, suppressed, and silenced literature in Eastern Europe and the USSR during the 20th century. While the totalitarian political regimes of the 20th century sought to control the public sphere and regulate artistic production, their efforts were never entirely successful. Inevitably, works appeared that either sought to directly challenge and confront ideology, "slipped through the cracks" and were banned or censored retroactively, or seemed palatable enough to censors but proved provocative to perceptive readers skilled in reading "between the lines." We will read and discuss banned, problematic, and controversial works written during the 20th century in contexts of political unfreedom, as we seek answers to a number of questions about the interconnection between the political and the aesthetic, such as: Do works banned for political reasons also pose aesthetic challenges to tyranny? Does suspect politics entail suspect aesthetics, or vice versa? Can radical aesthetics arise from ostensibly conformist politics? How does Sir Isaiah Berlin's distinction between positive and negative liberty help us navigate the murky waters of art under despotism? Readings will include works by Hrabal, Kiš, Kross, Kundera, Shalamov, Voznesenskaia, Yohansen, and others.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: COML 0478

1 Course Unit

REES 0479 Literature of Dissent: Art as Protest in 20th-Century Poland and Czechoslovakia

Eastern and Central Europe was the site of monumental political changes in the twentieth century, including the disillusion of monarchical empires in the First World War and the expansion of Soviet-style communism. At every point, artists have taken part in political debates, sometimes advancing radical agendas, sometimes galvanizing movements, sometimes simply shouting into the void to register their own dissatisfaction. In this course, we will consider texts including literature, political philosophy and film that pushed back against the dominant political norms. In so doing, we will investigate Aesopian language, the mechanics of censorship, the repercussions of dissent, performativity, samizdat and the rise of an alternative culture. We will contextualize our readings of literature with the sociological and historical work of Benedict Anderson, Tony Judt, Jonathan Bolton, Shana Penn, Alexei Yurchak and the series Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe. As well as becoming familiar with major thinkers and movements in Eastern and Central Europe, students will develop a sense of art as a tool of political protest.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: COML 2011

1 Course Unit

REES 0480 Dostoevsky

This seminar is a survey of the life and works of Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881). Focal texts include a selection of his major novels and a range of shorter works that span Dostoevsky's early career, his return from exile in Siberia, and the last years of his life. We will work together to understand Dostoevsky's career and self-conception as a writer, the wide-ranging philosophical implications of his work, and how his activity can be interpreted in the historical, ideological, and literary contexts of nineteenth-century Russia and Europe.

Also Offered As: COML 2007

1 Course Unit

REES 0481 Tolstoy

Leo Tolstoy is a figure who arguably needs little introduction, if only as an effigy for the kind of author who writes books like "War and Peace" — prime examples of what Henry James called the "large, loose, baggy monsters" of nineteenth-century Russian literature, the sprawling novels with several parallel plot lines and hundreds of characters who inhabit page numbers in the quadruple digits. In this seminar, we will grapple together with the intricacies of "War and Peace," learn about the social, cultural, and historical contexts not only of its depiction and genesis, but also of its wide-ranging reception, and consider the big questions that preoccupied Tolstoy throughout his lifetime. Working with a range of his texts including a wide spread of his shorter fiction and also a number of Tolstoy's non-literary writings on topics such as aesthetics, religion, education, and social and political problems, we will work toward understanding Tolstoy's work, how he became who he was, and the reverberations of his thought throughout the rest of the world.

Also Offered As: COML 2004

1 Course Unit

REES 0482 Nabokov: Art, Otherworldliness, and Morality

This course bridges the gap between the "Russian Nabokov" and the "American Nabokov." All of the readings in this course are in English and no knowledge of Russian is required, but the majority of the readings are translations of Nabokov's Russian-language works. Your study of Nabokov as a celebrated émigré novelist writing in Russian in the 1920s and 30s will contextualize his second career as an American author and enrich your further study of his English-language novels. Starting with the small yet significant task of learning to pronounce his name correctly (alas, The Police got it wrong in their 1980 hit "Don't Stand So Close to Me"), your knowledge and reading of Nabokov will grow in increasing depth and complexity over the course of the semester. The climactic novel of the semester is Nabokov's final Russian novel, *The Gift*, which is arguably his greatest novel ever (yes, even better than *Lolita* or *Pale Fire*). The final text for study, his American *Invitation of a Small Guest*, written in tandem with *Lolita*, serves as our example of Nabokov's prose after his transition to English. The central themes for this course are derived from the arc of inquiry in Nabokov scholarship, concerning Art (and artifice), Otherworldliness (termed, in Russian, "potustoronnost"), and Morality (an area of interest after years of claims that Nabokov's works are amoral and/or immoral). These trends in scholarship occurred, more or less, successively, but we will consider all the themes simultaneously in each text. In addition to becoming a proficient reader of Nabokov's challenging and fascinating fiction, you will develop and hone your critical reading skills, as well as gain competency in major areas of inquiry in literary studies, especially narrative strategies, inter-textuality, and metafiction.

Also Offered As: COML 0482

1 Course Unit

REES 0630 Behind the Iron Curtain

This first-year seminar provides an introduction to the histories, cultures, and societies of Central and Eastern Europe, including Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, and the successor states of Yugoslavia. Through a selection of articles and essays written by anthropologists and sociologists and based on their extended fieldwork in the region, students will explore both the ethnographic method and the experience of everyday life during and after the communist era. Topics will include: popular music under socialism, food and wine, environmental concerns, the status of Muslim minorities, socialist aesthetics, public memory and cultures of commemoration, privatization, advertising, women's rights, gender and sexuality, emergent nationalisms, and the rise of income inequality and homelessness. All readings and assignments in English.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ANTH 0630

1 Course Unit

REES 0982 Study Abroad Course Taught in English

This is for a course taken abroad on a topic not taught at Penn but which deserve departmental credit

1 Course Unit

REES 0992 Transfer Credit Course Taught in English

This number is for a course taken at another institution that fits that field of departmental major and minor programs.

1 Course Unit

REES 1171 Dialogues in Critical Theory between East and West

The twentieth century, marked by radical political revolutions and immense technological advancements, witnessed a seismic shift in critical thinking—the emergence of what we now call "critical theory." Instead of the centrality of the free individual, an idea of structure took hold; instead of grand narratives, the notion of decentered subjectivity gained prevalence. Concurrently, the 1917 communist revolution, WWII, and the Cold War divided the world into distinct cultural, political, and epistemological formations—broadly categorized as East and West, or socialist and capitalist worlds. This seminar will explore the genesis of this transformation in critical thinking, focusing on literary, cultural, and political theory through the lens of the political and cultural divide between Eastern and Western Europe. Participants will be introduced to the main tenets of critical theory and continental philosophy of the twentieth century, including structuralism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, existentialism, and deconstruction. The seminar will highlight the often covert dialogues and conceptual exchanges between East and West, despite censorship and beyond official channels. Finally, we will ask: what promise does critical theory have for us today, in a world dominated by war, political crises, and global capital? No previous knowledge of literary and cultural theory or philosophy is required.

Not Offered Every Year

Mutually Exclusive: REES 6171

1 Course Unit

REES 1172 Marx, Marxism, and the Culture of Revolution

Capitalist society is the object of Karl Marx's analysis and critique—a society that is the product of history and may one day vanish. This course will trace Marx's critique by moving between the fields of philosophy, economics, and politics. We will locate key interventions of Marx's thought that transform modern conceptions of history, the relation between economics and politics, and the limits of struggle and emancipation in capitalist society. We will consider the historical conditions of Marx's writing and the development of his thought to discover many sides of Marx and many divergent Marxisms (humanist, post-structuralist, feminist, and others) that follow, often at odds with each other. Further, we will ask about what kind of horizons Marx's and Marxist interventions open up for critique and analysis of capitalist society with respect to gender, race, class, and nation. "Theory becomes a material force when it has seized the masses," argues the young Marx; indeed, his theories have fueled emancipatory movements and propped up tyrannical regimes, substantiated scientific theories and transformed philosophical debates. In examining Marx's legacy, we will focus on the elaborations and historical limitations of his ideas by examining the challenges of fascism, the communist experiment in the Soviet Union and its collapse, as well as the climate and other crises currently taking place. In conclusion, we will turn to the question of whether and to what extent Marx's ideas remain relevant today, and whether it is possible to be a Marxist in the contemporary world dominated by global capital.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: COML 1020, GRMN 1020, PHIL 1439

1 Course Unit

REES 1173 Russian Modernism: Art, Life, and Culture

This course examines the history and core ideas behind major Russian modernist movements—including Symbolism, Futurism, Cubism, Cosmism, and abstract/non-figurative art—and explores how these movements differed from similar art styles and trends in other parts of the world. We will focus on understanding the Russian modernists' relentless emphasis on the inner world, defiance of social and moral conventions, and drive to experiment in art and life. In Russian modernism, art held spiritual power more profoundly than in comparable Western movements and was tasked with engineering social change. Russian Symbolists and avant-gardists engaged with abstract themes—such as eternal beauty and immortality—as well as urgent societal issues tied to modernization, including gender, sexuality, family structure, feminism, and socialist communities. While the ideas developed by modernist movements often prioritized intellectual ideals over practical solutions, they remain essential for interpreting modernist art and connecting with its enduring emotional resonance. The readings include short literary works, philosophical fragments, and artistic manifestos. All materials and discussions are in English.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 3841

1 Course Unit

REES 1174 National Antiquities: Genealogies, Hagiographies, Holy Objects

Human societies have always wanted to know about their origins, the reasons for their customs, the foundations of their social institutions and religious beliefs, and the justification of their power structures. They have conceived of creation myths and of origins stories for their communities in order to position themselves within the past and present of the natural and human worlds. The newly Christianized kingdoms of Medieval Europe faced the challenge of securing a place in the new vision of universal Providential history, and they inscribed their own histories into the narratives they knew from the authoritative sources of the time - biblical genealogies and heroic stories inherited from the poets of classical antiquity. The deeds and virtues of saintly kings and church hierarchs provided a continuity of historical narrative on the sacred map of time and space. In the 19th century, while interest in medieval antiquity as a source of inspiration for political and cultural renewal brought about a critical study of evidence, it also effected reinterpretation and repurposing of this evidence vis-a-vis a new political concept - that of a nation. This seminar will focus on central, eastern and southeast European nations and explore three categories of "national antiquities" that have been prominent in the workings of their modern nationalisms: (1) stories of ethnogenesis (so-called, *origo gentis*) that narrate and explain the beginnings and genealogy of peoples and states, as they are recorded in medieval and early modern chronicles, (2) narratives about holy people, who are seen as national patron-saints, and (3) material objects of sacred significance (manuscripts, religious ceremony objects, crowns, icons) that act as symbols of political, cultural and national identities. Our approach will be two-fold: On the one hand, we will read medieval sources and ask the question of what they tell us about the mindset of the authors and societies that created them. We will think about how the knowledge of the past helped medieval societies legitimize the present and provide a model for the future. On the other hand, we will observe how medieval narratives and artifacts have been interpreted in modern times and how they became repurposed - first, during the "Romantic" stage of national awakening, then in the post-imperial era of independent nation-states, and, finally, in the post-Soviet context of reimagined Europe. We will observe how the study of nationalistic mentality enhances our understanding of how the past is represented and repurposed in scholarship and politics.

Also Offered As: HIST 0725

1 Course Unit

REES 1177 Universal Language: From the Tower of Babel to Artificial Intelligence

This is a course in European intellectual history. It explores the historical trajectory, from antiquity to the present day, of the idea that there once was, and again could be, a universal and perfect language among the human race. If recovered, it can explain the origins and meaning of human experience, and can enable universal understanding and world peace. The tantalizing question of the possibility of a universal language have been vital and thought-provoking throughout the history of humanity. The idea that the language spoken by Adam and Eve was a language which perfectly expressed the nature of all earthly objects and concepts has occupied the minds of intellectuals for almost two millennia. In defiance of the Christian biblical myth of the confusion of languages and nations at the Tower of Babel, they have over and over tried to overcome divine punishment and discover the path back to harmonious existence. By recovering or recreating a universal language, theologians hoped to be able to experience the divine; philosophers believed that it would enable apprehension of the laws of nature, while mystic cabbalists saw in it direct access to hidden knowledge. In reconstructing a proto-language, 19th-century Indo-Europeanist philologists saw the means to study the early stages of human development. Even in the 20th century, romantic idealists, such as the inventor of Esperanto Ludwik Zamenhof, strived to construct languages to enable understanding among estranged nations. For writers and poets of all times, from Cyrano de Bergerac to Velimir Khlebnikov, the idea of a universal and perfect language has been an inexhaustible source of inspiration. Today, this idea echoes in theories of universal and generative grammars, in approaching English as a global tongue, and in various attempts to create artificial languages, even a language for cosmic communication. Each week we address a particular period and set of theories to learn about universal language projects, but above all, the course examines fundamental questions of what language is and how it functions in human society.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: COML 0095, ENGL 1445, HIST 0822

1 Course Unit

REES 1181 Writing the Translation

Literary translation is many things. Perhaps most of all, though, it is writing. It is a craft, and it is also a particular kind of imagination that both haunts and supersedes craft. Every translation, then, is as much the making of a new original as it is the learning from and listening to the 'old' one. We will pursue what Kornei Chukovsky calls "the high art of translation" in its multiple forms: as a discipline, as a tradition, as a force of disruption and change, and as a form of play. This is a course in two parts: seminar and workshop. We'll first read and discuss translated texts, and texts about translation, from a multiplicity of language traditions. This will help us develop a shared theoretical and imaginative language for the course's second portion, the workshop, in which you will try out your own translation work in conversation with your peers and me. A majority of the writers, poets, and theorists that we will encounter are working in the Russian-language tradition, but we will supplement this with texts by Anne Carson, John Keene, Sawako Nakayasu, among others. We will also consider translation between mediums, including video, music, and comics. And a user's note: if you are concerned that your language skills are not far enough along to participate meaningfully in class, please set that worry aside! Translation is a great way to improve your language, and this course is less about result than about process.

Also Offered As: COML 1181

1 Course Unit

REES 1230 Russian and East European Film from the October Revolution to World War II

The purpose of this course is to present the Russian and East European contribution to world cinema in terms of film theory, experimentation with the cinematic language, and social and political reflex. We discuss major themes and issues such as the invention of montage, the means of revolutionary visual propaganda and the cinematic component to the communist cultural revolutions, party ideology, and practices of social-engineering, cinematic response to the emergence of the totalitarian state in Soviet Russia before World War II.

Also Offered As: CIMS 1640

1 Course Unit

REES 1231 Russian and East European Film after World War II

The purpose of this course is to present the Russian and East European contribution to world cinema in terms of film theory, experimentation with the cinematic language, and social and political reflex. We discuss major themes and issues such as means of visual propaganda and the cinematic component to the communist cultural revolutions, party ideology and practices of social-engineering, cinematic response to the emergence of the totalitarian state in Russia and its subsequent installation in Eastern Europe after World War II.

Also Offered As: CIMS 1650

Mutually Exclusive: REES 6231

1 Course Unit

REES 1272 Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Film

This course studies the cinematic representation of civil wars, ethnic conflicts, nationalistic doctrines, and genocidal policies. The focus is on the violent developments that took place in Russia and on the Balkans after the collapse of the Soviet Bloc and were conditioned by the new geopolitical dynamics that the fall of communism had already created. We study media broadcasts, documentaries, feature films representing the Eastern, as well as the Western perspective. The films include masterpieces such as "Time of the Gypsies", "Underground", "Prisoner of the Mountains", "Before the Rain", "Behind Enemy Lines", and others.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 1272

1 Course Unit

REES 1370 Cold War: Global History

The Cold War was more than simply a military confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union; it was the frame within which the entire world developed (for better or worse) for nearly five decades. This course will examine the cold War as a global phenomenon, covering not only the military and diplomatic history of the period, but also examining the social and cultural impact of the superpower confrontation. We will cover the origins of the conflict, the interplay between periods of tension and detente, the relative significance of disagreements within the opposing blocs, and the relationship between the "center" of the conflict in the North Atlantic/European area and the global "periphery".

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: HIST 1735

1 Course Unit

REES 1380 Tolstoy's War and Peace and the Age of Napoleon

In this course we will read what many consider to be the greatest book in world literature. This work, Tolstoy's War and Peace, is devoted to one of the most momentous periods in world history, the Napoleonic Era (1789-1815). We will study both the book and the era of the Napoleonic Wars: the military campaigns of Napoleon and his opponents, the grand strategies of the age, political intrigues and diplomatic betrayals, the ideologies and human dramas, the relationship between art and history. How does literature help us to understand this era? How does history help us to understand this great book? Because we will read War and Peace over the course of the entire semester, readings will be manageable and very enjoyable.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: COML 1262, HIST 1260

1 Course Unit

REES 1470 Chekhov: Stage & Screen

What's so funny, Mr. Chekhov? This question is often asked by critics and directors who still are puzzled with Chekhov's definition of his four major plays as comedies. Traditionally, all of them are staged and directed as dramas, melodramas, or tragedies. Should we cry or should we laugh at Chekhovian characters who commit suicide, or are killed, or simply cannot move to a better place of living? Is the laughable synonymous to comedy and the comic? Should any fatal outcome be considered tragic? All these and other questions will be discussed during the course. The course is intended to provide the participants with a concept of dramatic genre that will assist them in approaching Chekhov's plays as comedies. In addition to reading Chekhov's works, Russian and western productions and film adaptations of Chekhov's works will be screened. Among them are, Vanya on 42nd Street with Andre Gregory, and Four Funny Families. Those who are interested will be welcome to perform and/or direct excerpts from Chekhov's works.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 1470

1 Course Unit

REES 1471 Fate and Chance in Literature and Culture

In Fate and Chance in Literature and Culture, we will explore these two interrelated concepts in comparative perspective over a broad historical range. As a result, the students will learn how the philosophy of fate and chance has been reflected in works of different Russian authors and in different cultural and political environments. In Russian as well as western systems of belief fate and chance represent two extreme visions of the universal order, or, perhaps, two diametrically opposed cosmic forces: complete determinism, on the one hand, and complete chaos or unpredictability, on the other. These visions have been greatly reflected by various mythopoetic systems. In this course, we will investigate religious and folkloric sources from a series of Russian traditions compared to other Indo-European traditions (Greek, East-European). Readings will include The Song of Prince Igor's Campaign, The Gambler by Dostoevsky, The Queen of Spades by Pushkin, Vii by Gogol, The Black Monk by Chekhov, The Fatal Eggs by Bulgakov, and more.

Also Offered As: COML 1095

1 Course Unit

REES 1530 Communism

The rise and fall of Communism dominated the history of the short twentieth century from the Russian revolution of 1917 to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. As a system of government, Communism is more or less dead, but its utopian ideals of liberation from exploitation and want live on. Communism remains the one political-economic system that presented, for a time, an alternative to global capitalism. In this course, students will gain an introduction to socialist and Communist political thought and explore Communist political and economic regimes their successes and failures, critics and dissidents, efforts at reform, and causes of collapse. We will learn about the remnants of Communism in China, North Korea, and Cuba and efforts of contemporary theorists to imagine a future for Communism.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: PSCI 0102

1 Course Unit

REES 1531 Socialism

Socialism has become a hot topic in US politics. Some advocate it as an ideology that supports economic equality; others decry it as a path towards excessive state control. But what does the word socialism really mean? Why does it seem to mean different things to different people? What is the historical background of socialism? Are there meaningful differences between different forms of socialism or are they more or less the same thing? Which societies are socialist in practice, both past and present? What about the US? What are the different proposals US and other Socialists make today? What is their logic? How socialist are they? Are their policy ideas or bad? What effects would they have? This course will introduce students to socialism in theory and practice, with an emphasis on different models of Western social democracy and how they are impacting political discourse right now.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: PSCI 1104

1 Course Unit

REES 1535 Russian Politics

Keeping in mind the difficulties of teaching about an adversary embroiled in a war, this course will seek to analyze Russian politics as objectively as possible, with an eye to understanding long-term continuities and changes through alternating periods of stability and turmoil. This necessarily entails a consideration of historical complexities, especially the Soviet era (1917-1991). Thus, the first part of the course examines the origins and evolution of the Soviet regime from Lenin to Gorbachev. The point would be to identify some key continuities and transformations political dynamics, economic development, social conditions, and geopolitical ambitions – particularly aspects that would later affect the evolution of post-Soviet Russia. The rest of the course delves into the evolution of politics, economics, society and foreign policy, first during the early years of transition under Boris Yeltsin (1992-99), but primarily under Vladimir Putin (2000 - present). In this section, we track the evolution of Russia's political system, the fluctuations in economic growth, and changing social conditions over time. In the process, we will consider the rise of the oligarchs, patterns of political protest, social/demographic trends, and the role of natural resources. We will then turn to the drivers of Russia's foreign policy since the break-up of the USSR, trying to identify the sources for the sharp decline in Russia's relations with the US/West since even before the invasion of Ukraine. We will trace some of the key forces that paved the way to the invasion of Ukraine, especially and speculate about what the future holds in terms of peace and conflict in the region. In all these domains analysis will be informed by an underlying question: how "normal" is post-Soviet Russia's trajectory when compared to non-western powers with their own competing historical inheritances and geopolitical aspirations (e.g. China, India, Turkey, etc.).

Spring

Also Offered As: PSCI 1172

Mutually Exclusive: PSCI 5172

1 Course Unit

REES 1570 Russia and Eastern Europe in International Affairs

Russia and the European Union (EU) are engaged in a battle for influence in Eastern Europe. EU foreign policy towards its Eastern neighbors is based on economic integration and the carrot of membership. With the application of this powerful incentive, Central and Southeastern European countries such as Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Croatia have progressed rapidly towards integration with the EU (and NATO). Yet, given Russia's opposition to the further enlargement, membership is off the table for the large semi-Western powers such as Russia itself and Turkey and the smaller countries inhabiting an emerging buffer zone between Russia and the EU, such as Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova, and Belarus. These in-between countries find themselves subject to intense competition for influence between Eastern and Western powers. In this context, EU countries must balance their energy dependence on Russia and need for new markets and geopolitical stability with concern for human rights, democratic governance, and self-determination. What are the trade-offs implicit in the foreign policies of Russia, EU member states, and Eastern Europe? What are the best policy approaches? What are the main opportunities and obstacles?

Fall

Also Offered As: PSCI 0401

Mutually Exclusive: REES 5570

1 Course Unit

REES 1575 Oligarchy, Corruption, and Kleptocracy in Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia

Corruption is one of the main political pathologies that can undermine government transparency and therefore limit the ability of government to represent and deliver for citizens. It exists in all countries to varying degrees, and is endemic in post-communist Eastern and Central Europe and Eurasia - in part due to the way former state assets were privatized in the 1990s - and though it can be a mainly domestic phenomenon, it contributes to malign foreign influence as well. Corruption erodes public trust and has affected negatively not only the consolidation of democratic institutions, but in some cases the ability to form a functional government at all or to know who is driving government decision making and on the basis of what interests. Corruption and kleptocracy in the region also have fueled domestic and international conflicts and have impacted European, American, and global security. In this seminar-format course, taught by a practitioner who has served as the National Security Council Director for Central Europe and the Balkans, students will examine the roots, mechanisms, and consequences of corruption and kleptocracy, and will seek to understand some of the available tools to counter them (including, i.a., sanctions, law enforcement, financial transparency initiatives, investigative journalism, and international relations tools such as the EU accession process). They will read case studies from Central and Eastern Europe, Russia, Ukraine, and the Balkans, analyze and compare these cases, and discuss the adequacy of citizens' and the international community's attempts to address them thus far. Each student will also write a final paper examining a country or situation and proposing responses to mitigate or eliminate corruption and its consequences in that case.

1 Course Unit

REES 1580 China & USSR Compared

A comprehensive and multi-faceted survey of China and Russia, mostly in the twentieth century, through examining preludes and postludes, but focusing above all on their time as Communist states and sometimes quarreling Cold War allies. Of course we will cover the history, the geography, the economics, the leaders (Stalin, Mao), and the great events - not least the Second World War in each - always comparing, contrasting, and drawing linkages. We will also examine, however, daily life and work for ordinary people, developments in society, and not least their common attempts at revolution, at somehow creating new and unprecedented polities, having populations of radically transformed new people. This informative, fascinating quest will take us from folklore to literature and the arts to dissent and religion and ecology, among other topics. As far as possible we will let their people speak for themselves, by assigning mostly translations of original sources including novels and memoirs, even poetry. A comprehensive assessment of the strategically critical Asian heartland - which at over 14 million square miles is larger than Canada, the United States, and Western Europe combined. Lectures, readings, midterm, short paper, and in-class final.

Spring

Also Offered As: EALC 1712, HIST 1790

1 Course Unit

REES 1630 Soviet and Post-Soviet Economy

The course will cover the development and operation of the Soviet centrally planned economy—one of the grandest social experiments of the 20th century. We will review the mechanisms of plan creation, the push for the collectivization and further development of Soviet agriculture, the role of the Soviet educational system and the performance of labor markets (including forced labor camps—GULags). We will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the Soviet system and the causes of its collapse. Privatization, called by some "piratization," will be one of the central issues in our consideration of the transition from central planning to a market economy in the early 1990s. Even though our main focus will be on the Soviet economy and post-Soviet transition, we will occasionally look back in time to the tsarist era and even further back to find evidence to help explain Soviet/Russian economic development.

1 Course Unit

REES 1631 Anarchism: Theories and Ethnographies

"That we are Utopians is well known. So Utopian are we that we go the length of believing that the Revolution can and ought to assure shelter, food, and clothes to all..." -Pyotr Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread*. Although born in the West through the works of William Godwin and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, anarchism as a political theory was subsequently developed by a variety of Russian and Ukrainian theorists and activists, including Mikhail Bakunin, Lev Tolstoy, Pyotr Kropotkin, Nestor Makhno, and Emma Goldman (in exile in the United States). Anarchism fundamentally questions the need for political power and authority, particularly as embodied in a state. As a political theory, anarchism makes moral claims about the importance of individual liberty and presents a positive theory of human flourishing that is based on ideals of non-coercive consensus building. This course investigates the 19th century theoretical foundations of Russian and Ukrainian anarchist theory through a close examination of key texts from the 19th and early 20th centuries and includes ethnographic explorations of anarchist practices in eastern Europe in the 21st century. All readings will be in English.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ANTH 2620

Mutually Exclusive: REES 5631

1 Course Unit

REES 1670 Population and Public Health in Eastern Europe

Since the collapse of communism in 1989 in Eastern Europe (and 1991 in the Soviet Union), many of the countries in the region have experienced public health crises and demographic catastrophe. Below replacement fertility rates and massive out migration have decimated the populations of these countries even as populations age and place unsustainable strains on pension systems and medical services. The demographic collapse has also been accompanied by falling male life expectancy and the rise of alcoholism, depression, domestic violence, and suicide. The economic exigencies of the transition from communism to capitalism dismantled welfare states at the exact moment when health services were most needed, leaving charities and nongovernmental organization to try to fill in the gaps. Through a combination of readings from the fields of epidemiology, demography, and medical anthropology, this course examines the public health implications of poverty and social dislocation in post-communist states. All readings and assignments are in English.

Also Offered As: ANTH 1670, SOCI 2950

1 Course Unit

REES 1680 Sex and Socialism

This seminar examines classic and current scholarship and literature on gender and sexuality in contemporary Eastern Europe, and examines the dialogue and interchange of ideas between East and West. Although the scholarly and creative works will primarily investigate the changing status of women during the last three decades, the course will also look at changing constructions of masculinity and LGBT movements and communities in the former communist bloc. Topics will include: the woman question before 1989; gender and emerging nationalisms; visual representations in television and film; social movements; work; romance and intimacy; spirituality; and investigations into the constructed concepts of "freedom" and "human rights."

Also Offered As: ANTH 1688, GSWS 1680, SOCI 2972

1 Course Unit

REES 1770 Building Intergenerational Connections with Holocaust Survivors

Welcome to REES 1770! We are thrilled to have you join us on this transformative journey of service, discovery, and community engagement! This course connects Penn students who are studying or speak Russian with Russian-speaking Holocaust Survivors through the Holocaust Survivor Support Program at the Jewish Family and Children's Service Of Greater Philadelphia. Throughout the semester, we will collaborate and engage in service activities, reflect on our experiences, and connect them to academic concepts and theories.

Not Offered Every Year

Prerequisites: At least one semester of Russian or equivalent.

1 Course Unit

REES 2170 Russian Song and Folklore

This course offers a general introduction to the history of Russian folklore, song and musical culture. Students will explore the history of song in Russia and various song genres including folk songs, gangster songs, cabaret, war songs, Soviet ideological songs, and Russian rock and pop music. We will discuss ritual functioning of songs in Russian calendar rites, examine the aesthetic properties of song lyrics and music, and analyze the educational, community-building and ideological roles of song in Russian society.

Not Offered Every Year

Prerequisite: RUSS 1200

1 Course Unit

REES 2171 Russian Revolution

This course is a content-based course intended for students who speak Russian at home and seek to improve their command of formal and professional registers of the Russian language. Paying tribute to the centennial of the Russian Revolution, the course examines the sociopolitical milestone of the 20th century through the works of literature, art, music, film, and material culture that both refracted the revolutionary situation and responded to the revolutionary change. The course's primary sources include works of Russian symbolist poets (e.g. Blok) and realist writers (e.g. Korolenko, Chekhov, Gorky, Andrei Platonov), the music of modernist composers, Soviet montage films, and the Soviet architecture of the International Style. The specific attention will be on the relationship between sociopolitical transformation and the raise of avant-garde movements in visual arts and poetry known as the artistic revolution (e.g. Khlebnikov, Maiakovskii, Kandinskii, Goncharova, Malevich, Chagall).

Not Offered Every Year

Prerequisite: RUSS 0401

1 Course Unit

REES 2172 Global Landscapes: Russia in XXI Century

The goal of this course is to improve students' ability to engage in informed and articulate debate on a number of issues facing Russia and the world at large today, such as: political freedom, and the future of political protest, environmental problems and catastrophes and their aftermath (Chernobyl nuclear disaster), problems of social inequality and redistribution of wealth, national security, the economy, health care, international politics. This will be accomplished through intensive work on expanding lexical knowledge, increasing grammatical accuracy, and developing rhetorical skills. By the end of the course, students will be able to comprehend increasingly complex written and spoken texts on a range of topics and defend their own viewpoint in oral debate and persuasive essay formats.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

REES 2173 The Living & the Dead: The Great Patriotic War in Russian Cultural Imagination

This course is dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the Great Patriotic War, 1941-45. Students will explore the cultural myth of the war, created in the 1960-80s. The materials will include literary texts, documentaries, photographs, and films. We will focus on three major themes of this myth: 1. moral strength and courage; 2. respect for Russia's military past; and 3. the rise of national consciousness.

Not Offered Every Year

Prerequisite: RUSS 0401

1 Course Unit

REES 2177 Moscow and Muscovites in Russian History and Literary Imagination

This course is intended for students who have spoken Russian at home and seek to improve their capabilities in formal and professional uses of the Russian language. Moscow is not only a city with rich history, but also a cultural myth, similarly to Rome, St. Petersburg or Paris. The memories of historical events and literary narratives, real and fictional biographies, existing and lost landmarks imbue the image of the city with multiple layers of meanings and symbolism. This course will examine the key components of Moscow myth: historical events and fictional stories that left their traces on the cultural map of Moscow throughout its history. We will also explore the material culture of the city: historic places, buildings, artifacts and locations that anchor historical memories and urban legends alike. The readings will include excerpts from Moscow chapters of such Russian classics, as Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, Mikhail Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita* and Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*, along with the work of contemporary Russian authors Victor Pelevin and Maya Kucherskaya.

Prerequisite: RUSS 0401

1 Course Unit

REES 2179 Behind the Headlines: Navigating Russian-Language Media

This course explores a wide range of Russian-language media, looking at the diverse ways in which news outlets cover current political, economic, and sociocultural events and issues. The coursework emphasizes close reading and analysis of written, spoken, and visual texts and discussion of the topics and issues they raise. A special focus will be placed on the role that language plays in expressing underlying ideologies, power dynamics, and nuance, and in shaping public opinion. In addition to developing more advanced, professional-level proficiency in speaking, reading, writing, and listening in Russian, you will expand your active and passive vocabulary on a variety of topics and improve your translation skills. Within the course structure, students are encouraged to explore topics of particular personal and academic interest. This course is designed for heritage students who have completed Russian 0401 or have demonstrated competency at this level through placement testing.

Not Offered Every Year

Mutually Exclusive: REES 5179

Prerequisite: RUSS 0401

1 Course Unit

REES 2180 Behind the Headlines: Navigating Russian-Language Media

This course explores a wide range of Russian-language media, looking at the diverse ways in which news outlets cover current political, economic, and sociocultural events and issues. The coursework emphasizes close reading and analysis of written, spoken, and visual texts and discussion of the topics and issues they raise. A special focus will be placed on the role that language plays in expressing underlying ideologies, power dynamics, and nuance, and in shaping public opinion. In addition to developing more advanced, professional-level proficiency in speaking, reading, writing, and listening in Russian, you will expand your active and passive vocabulary on a variety of topics and improve your translation skills. Within the course structure, students are encouraged to explore topics of particular personal and academic interest.

Mutually Exclusive: REES 5180

Prerequisite: RUSS 1200

1 Course Unit

REES 2181 Masterpieces of Soviet Propaganda

The subject of this course is the history and evolution of Soviet propaganda and propaganda art from the Communist Revolution to Stalinism, World War II, and the Cold War. We will investigate major propaganda myths and rituals, and study different styles of propaganda art in a broad historical and political context, in particular, looking at historical events, government policies and political ideas that are associated with their creation and dissemination. We will also examine the impacts of the artistic culture of both the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian avant-garde on the origin of the language and imagery of Soviet propaganda. Finally, we will compare methods and styles of Soviet propaganda and capitalist advertising.

Fall or Spring

Prerequisite: RUSS 0401

1 Course Unit

REES 2250 Russian Culture Through Art and Architecture: From Fin de Siecle to Perestroika

This course offers a general introduction to the history of Russian visual art and material culture. It surveys styles, traditions, and fashions in Russian visual culture from the Middle Ages to Perestroika, considering them in the context of Russian social and political history. The course examines the very important role that visual art played in the history of Russian culture, and seeks to arrive at a deeper understanding of the relationship between visual media and key aspects and events of Russian civilization, such as Orthodoxy, Westernization and Nationalism, Communist utopia, and political protest.

Not Offered Every Year

Mutually Exclusive: REES 5250

Prerequisite: RUSS 1200

1 Course Unit

REES 2270 Contemporary Russia Through Film

This course continues developing students' advanced skills in Russian and offers intensive study of Russian film, arguably the most powerful medium for reflecting changes in modern society. This course will examine Russia's transition to democracy and market economy through the eyes of its most creative and controversial cinematographers. The course will focus on the often agonizing process of changing values and attitudes as the country moves from Soviet to Post-Soviet society. Russian films with English subtitles will be supplemented by readings from contemporary Russian media sources. The course provides an excellent visual introduction to the problems of contemporary Russia society.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 2270

Mutually Exclusive: REES 5296

Prerequisite: RUSS 1200

1 Course Unit

REES 2271 Post-Soviet Russia in Film

This course is intended for students who have spoken Russian at home and seek to improve their capabilities in formal and professional uses of the Russian language. Film is arguably the most powerful medium for reflecting changes in modern society. This course will examine Russia's transition to democracy and market economy through the eyes of its most creative and controversial cinematographers. The course will focus on the often agonizing process of changing values and attitudes as the country moves from Soviet to Post-Soviet society. Russian films with English subtitles will be supplemented by readings from contemporary Russian media sources. The course provides an excellent visual introduction to the problems of contemporary Russia society.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 2271

Mutually Exclusive: REES 5271

Prerequisite: RUSS 0401

1 Course Unit

REES 2350 Reading Russian History

The course explores defining episodes, concepts, and figures in Russian history, from the earliest time to the present day, and their reception in today's scholarship and society. Students learn about Russian historical heritage through the reading of primary sources and analytical essays, as well as examining how this history is used in the present socio-political and ideological discourse. Work on language focuses on matters of style, sentence structure, and vocabulary building.

Not Offered Every Year

Prerequisite: RUSS 1200

1 Course Unit

REES 2410 19th-Century Russian Literature and Culture: Romanticism and Realists

This course continues developing students' skills in Russian, and combines advanced study of the Russian language with an examination of the fundamental literary movements and figures of nineteenth-century Russian literature and culture. Course materials include prosaic and poetic texts by Pushkin, Gogol', Lermontov, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov, as well as films and art. Language work will be devoted to writing, syntactical and stylistic analysis, vocabulary, academic speech, and listening comprehension.

Not Offered Every Year

Prerequisite: RUSS 1200

1 Course Unit

REES 2430 Twentieth-Century Russian Literature, Film and Culture: Utopia, Revolution and Dissent

This course continues developing students' advanced skills in Russian, and introduces students to major movements and figures of twentieth-century Russian literature and culture. We will read the works of modern Russian writers, and watch and discuss feature films. The course will introduce the first Soviet films and works of the poets of the Silver Age and beginning of the Soviet era as well as the works from later periods up to the Perestroika and Glasnost periods (the late 1980s).

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 2430

Prerequisite: RUSS 1200

1 Course Unit

REES 2451 Classic Russian Literature Today

This course is intended for students who have spoken Russian at home and seek to improve their skills in formal and professional uses of the Russian language. A study of classic Russian literature in the original. Readings consist of some of the greatest works of 19th and 20th-century authors, such as Pushkin, Gogol, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Bulgakov. Students will examine various forms and genres of literature, learn basic techniques of literary criticism, and explore the way literature is translated into film and other media. An additional focus of the course will be on examining the uses and interpretations of classic literature and elitist culture in contemporary Russian society. Observing the interplay of the "high" and "low" in Russian cultural tradition, students will develop methodology of cultural analysis.

Not Offered Every Year

Prerequisite: RUSS 0401

1 Course Unit

REES 2470 Russian Folk and Literary Tale

This course continues developing students' advanced skills in Russian. It focuses on the language, style, and narrative techniques of Russian tales. Course materials include written, animated, and cinematic versions of folk fairy tales, epic songs, and literary tales by major Russian authors, such as Alexander Pushkin, Nikolai Gogol, and Leo Tolstoy. The course aims to improve students' knowledge of idiomatic language and to expand their knowledge of Russian popular culture.

Not Offered Every Year

Prerequisite: RUSS 1200

1 Course Unit

REES 2471 Fear and Loathing of Capitalism in Russian Literature of the 19th Century

This course is a content-based course intended for students who speak Russian at home and seek to improve their command of formal and professional registers of the Russian language. Free trade and market relations were slowly developing in the 19th century Russia, rising against the inhibiting influence exerted by the institution of slavery and rigid social hierarchy. Russian classical realist literature is known for its fierce attacks on capitalism and capitalist values through literary characters and conflicts that prominently feature money and private property. Despite all their philosophical and ideological differences, great Russian writers signal their inherent opposition to capitalist mode of production and remain indifferent to liberal values and creative potential associated with capitalist competition. In this course we will explore what was the cultural and historical context for that palpable fear of capitalism and loathing of bourgeois values, and what was it in free market relations that scared so much all the grand authors of Russian 19th century canon. We will examine these questions through reading and analyzing the works of such authors as Pushkin, Turgenev, Ostrovsky, Tolstoy and Chekhov.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

REES 2472 The Life and Art of Anton Chekhov

This course continues to develop students' advanced skills in Russian. Language work will be combined with an examination of the life and creative work of one of Russia's greatest writers, Anton Chekhov. Chekhov's prose and drama will be analyzed using the political, social and literary currents of his time as the background. This course will introduce students to the literary technique, poetics, and deeply humane worldview of Chekhov. Course materials will include short stories and drama, as well as some background readings. The advanced study of Russian language will have an emphasis on improving pronunciation, significantly expanding the vocabulary, mastering complicated grammatical and syntactic structures, and learning the basic conventions of academic discourse. As part of this course, students will be asked to write short response papers and some pieces of creative writing. Students will also produce a short film and stage a scene from a play. All class discussions and primary sources will be in Russian. Some secondary readings will be in English.

Prerequisite: RUSS 1200

1 Course Unit

REES 2473 Fathers and Sons: an Encyclopedia of Generational Conflict in 19thC Russia

This course offers a close reading of one of the most exquisitely narrated novels of the Russian realist canon, Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons*. Written in the early 1860s, the novel is set in an era of transition when progressive, enlightened liberalism of the Russian landed gentry clashed with the new revolutionary ideas espoused by young radicals. A simple tale of a generational conflict becomes a mirror in which the key social and political questions of the time are reflected and enlarged. The purpose of the course is to expand students' knowledge of political and cultural history of the 19th century Russia through a close reading of the novel aided by an array of historical and literary sources, such as memoirs, literary fragments and journalism of the era.

Not Offered Every Year

Prerequisite: RUSS 0401

1 Course Unit

REES 2477 Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Fantastic Imagination in Russian Culture

This course explores masterpieces of Russian fantastic imagination from folklore and 19th-century classics to 20th and 21st-century dystopia, magic realism and science fiction. Readings include works by Nikolai Gogol, Mikhail Bulgakov, the Strugatsky brothers, and Victor Pelevin. Discussions focus on 1) the philosophical quest of Russian fantastic authors and their ideas about humanity, the meaning of existence, and human relationship with nature; 2) the texture of fantasy, including the absurd and surreal, the grotesque humor, and macabre irony.

Not Offered Every Year

Prerequisite: RUSS 0401

1 Course Unit

REES 2479 Anton Chekhov: Love and Death in Russian Culture

In this course we will study Anton Chekhov's short prose and dramatic works exploring the significance of love and death in human experience. The first part of the course will be focused on examining existential, social and cultural aspects of these themes represented in Chekhov's poignant and humorous short stories, such as "The Student," "The Darling," "About Love," "House with a Mezzanine" and "The Bishop." Then we will attempt a dramatic interpretation of Chekhov using the ideas we discovered while reading his short prose. We will create a stage version of Chekhov's play or produce our own short play inspired by Chekhov's themes and characters. As a group we will decide on the type of our performance, whether it will be a stage reading or staging a play, and each of the students will choose how to participate in it: whether by acting, directing, writing, project managing or tech work.

Prerequisite: RUSS 0401

1 Course Unit

REES 2630 Soviet Childhood

This course examines "Soviet childhood" as a changing historical and political concept, beginning with its incipient notions in the pre-revolutionary period and moving through the Soviet and post-Soviet eras in Russia. We will access the viewpoints of children and adults at various points in time, while engaging with educational theory and practices, legislation, societal norms, and cultural rituals associated with Soviet childhood. This course relies on the close study of literature, songs, films, artifacts of mass production, as well as documentary resources (diaries, recorded interviews, drawings, etc.), in addition to relevant scholarship.

Not Offered Every Year

Mutually Exclusive: REES 5630

Prerequisite: RUSS 1200 or placement testing

1 Course Unit

REES 2670 Shaping Russian Society: Soviet Heritage and Transformation

This Russian-language content course continues to develop students' functional proficiency in speaking, writing, reading, and listening. The course is designed to familiarize students with contemporary Russian society and its historical background. It covers the current political, economic, and societal developments in Russia, focuses on a variety of issues central to Russian society since the fall of the Soviet Union, including the search for national identity, changing values, and popular perceptions of Westerners and Western practices. We will observe the business community and its relations with the government, trace the origin of Russian oligarchs and entrepreneurs and investigate how informal Soviet practices and the criminal world shaped the current business environment. Course materials will include interviews, articles, essays by leading Russian journalists and statesmen, and contemporary Russian movies.

Not Offered Every Year

Mutually Exclusive: REES 5670

Prerequisite: RUSS 1200

1 Course Unit

REES 2671 Everyday Life in the Soviet Union

This course is intended for students who have spoken Russian at home and seek to improve their capabilities in formal and professional uses of the Russian language. The course focuses on the history of everyday life in the Soviet Union during the twenty-year period before the collapse of the communist system (1960s-1980s). We will examine experiences, practices, and material culture related to various spheres of Soviet life, including living arrangements, food, housekeeping, work and leisure, education, and health. We will also study language policies and national tensions as they manifest in everyday practices and communications. Finally, we will explore how ideas and practices of socialist living continue to influence younger generations of former Soviet families who have never lived under socialism. Course readings include films, literary texts, memoirs, social journalism, and publications on statistics and social anthropology.

Not Offered Every Year

Prerequisite: RUSS 0401

1 Course Unit

REES 2673 Not by Bread Alone: Food in Russian History and Culture

The subject of this course is food culture in various eras of Russian and Soviet history. We will look at historical practices of food preparation and consumption, investigate the history of several important ingredients, and study the origin and history of Russian traditional dishes, while also discussing changes in tastes and attitudes to food over centuries. We will also examine how production, consumption and distribution of food reflected social and cultural distinctions, class hierarchies, and gender roles. Last but certainly not least, the students will get hands-on experience preparing a number of popular contemporary Russian dishes. The readings for this course range from fairy tales and myths to classical literature, from culinary journalism and advertising posters to excerpts from autobiographical writings and memoirs.

Fall or Spring

Prerequisite: RUSS 0401

1 Course Unit

REES 2730 Russia's 20th-Century: History Through Literature

To study Russia's twentieth-century history through its literature is to come face-to-face with a country for which works of fiction have often served, as the writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn put it, as "a second government." Russia is a society that takes literature seriously—one in which the pen is assumed to have direct historical consequences. In this course, we will study how twentieth-century Russian literature actively participated in war, revolution, totalitarian dictatorship, and resistance. The masterworks we will study open windows into worlds of revolutionary rapture and moral uplift in the face of tyranny, of history as a gigantic wheel that lifts some people up even as it crushes others. Our readings will range from an avant-garde play intended to rewire your mind, to an epic representation of revolutionary social transformation, to surreal and absurdist representations of a world gone mad. In other words: fasten your seatbelts low and tight; turbulence ahead!

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: HIST 2257

1 Course Unit

REES 2770 The Russian Revolutions, 1905-1924: Brave New World?

Many believe that the 1917 Russian Revolution was the most significant event in the twentieth century, both as a rupture from the past and as a precursor of much that was to come in the twentieth century. The February Revolution of 1917 made the Russian Republic—at one stroke, in the midst of the world war—the world's most democratic state. The October Revolution of 1917, following it, was the world's first socialist revolution, and it established the world's first socialist state—the Soviet Union. Throughout the twentieth century and beyond, people have looked to it with either fear or with hope. It generated great dreams of equality and liberation—and great misery. This course will examine the causes, course and consequences of this crucial period, for the peoples of the Soviet Union and for the world. In some ways, the term "Russian Revolution" is in fact not entirely correct. First, there was not one Russian Revolution—were a series of overlapping revolutions in this period—labor, rural, nationalist, liberationist. And second, it was a revolution that was not limited to European Russia, but encompassed the entire space of Russian empire (the Caucasus, the Baltics, Poland, Central Asia), and had worldwide and global significance. How do programs for liberation produce both new possibilities and great misery?

Also Offered As: HIST 2256

1 Course Unit

REES 3170 Tears and Laughter in the World of Anton Chekhov

Chekhov's theatre has been an impartial and compassionate mirror not only for his generation but for human society across different eras and places for more than a century. The world-acclaimed writer began his literary career as an author of short humorous stories for entertainment and satire magazines. With time, as he brought a more complex emotional palette and existential themes to his oeuvre, he conceived his celebrated dramatic style that weds tragic and serious meanings with skeptical laughter. The visions of human loneliness, disconnectedness and boredom, unrequited love and existential meaninglessness in Chekhov's dramatic masterpieces are interspersed with humor and irony and combined with comedic presentations of characters. The purpose of this course is a hands-on examination of Chekhov's style through a practical attempt to stage Chekhov's work. The first part of the course will be focused on examining Chekhov's comedic style against the background of the tradition of laughter in Russian literature. Then we will attempt a dramatic interpretation of Chekhov's play or a theatrical adaptation of his short-stories, using the ideas we discovered while reading his short prose. The students will be able to choose how they would like to contribute to the project: by acting, directing, stage management or stage design. The play will be performed in front of a live audience at the end of the semester.

Not Offered Every Year

Mutually Exclusive: REES 5170

Prerequisite: RUSS 0401 OR RUSS 5401 OR RUSS 1200 OR RUSS 5600

1 Course Unit

REES 3430 Twentieth-Century Russian Literature: Fiction and Reality

This course is designed for students with native or near-native proficiency in Russian and is conducted entirely in Russian. The course introduces the major movements and figures of twentieth-century Russian and Soviet literature and culture. Through the exploration of the poetry of Mayakovsky, Blok, Gumilev, Mandelshtam, and Akhmatova, students will become familiar with the important literary movements of the Silver Age. The realities of the Soviet era will be examined in the works of Zamyatin, Babel, Bulgakov, and Zoshchenko, with a brief survey of the development of Soviet cinema. Literary trends in the later Soviet period will be examined through war stories, prison-camp literature, village prose, and the writings of women authors of that time. The course places particular emphasis on the interpretation of literary texts, class discussions, and presentations grounded in historical and cultural context. Prerequisite: Departmental placement testing required.

Not Offered Every Year

Mutually Exclusive: REES 5430

1 Course Unit

REES 3470 Poetry Matters: Russian Poetry of 18-21 Centuries

This is a content-based Russian language course that offers a general introduction to the study of Russian poetic tradition. We will survey key genres and trends of the almost three centuries of modern Russian poetry, focusing on several larger thematic questions: What ethical challenges loom large in poetic practice? How does poetry address experiences of trauma and harm? How do poems "do" things they do? Taking our cue from Daniil Kharm's famous dictum, "A poem should be written in such a way that if you throw it at a window, the window will break," we will consider poetic utterances in a variety of contexts and situations both private and public. Particular attention will be directed to the genre of elegy understood as a narrative of absence and loss. We will closely follow the transformations of the Russian elegiac tradition from 19th Romantic elegy to avant-garde experiments, blockade and prison poetry. The course will also introduce students to scansion and the study of prosody in verse. Course will be taught in Russian. Readings in Russian and English.

Fall or Spring

Prerequisite: At least one advanced Russian seminar

1 Course Unit

REES 3675 Advanced Russian for Business

This advanced language course is designed to develop effective oral and written communication skills and competencies essential for navigating a Russian-speaking business environment. The relocation of people and companies from Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine underscores the role of the Russian language as a means of business communication in the post-Soviet countries. Consequently, the course shifts its focus from the Russian market to encompass Russian-speaking markets. Students will explore key aspects of conducting business in Russia and Kazakhstan, gaining insights into various companies and business practices through business press materials and case studies. News reports, presentations, and the final project offer opportunities to investigate other Russian-speaking markets. Special emphasis is placed on materials that focus on communication styles across diverse cultures, culture-specific behaviors, and business practices that may present challenges to effective communication among individuals from different cultural backgrounds. In the second part of the semester, you will be working on a simulation project. The primary objective of this project is to develop a simulation that replicates a real-life business situation, allowing you to utilize and enhance your language skills, intercultural competency, and knowledge of business environment in one of the Russian-speaking countries.

Not Offered Every Year

Mutually Exclusive: REES 5675

1 Course Unit

REES 3770 Cinema and Socialism

Films from socialist countries are often labeled and dismissed as "propaganda" in Western democratic societies. This course complicates this simplistic view, arguing for the value in understanding the ties between socialist governments, the cinematic arts, and everything in between. We will examine films from past and present socialist countries such as the Soviet Union, China, North Korea, and Cuba, as well as films made with socialist aspirations. See the English Department's website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 3100, CIMS 3100, EALC 2314, ENGL 2934

1 Course Unit

REES 4998 Honors Thesis

This course is for the research and writing of undergraduate honors theses in the Department of Russian and East European Studies. Please see the department webpage and consult with the undergraduate chair for more information about honors theses.

Fall or Spring

1 Course Unit

REES 5001 Introduction to Russian and East European Studies I: Social Science Approaches

This graduate level seminar provides an introduction to social science approaches to the study of the Eastern half of Europe and Eurasia, including Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, the successor states of Yugoslavia as well as the successor states of the former Soviet Union. Through a selection of articles and essays written by historians, anthropologists, sociologists, demographers, political scientists, and economists, students will explore how social scientific methodologies have been used to understand modern and contemporary society, politics, cultures, and economies of this region from the rise of nationalism in the 19th century to the current day. All readings and assignments in English.

Fall

1 Course Unit

REES 5002 Introduction to Russian and East European Studies II: Humanistic Approaches

This course will provide an overview of humanistic approaches to the study of Russia, Eastern Europe and Eurasia. Weekly modules are divided into those focused on Methods, Moments, and Geographies (although these dimensions of scholarly work are of course all activated in each module), including: Methods 1: Disciplines - What are the Humanities? 2: Texts and Cultures: Close Reading 3: Images: Close Analysis 4: Institutions - Cultural and Social Institutions and Their Study 5: Histories and Archives 6: Data: The Digital Humanities Genres: 1. What are the main scholarly genres of humanities scholarship: Articles, rev Geographies: 1: Caucasus 2: Russian and Soviet Empires 3: East and East Central Europe 4: Central Asia Moments: 1: Medieval-18C 2: 19C 3: 20C 4: 21C All readings will be provided in English, although students are encouraged to read in the original, if possible. Some originals will be provided in parallel to the translated English texts. Students will either complete an original research paper or a selection of smaller outputs (an oral report, an extended review essay, an annotated bibliography).

Spring

1 Course Unit

REES 5100 Old Church Slavonic: History, Language, Manuscripts

The language that we know today as Old Church Slavonic was invented, along with the Slavic alphabet(s), in the 9th century by two Greek scholars, Sts. Cyril and Methodius. They had been tasked by the Byzantine Emperor with bringing the Christian faith to the Slavic-speaking people of Great Moravia, a powerful medieval state in central Europe. From there, literacy, along with the Christian faith, spread to other Slavs, and even non-Slavic speakers, such as Lithuanians and Romanians. Church Slavonic and its regional variants were used to compose the oldest texts of the Slavic-speaking world, which today is comprised of Belarus, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Russia, Poland, Slovakia, Serbia, Slovenia, and Ukraine. Knowledge of this language and tradition aids in understanding the cultural, literary, and linguistic history of any modern Slavic language. For learners of Russian and other Slavic languages, Church Slavonic provides a layer of elevated stylistic vocabulary and conceptual terminology, similar to, and even greater than, the role of Latin and Greek roots in the English language. For historical linguists, Church Slavonic provides unique material for comparison with other ancient Indo-European languages, such as Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit. For medievalists and cultural historians, it opens the door into the Slavic Orthodox tradition that developed in the orbit of the Byzantine Commonwealth.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: COML 5180

1 Course Unit

REES 5101 History of Russian Literary Language and Culture

This course examines the linguistic, literary, and social history of the Russian language from the earliest written records to the modern day. Course topics include: the creation of the Slavic alphabets and the first literary language of the Slavs, Old Church Slavonic; the beginnings and development of writing and literacy in Medieval Rus (modern Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine); the evolution of the Russian literary language, its styles, and registers; grammatical categories of Russian; features of Russian lexicography; the social history and politics of language use; analysis of texts. Readings in Russian & English; advanced language proficiency required.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

REES 5170 Tears and Laughter in the World of Anton Chekhov

Chekhov's theatre has been an impartial and compassionate mirror not only for his generation but for human society across different eras and places for more than a century. The world-acclaimed writer began his literary career as an author of short humorous stories for entertainment and satire magazines. With time, as he brought a more complex emotional palette and existential themes to his oeuvre, he conceived his celebrated dramatic style that weds tragic and serious meanings with skeptical laughter. The visions of human loneliness, disconnectedness and boredom, unrequited love and existential meaninglessness in Chekhov's dramatic masterpieces are interspersed with humor and irony and combined with comedic presentations of characters. The purpose of this course is a hands-on examination of Chekhov's style through a practical attempt to stage Chekhov's work. The first part of the course will be focused on examining Chekhov's comedic style against the background of the tradition of laughter in Russian literature. Then we will attempt a dramatic interpretation of Chekhov's play or a theatrical adaptation of his short-stories, using the ideas we discovered while reading his short prose. The students will be able to choose how they would like to contribute to the project: by acting, directing, stage management or stage design. The play will be performed in front of a live audience at the end of the semester.

Not Offered Every Year

Mutually Exclusive: REES 3170

Prerequisite: RUSS 0401 OR RUSS 5401 OR RUSS 1200 OR RUSS 5600

1 Course Unit

REES 5172 Global Landscapes: Russia in XXI century

The goal of this course is to improve students' ability to engage in informed and articulate debate on a number of issues facing Russia and the world at large today, such as: political freedom, and the future of political protest, environmental problems and catastrophes and their aftermath (Chernobyl nuclear disaster), problems of social inequality and redistribution of wealth, national security, the economy, health care, international politics. This will be accomplished through intensive work on expanding lexical knowledge, increasing grammatical accuracy, and developing rhetorical skills. By the end of the course, students will be able to comprehend increasingly complex written and spoken texts on a range of topics and defend their own viewpoint in oral debate and persuasive essay formats.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

REES 5175 Stalinist Culture

In the Soviet Union in the late 1920s the dynamic cultural life of the revolutionary era, characterized by avant-gardism, experimentation, and diversity, gave way to a new organization of Soviet cultural life—one dominated by the newly formulated official style of "Socialist Realism" and bureaucratic institutions such as the Soviet Writers Union. In this course we will study the conditions that gave rise to this new era, its institutional realities, and masterworks in film, photography and literature of official art, including those by Kavelin, Pasternak and Eisenstein. We will also examine the social phenomena of cultural resistance and non-conformism of this period and its works written "for the drawer" or for non-official consumption, such as those of Akhmatova, Mandelstam, Bulgakov, Kharmis and Druskin.

1 Course Unit

REES 5179 Behind the Headlines: Navigating Russian-Language Media

This course explores a wide range of Russian-language media, looking at the diverse ways in which news outlets cover current political, economic, and sociocultural events and issues. The coursework emphasizes close reading and analysis of written, spoken, and visual texts and discussion of the topics and issues they raise. A special focus will be placed on the role that language plays in expressing underlying ideologies, power dynamics, and nuance, and in shaping public opinion. In addition to developing more advanced, professional-level proficiency in speaking, reading, writing, and listening in Russian, you will expand your active and passive vocabulary on a variety of topics and improve your translation skills. Within the course structure, students are encouraged to explore topics of particular personal and academic interest. This course is designed for heritage students who have completed Russian 0401 or have demonstrated competency at this level through placement testing.

Not Offered Every Year

Mutually Exclusive: REES 2179

Prerequisite: RUSS 0401 OR RUSS 5401

1 Course Unit

REES 5180 Behind the Headlines: Navigating Russian-Language Media

This course explores a wide range of Russian-language media, looking at the diverse ways in which news outlets cover current political, economic, and sociocultural events and issues. The coursework emphasizes close reading and analysis of written, spoken, and visual texts and discussion of the topics and issues they raise. A special focus will be placed on the role that language plays in expressing underlying ideologies, power dynamics, and nuance, and in shaping public opinion. In addition to developing more advanced, professional-level proficiency in speaking, reading, writing, and listening in Russian, you will expand your active and passive vocabulary on a variety of topics and improve your translation skills. Within the course structure, students are encouraged to explore topics of particular personal and academic interest.

Mutually Exclusive: REES 2180

Prerequisite: RUSS 1200 OR RUSS 5600

1 Course Unit

REES 5250 Russian Culture Through Art and Architecture: From Fin de Siecle to Perestroika

This course offers a general introduction to the history of Russian visual art and material culture. It surveys styles, traditions, and fashions in Russian visual culture from the Middle Ages to Perestroika, considering them in the context of Russian social and political history. The course examines the very important role that visual art played in the history of Russian culture, and seeks to arrive at a deeper understanding of the relationship between visual media and key aspects and events of Russian civilization, such as Orthodoxy, Westernization and Nationalism, Communist utopia, and political protest.

Not Offered Every Year

Mutually Exclusive: REES 2250

Prerequisite: RUSS 1200

1 Course Unit

REES 5270 Russian History in Film

The course draws on the cinematic/fictional representation of the Russian/Soviet history based on Russian as well as non-Russian sources. The analysis targets major modes of imagining, staging and reenacting history, construction of images that satisfy dominant political, cultural and ideological stereotypes, and help create national identities. Bias, eye-witness accounts, propaganda uses and abuses of history, forgeries and the production of alt-facts become topics of particular interest. The discussions involve nation builders, iconic heroes and charismatic antiheroes, great commanders and revolutionaries such as Alexander Nevsky, Ivan the Terrible, Rasputin and the Fall of the Romanovs, Lenin and the October Revolution, Stalin and the construction of the Soviet Colossus, the Storming of the Winter Palace, the Civil War, the Great Purge, the Red Scare in the US, etc.

Also Offered As: CIMS 5750

Mutually Exclusive: REES 0270

1 Course Unit

REES 5271 Post-Soviet Russia in Film

This course is intended for students who have spoken Russian at home and seek to improve their capabilities in formal and professional uses of the Russian language. Film is arguably the most powerful medium for reflecting changes in modern society. This course will examine Russia's transition to democracy and market economy through the eyes of its most creative and controversial cinematographers. The course will focus on the often agonizing process of changing values and attitudes as the country moves from Soviet to Post-Soviet society. Russian films with English subtitles will be supplemented by readings from contemporary Russian media sources. The course provides an excellent visual introduction to the problems of contemporary Russia society.

Not Offered Every Year

Mutually Exclusive: REES 2271

Prerequisite: RUSS 0401

1 Course Unit

REES 5272 Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Film

This course studies political violence, terrorism, civil wars, ethnic conflicts, and genocidal policies as represented in the social media, cable news, documentaries, feature films. We discuss various techniques and strategies of the propaganda wars, post-truth media environment, etc. The regions of interest are Former Soviet Union, Russia, the Caucasus, and the Balkans, US homegrown political violence, and the Middle East. The students are expected to develop and demonstrate a critical approach to different aspects of the cinematic, news, and social media representation of ethnic conflict. We focus on the violent developments that took place in Russia and the Balkans after the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, conditioned by the geopolitical dynamics that the fall of communism had created. We study media broadcasts, documentaries, feature films representing both, the Eastern and the Western perspective.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 5272

1 Course Unit

REES 5296 Contemporary Russia Through Film

This course continues developing students' advanced skills in Russian and offers intensive study of Russian film, arguably the most powerful medium for reflecting changes in modern society. This course will examine Russia's transition to democracy and market economy through the eyes of its most creative and controversial cinematographers. The course will focus on the often agonizing process of changing values and attitudes as the country moves from Soviet to Post-Soviet society. Russian films with English subtitles will be supplemented by readings from contemporary Russian media sources. The course provides an excellent visual introduction to the problems of contemporary Russia society.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 5296

Mutually Exclusive: REES 2270

Prerequisite: RUSS 1200

1 Course Unit

REES 5310 The Rise and Fall of the Russian Empire, 1552-1917

How and why did Russia become the center of the world's largest empire, a single state encompassing eleven time zones and over a hundred ethnic groups? To answer this question, we will explore the rise of a distinct political culture beginning in medieval Muscovy, its transformation under the impact of a prolonged encounter with European civilization, and the various attempts to re-form Russia from above and below prior to the Revolution of 1917. Main themes include the facade vs. the reality of central authority, the intersection of foreign and domestic issues, the development of a radical intelligentsia, and the tension between empire and nation.

Also Offered As: HIST 5240

Mutually Exclusive: HIST 0240

1 Course Unit

REES 5430 Twentieth-Century Russian Literature: Fiction and Reality

This course is designed for students with native or near-native proficiency in Russian and is conducted entirely in Russian. The course introduces the major movements and figures of twentieth-century Russian and Soviet literature and culture. Through the exploration of the poetry of Mayakovsky, Blok, Gumilev, Mandelstam, and Akhmatova, students will become familiar with the important literary movements of the Silver Age. The realities of the Soviet era will be examined in the works of Zamyatin, Babel, Bulgakov, and Zoshchenko, with a brief survey of the development of Soviet cinema. Literary trends in the later Soviet period will be examined through war stories, prison-camp literature, village prose, and the writings of women authors of that time. The course places particular emphasis on the interpretation of literary texts, class discussions, and presentations grounded in historical and cultural context.

Not Offered Every Year

Mutually Exclusive: REES 3430

Prerequisites: Departmental placement testing required.

1 Course Unit

REES 5448 Twentieth-Century Russian Literature, Film and Culture: Utopia, Revolution and Dissent

This course continues developing students' advanced skills in Russian, and introduces students to major movements and figures of twentieth-century Russian literature and culture. We will read the works of modern Russian writers, and watch and discuss feature films. The course will introduce the first Soviet films and works of the poets of the Silver Age and beginning of the Soviet era as well as the works from later periods up to the Perestroika and Glasnost periods (the late 1980s). Prerequisite: All lectures and readings in Russian.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

REES 5470 Poetry Matters: Russian Poetry of 18-21 Centuries

This is a content-based Russian language course that offers a general introduction to the study of Russian poetic tradition. We will survey key genres and trends of the almost three centuries of modern Russian poetry, focusing on several larger thematic questions: What ethical challenges loom large in poetic practice? How does poetry address experiences of trauma and harm? How do poems "do" things they do? Taking our cue from Daniil Kharm's famous dictum, "A poem should be written in such a way that if you throw it at a window, the window will break," we will consider poetic utterances in a variety of contexts and situations both private and public. Particular attention will be directed to the genre of elegy understood as a narrative of absence and loss. We will closely follow the transformations of the Russian elegiac tradition from 19th Romantic elegy to avant-garde experiments, blockade and prison poetry. The course will also introduce students to scansion and the study of prosody in verse. Course will be taught in Russian. Readings in Russian and English.

Fall or Spring

Mutually Exclusive: REES 3470

Prerequisite: At least one advanced Russian seminar

1 Course Unit

REES 5471 Slavic Literary Theory in Western Context

This course will compare selected theoretical concepts advanced by Russian Formalists, Prague Structuralists, and the Bakhtin group (e.g., defamiliarization, aesthetic sign, dialogue) with similar or analogous notions drawn from Western intellectual tradition.

1 Course Unit

REES 5497 Fear and Loathing of Capitalism in Russian Literature of the 19th Century

This course is a content-based course intended for students who speak Russian at home and seek to improve their command of formal and professional registers of the Russian language. Free trade and market relations were slowly developing in the 19th century Russia, rising against the inhibiting influence exerted by the institution of slavery and rigid social hierarchy. Russian classical realist literature is known for its fierce attacks on capitalism and capitalist values through literary characters and conflicts that prominently feature money and private property. Despite all their philosophical and ideological differences, great Russian writers signal their inherent opposition to capitalist mode of production and remain indifferent to liberal values and creative potential associated with capitalist competition. In this course we will explore what was the cultural and historical context for that palpable fear of capitalism and loathing of bourgeois values, and what was it in free market relations that scared so much all the grand authors of Russian 19th century canon. We will examine these questions through reading and analyzing the works of such authors as Pushkin, Turgenev, Ostrovsky, Tolstoy and Chekhov.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

REES 5550 Terrorism

This course studies the emergence of organized terrorism in nineteenth-century Russia and its impact on public life in the West, the Balkans, and America. We investigate the political and cultural origins of terrorism, its conspiratorial routine, structures, methods, manuals, and manifestoes. Historical and cultural approaches converge in the discussion of intellectual movements that forged the formula of terrorism and influenced the professionalization of the underground, such as nihilism, anarchism, and populism. We discuss the stern terrorist personality, self-denial, revolutionary martyrdom, and conspiratorial militancy. The theatricals of terrorism are of particular interest, its bombastic acts, mystification, and techniques of spreading disorganizing fear in the global media environment. We trace the creation of counterterrorism police in late imperial Russia and its methods to infiltrate, demoralize, and dismantle the terrorist networks, and reengineer their social base. First Red Scare and the formation of the FBI constitutes a unique case of managing rampant political violence and countering the asymmetrical threat of terrorism.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: CIMS 5550

1 Course Unit

REES 5570 Russia and Eastern Europe in International Affairs

Russia and the European Union (EU) are engaged in a battle for influence in Eastern Europe. EU foreign policy towards its Eastern neighbors is based on economic integration and the carrot of membership. With the application of this powerful incentive, Central and Southeastern European countries such as Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Croatia have progressed rapidly towards integration with the EU (and NATO). Yet, given Russia's opposition to the further enlargement, membership is off the table for the large semi-Western powers such as Russia itself and Turkey and the smaller countries inhabiting an emerging buffer zone between Russia and the EU, such as Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova, and Belarus. These in-between countries find themselves subject to intense competition for influence between Eastern and Western powers. In this context, EU countries must balance their energy dependence on Russia and need for new markets and geopolitical stability with concern for human rights, democratic governance, and self-determination. What are the trade-offs implicit in the foreign policies of Russia, EU member states, and Eastern Europe? What are the best policy approaches? What are the main opportunities and obstacles?

Fall

Mutually Exclusive: REES 1570

1 Course Unit

REES 5630 Soviet Childhood

This course examines "Soviet childhood" as a changing historical and political concept, beginning with its incipient notions in the pre-revolutionary period and moving through the Soviet and post-Soviet eras in Russia. We will access the viewpoints of children and adults at various points in time, while engaging with educational theory and practices, legislation, societal norms, and cultural rituals associated with Soviet childhood. This course relies on the close study of literature, songs, films, artifacts of mass production, as well as documentary resources (diaries, recorded interviews, drawings, etc.), in addition to relevant scholarship.

Not Offered Every Year

Mutually Exclusive: REES 2630

Prerequisite: RUSS 5600 or RUSS 1200

1 Course Unit

REES 5637 Gender and Health in Post-Socialist Society

In terms of gender and health arrangements, post-socialist societies have provided through the course of their history examples both of radical empowerment and of evident discrimination, rapid emancipation and conservative backlashes. Social policy researchers frequently refer to this as a sui generis social laboratory, where health and gender policy experiments have taken place. This course aims to examine the premises and societal outcomes of such 'experiments' both on the empirical and conceptual levels. The course pursues two interconnected goals (1) to explore the specificities of gender and health in post-socialist societies, i.e. to consider how these phenomena are grounded in and affected by the political and institutional transition from state socialism; (2) to explore theoretical insights that social studies of the post-socialist experience provide for our understanding of health and gender. The course is structured thematically and chronologically. By tracing transformations of socialist and post-socialist gender order the first part of the course introduces students to the political and institutional context of societies under consideration. The second part of the course discusses social science categories that are used to analyze gender and health (medical professionalism, medical knowledge, emotions in healthcare, etc.) and examines, how attention to socialist and post-socialist experience can enhance our conceptualizations. The third part is devoted to different dimensions of health and gender inequalities on post-socialist space. Empirical researches discussed in this part are mostly concerned with the case of Russia, but are not limited to it. Generally, the course builds into the discussion on what analytical results can be gained through comparing health and gender in post-socialist and 'Western' contexts, and what variations between and within post-socialist societies exist. This is an introductory level graduate course.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: SOCI 5637

1 Course Unit

REES 5640 Geopolitics of Energy in Russia and Eurasia

Russia is one of the major players in the international energy market: third largest oil producer after the U.S. and Saudi Arabia and second-largest (after the U.S.) natural gas producers (2019). It is also a top coal and nuclear power producer. But the geopolitical might that the country holds with respect to energy markets stems not as much from how much energy it produces as from how much energy it exports. Today Russia leads global natural gas exports and trails only the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in oil exports. Russia is also reliably one of the top coal-exporting countries. This class will explore the geopolitics of energy focusing on the role of Russia as a leading global energy supplier. In doing so, it hopes to provide a slightly different understanding of global energy that is usually taught from either the U.S. or OPEC angle.

Fall

Also Offered As: ENMG 5080

1 Course Unit

REES 5670 Shaping Russian Society: Soviet Heritage and Transformation

This Russian–language content course continues to develop students’ functional proficiency in speaking, writing, reading, and listening. The course is designed to familiarize students with contemporary Russian society and its historical background. It covers the current political, economic, and societal developments in Russia, focuses on a variety of issues central to Russian society since the fall of the Soviet Union, including the search for national identity, changing values, and popular perceptions of Westerners and Western practices. We will observe the business community and its relations with the government, trace the origin of Russian oligarchs and entrepreneurs and investigate how informal Soviet practices and the criminal world shaped the current business environment. Course materials will include interviews, articles, essays by leading Russian journalists and statesmen, and contemporary Russian movies.

Not Offered Every Year

Mutually Exclusive: REES 2670

Prerequisite: RUSS 1200

1 Course Unit

REES 5675 Advanced Russian for Business

This advanced language course is designed to develop effective oral and written communication skills and competencies essential for navigating a Russian-speaking business environment. The relocation of people and companies from Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine underscores the role of the Russian language as a means of business communication in the post-Soviet countries. Consequently, the course shifts its focus from the Russian market to encompass Russian-speaking markets. Students will explore key aspects of conducting business in Russia and Kazakhstan, gaining insights into various companies and business practices through business press materials and case studies. News reports, presentations, and the final project offer opportunities to investigate other Russian-speaking markets. Special emphasis is placed on materials that focus on communication styles across diverse cultures, culture-specific behaviors, and business practices that may present challenges to effective communication among individuals from different cultural backgrounds. In the second part of the semester, you will be working on a simulation project. The primary objective of this project is to develop a simulation that replicates a real-life business situation, allowing you to utilize and enhance your language skills, intercultural competency, and knowledge of business environment in one of the Russian-speaking countries.

Not Offered Every Year

Mutually Exclusive: REES 3675

1 Course Unit

REES 6100 Portraits of Old Rus: Myth, Icon, Chronicle

Three modern-day nation-states – Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus – share and dispute the cultural heritage of Old Rus, and their political relationships revolve around interpretations of the past. Has the medieval Rus state been established by the Vikings or by the local Slavs? Is early Rus a mother state of Russia or of Ukraine, and, therefore, should it be spelled ‘Kyivan Rus’ or ‘Kievan Rus’ in English? Has the culture of Russian political despotism been inherited from the Mongols, or is it an autochthonous ideology? The constructed past has a continuing importance in modern Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus, and it is keenly referenced, often manipulatively, in contemporary social and political discourse. For example, President Putin invaded Ukraine under a pretense that its territory has “always” been an integral part of Russia and its history. The course covers eight centuries of cultural, political, and social history of the lands that are now within the borders of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus, from early historical records through the 18th century, a period that laid the foundation for the Russian Empire and the formation of modern nations. Students gain knowledge about formative events and prominent figures, as well as social and cultural developments during this period. The course takes multidisciplinary approach by combining the study of textual sources, objects of art and architecture, music, ritual, and film in their social and historical contexts. Students learn to analyze and interpret primary sources (historical documents and literary texts), identify their intellectual issues, and understand the historical, cultural, and social contexts in which these sources emerged. While working with these primary sources students learn to pose questions about their value and reliability as historical evidence. By exposing students to the critical examination of “the uses of the past,” the course aims to teach them to appreciate the authoritative nature of historical interpretation and its practical application in contemporary social and political rhetoric. The study of pre-modern cultural and political history through the prism of nationalism theories explains many aspects of modern Belarusian, Russian, and Ukrainian societies, as well as political aspirations of their leaders. At the end of the course, students should develop understanding of the continuity and change in the history of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, their belief systems, and nationalistic ideologies, and will be able to speak and write about these issues with competence and confidence.

Not Offered Every Year

Mutually Exclusive: REES 0100

1 Course Unit

REES 6110 Portraits of Russian Society: Art, Fiction, Drama

This course covers 19C Russian cultural and social history. Each week-long unit is organized around a single medium-length text (novella, play, memoir) which opens up a single scene of social history birth, death, duel, courtship, tsar, and so on. Each of these main texts is accompanied by a set of supplementary materials paintings, historical readings, cultural-analytical readings, excerpts from other literary works, etc. The object of the course is to understand the social codes and rituals that informed nineteenth-century Russian life, and to apply this knowledge in interpreting literary texts, other cultural objects, and even historical and social documents (letters, memoranda, etc.). We will attempt to understand social history and literary interpretation as separate disciplines yet also as disciplines that can inform one another. In short: we will read the social history through the text, and read the text against the social history.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

REES 6130 Portraits of Soviet Society: Literature, Film, Drama

How can art and literature open a window on Russian lives lived over the course of the tumultuous twentieth century? This course adopts a unique approach to questions of cultural and social history. Each week-long unit is organized around a medium-length film, text or set of texts by some of the most important cultural figures of the era (novella, play, memoir, film, short stories) which opens up a single scene of social history: work, village, avant-garde, war, Gulag, and so on. Each cultural work is accompanied by a set of supplementary materials: historical readings, paintings, cultural-analytical readings, excerpts from other literary works, etc. We will read social history through culture and culture through history. All readings and lectures in English.

Spring

1 Course Unit

REES 6131 Putin's Russia: Culture, Society and History

Winston Churchill famously said that Russia "is a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma. Strikingly, today many informed Russians would agree: no one can provide definitive answers concerning what has driven Russian public life and politics over the past three years, as it ricocheted from the mass protests of 2011 and 2012, into the Pussy Riot scandal, then the Olympics, and most recently to the intense patriotism driving the Russian annexation of Crimea and intervention in Ukraine. In this course we will examine how Russians themselves communicate about and represent Russia and what this reveals about this complex society and its development. We will consider print journalism, novels, films, televised media, and the internet paying close attention both to particular representations and to social institutions for their production, dissemination and consumption. Topics of special concern will include: conspiracy theories, representations of Russian history, collective identity and patriotism, intellectuals and elites, gender and sexuality, consumption and wealth. Putins Russia is an introductory level course for which no prior knowledge Russian history, culture or society is required. All readings and screenings will be in English. Prerequisite: No prior knowledge of Russian is required.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

REES 6149 Socialist and Post-Socialist Worlds

In 1989-1991, a whole world, perhaps many worlds, vanished: the worlds of socialism. In this graduate seminar we will investigate key cultural works, theoretical constructs and contexts spanning the socialist world(s), focused around the USSR, which was for many the (not uncontested) center of the socialist cosmos. Further, we will study the cultural and political interrelationships between the socialist world(s) and anticolonial and left movements in the developing and the capitalist developed nations alike. Finally, we will investigate the aftermaths left behind as these world(s) crumbled or were transformed beyond recognition at the end of the twentieth century. Our work will be ramified by consideration of a number of critical and methodological tools for the study of these many histories and geographies. The purview of the course is dauntingly large - global in scale - and therefore "coverage" will of necessity be incomplete. In addition to the lead instructor, a number of guest instructors from Penn and from other institutions will join us to lead our investigations into specific geographies, moments and areas. Additionally, four weeks have been left without content, to be filled in via consensus decision by the members of the seminar.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: COML 6149, ENGL 6490

1 Course Unit

REES 6150 Russian and Soviet Cultural Institutions

In this seminar, we will study Russian and Soviet culture through the history of its institutions, in the broader social-institutional context of land-based European empire and state socialism. The course will include material from the eighteenth to the twenty-first centuries, but attention will be focused disproportionately on the twentieth century. Each unit will focus on a specific social institution of culture, yet will also require the reading/viewing of canonical texts and films. Topics will include: reading publics and education; authorship and professionalization; cultural management of social, ethnic, gender and national diversity (including via institutions of translation); journals and publishing houses; genres; the Union of Soviet Writers; censorship and unofficial dissemination; the film industry; cultural history and memory (jubilee celebrations); the culture industry.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: COML 6530, ENGL 5910

1 Course Unit

REES 6151 Reading Marx's Capital: Divergent Traditions in Europe, the Soviet Union, and the Global South

Karl Marx's masterpiece *Capital* received little attention at the time of its publication, but gained new life in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The afterlives of *Capital*, however, took disparate forms across different regions and traditions globally: while working on the same text, these traditions gave rise to conflicting and contradictory interpretations, antagonistic dialogues, and cross-disciplinary encounters. This seminar will examine a series of exemplary interpretations of *Capital* with attention to detail in order to clarify the stakes of different readings and pose the question of relevance of Marx's masterpiece for the contemporary moment. We will investigate how political conjunctures, regional specificities, and ideological concerns shape disparate modes and cultures of reading. We will also examine how *Capital* is transfigured through the lens of disciplines such as literary studies and comparative literature, philosophy, political science, postcolonial studies, and economics. We will also pose the question of philosophical genealogies of *Capital*, tracing how divergent philosophical backgrounds inflect the reconfigurations of Marx's thought, e.g., in examining "Hegelian," "Spinozist," and "Epicurian" readings. The topics may include, but are not limited to, the following regions and traditions: France (Louis Althusser group), Italy (Mario Tronti and autonomia tradition), and Germany (Neue Marx Lektüre); Soviet Union (Isaak Rubin, Evald Ilyenkov); Bolivia (Alvaro Garcia Linera), and Argentina (Ernesto Laclau). Finally, we will engage with the most recent readings of *Capital* in the twenty-first century in the works of thinkers such as Sylvia Federici, Michael Heinrich, and A. Kiarina Kordela, among others.

Spring

Also Offered As: COML 6210, GRMN 6210

1 Course Unit

REES 6171 Dialogues in Critical Theory between East and West

The twentieth century, marked by radical political revolutions and immense technological advancements, witnessed a seismic shift in critical thinking—the emergence of what we now call “critical theory.” Instead of the centrality of the free individual, an idea of structure took hold; instead of grand narratives, the notion of decentered subjectivity gained prevalence. Concurrently, the 1917 communist revolution, WWII, and the Cold War divided the world into distinct cultural, political, and epistemological formations—broadly categorized as East and West, or socialist and capitalist worlds. This seminar will explore the genesis of this transformation in critical thinking, focusing on literary, cultural, and political theory through the lens of the political and cultural divide between Eastern and Western Europe. Participants will be introduced to the main tenets of critical theory and continental philosophy of the twentieth century, including structuralism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, existentialism, and deconstruction. The seminar will highlight the often covert dialogues and conceptual exchanges between East and West, despite censorship and beyond official channels. Finally, we will ask: what promise does critical theory have for us today, in a world dominated by war, political crises, and global capital? No previous knowledge of literary and cultural theory or philosophy is required.

Mutually Exclusive: REES 1171

1 Course Unit

REES 6172 Madness and Madmen in Russian Culture

Is “insanity” today the same thing as “madness” of old? Who gets to define what it means to be “sane,” and why? Are the causes of madness biological or social? In this course, we will grapple with these and similar questions while exploring Russia’s fascinating history of madness as a means to maintain critique, or subvert the status quo. We will consider the concept of madness in Russian culture beginning with its earliest folkloric roots and trace its depiction and function in the figure of the Russian “holy fool,” in classical literature, and in contemporary film. Readings will include works by many Russian greats, such as Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Chekhov, Bulgakov and Nabokov.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

REES 6175 History and Memory in/of Socialism

State socialist societies shaped the history of the twentieth century. They also intently reshaped the history of past eras. Now, decades after the collapse of the USSR and the capitalist remake of the People’s Republic of China, those histories are often little more than memories, sometimes haunting the present, and sometimes weaponized for present purposes. This course will begin with consideration of state socialist societies’ representations of their own pasts and of global histories, from the historicization of the October Revolution, to the mid-century retellings of deeper histories of empire and nation, to non-conformist histories of state socialist mass violence. In the latter portion of the course, we will turn to investigate the history and memory of state socialism, covering post-socialist melancholy and nostalgia, the deployment of socialist history in memory wars and real wars in formerly state socialist lands, and recent revisions of socialist history in terms of empire, nation, and post- and de-coloniality. Primary materials will range from literature and film to public discourse, monumental art, and historiography (from Maxim Gorky’s “History of Factories and Plants” project [1930s] to Jasmina Wojcik’s “Symphony of the Ursus Factory” [2018]). Our work will be ramified by readings in theory and method, covering social memory, invented traditions, lieux de mémoire, trauma studies, entangled and multidirectional memory, and other topics. All course materials will be available in English translation. Undergraduates may enroll with instructor’s permission.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: COML 6175, ENGL 5912

1 Course Unit

REES 6177 The Quest for a Universal Language

This seminar is an exploration in European intellectual history. It traces the historical trajectory, from antiquity to the present day, of the idea that there once was, and again could be, a universal and perfect language among humanity. The tantalizing question of the possibility of such a language has been a vital and thought-provoking inquiry throughout human history. If recovered or invented, such a language has the potential to explain the origins, physical reality, and meaning of human experience, fostering universal understanding and world peace. Greek philosophers grappled with the capacity of names to correctly denote things. In Judaic and Christian traditions, the notion that the language spoken by Adam and Eve perfectly expressed the nature of the physical and metaphysical world captivated the minds of intellectuals for nearly two millennia. In defiance of the biblical myth of the confusion of languages and peoples at the Tower of Babel, they persistently endeavored to overcome divine punishment and rediscover the path to harmonious life. In the 19th century, Indo-Europeanist philologists perceived an avenue to explore the early stages of human development by reconstructing a proto-language. In the 20th century, romantic idealists like the inventor of Esperanto, Ludwik Zamenhof, constructed languages to further understanding among estranged nations. For writers and poets of all times, from Cyrano de Bergerac to Velimir Khlebnikov, the concept of a universal and perfect language has served as an inexhaustible source of inspiration. Today, this idea reverberates in theories of universal and generative grammars, in the approach to English as a global language, and in various attempts to devise artificial languages, including those intended for cosmic communication. Each week, we examine a particular period and a set of theories to explore universal language projects. But above all, at the core of the course lies an examination of what language is and how it is used in human society.

Also Offered As: COML 6177, ENGL 7177

1 Course Unit

REES 6190 Russia and the West

This course will explore the representations of the West in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Russian literature and philosophy. We will consider the Russian visions of various events and aspects of Western political and social life: Revolutions, educational system, public executions, resorts, etc. within the context of Russian intellectual history. We will examine how images of the West reflect Russia's own cultural concerns, anticipations, and biases, as well as aesthetic preoccupations and interests of Russian writers. The discussion will include literary works by Karamzin, Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Leskov, and Tolstoy, as well as non-fictional documents, such as travelers' letters, diaries, and historiographical treatises of Russian Freemasons, Romantic and Positivist thinkers, and Russian social philosophers of the late Nineteenth century. A basic knowledge of nineteenth-century European history is desirable. The class will consist of lectures, discussion, short writing assignments, and two in-class tests.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

REES 6230 Russian and East European Film from the October Revolution to World War II

The purpose of this course is to present the Russian and East European contribution to world cinema in terms of film theory, experimentation with the cinematic language, and social and political reflex. We discuss major themes and issues such as the invention of montage, the means of revolutionary visual propaganda and the cinematic component to the communist cultural revolutions, party ideology, and practices of social-engineering, cinematic response to the emergence of the totalitarian state in Soviet Russia before World War II.

Fall

1 Course Unit

REES 6231 Russian and East European Film after World War II

The purpose of this course is to present the Russian and East European contribution to world cinema in terms of film theory, experimentation with the cinematic language, and social and political reflex. We discuss major themes and issues such as means of visual propaganda and the cinematic component to the communist cultural revolutions, party ideology and practices of social-engineering, cinematic response to the emergence of the totalitarian state in Russia and its subsequent installation in Eastern Europe after World War II.

Spring

Mutually Exclusive: REES 1231

1 Course Unit

REES 6272 Nationalism and Ethnic Conflict in Film

This course studies the cinematic representation of civil wars, ethnic conflicts, nationalistic doctrines, and genocidal policies. The focus is on the violent developments that took place in Russia and on the Balkans after the collapse of the Soviet Bloc and were conditioned by the new geopolitical dynamics that the fall of communism had already created. We study media broadcasts, documentaries, feature films representing the Eastern, as well as the Western perspective. The films include masterpieces such as "Time of the Gypsies", "Underground", "Prisoner of the Mountains", "Before the Rain", "Behind Enemy Lines", and others.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

REES 6285 Film, Revolution, and the 1960s

This graduate class analyzes global film practices of the 1960s alongside revolutionary movements, from the 1960 Japanese anti-US-Japan Security Treaty (ANPO) protests to the global insurrections of May 1968 and beyond.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 5045, EALC 6311, ENGL 5045

1 Course Unit

REES 6286 The Politics of Truth in the Global Documentary

This course is a study of documentary film practices internationally, beginning from the invention of cinema and ending in the contemporary landscape. It analyzes how documentary worldwide serves a paradoxical function: both a testament to the power of the "real," and a critique of its representation. The class thus challenges preconceived notions of a medium often connected to "cinema-truth." This class will also pay special attention to the intersection of documentary and politics to think through how the art of documentary has been historically instrumental for revolutionary politics, while also deeply complicit in fascist regimes.

The course will include short writing assignments as well as a critical-creative project. The course is suitable for both graduate students and advanced undergraduate students, and advanced undergraduate students are more than welcome to apply. For more information, please visit: <https://www.english.upenn.edu/courses/graduate>

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 5934, COML 5934, ENGL 5934

1 Course Unit

REES 6400 Cultural History of Medieval Rus (800-1700)

This course offers an overview of the literary, cultural, and political history of Medieval Rus from its origins in the 9th century up to the reign of Peter the Great (early 18th century), the period that laid the foundation for the Russian Empire. The focus of the course is on the Kievan and Muscovite traditions but we also look at the cultural space of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Poland (i.e., the territory of today's Belarus and Ukraine). The course takes a comparative and interdisciplinary approach to the evolution of the main cultural paradigms of Russian Orthodoxy viewed in a broader European context (vis-à-vis Byzantium and the Latin West). We learn about the worldview of Orthodox Slavs by examining their religion, ritual, spirituality, art, music, literature, education, and popular culture. Classes are conducted in English. Readings are in Russian and English. English translations of some primary sources are available for those with limited Russian competence.

Fall

Also Offered As: COML 6170

1 Course Unit

REES 6410 Masterpieces of 19th Century Russian Literature

A bronze monument to an all-powerful emperor comes to life and pursues a poor everyman through the streets, driving him to his death. A studious young man kills an old woman as a philosophical experiment. A young woman at the height of aristocratic society abandons her husband and young son to devote herself to her lover. These and other tales from the classics of nineteenth-century Russian literature will touch and delight you, get under your skin, and even attempt to show you how to live.

We will read these tales in order to understand how books can become events in their own right, how Russian literature gained such power and prestige, and what it can still teach us today. Authors include Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Pavlova, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and others.

Fall

1 Course Unit

REES 6431 Masterpieces of 20th Century Russian Literature

"Only in Russia is poetry respected. They kill you for it," famously quipped the poet Osip Mandelstam, who died in Joseph Stalin's concentration camps. Russia is a society that takes literature seriously - one in which the pen is assumed to have direct historical consequences. In this course, we will study how twentieth century Russian literature actively participated in war, revolution, totalitarian dictatorship, and resistance. The masterworks we will study open windows into worlds of revolutionary rapture, moral uplift in the face of tyranny, courageous subversion of the repressive state, and historical reflection on its failures. Our readings will range from an avant-garde play intended to rewire your mind, to an epic representation of revolutionary social transformation, to surreal and absurdist representations of a world gone mad. In other words: fasten your seatbelts low and tight across your waist; turbulence ahead!

Spring

1 Course Unit

REES 6435 Modern Literary Theory and Criticism

This course will provide an overview of major European thinkers in critical theory of the 20th and 21st centuries. We will pay particular attention to critical currents that originated in Eastern European avant-garde and early socialist contexts and their legacies and successors. Topics covered will include: Russian Formalism and its successors in Structuralism and Deconstruction (Shklovsky, Levi-Strauss, Jakobson, Derrida); Bakhtin and his circle, dialogism and its later western reception; debates over aesthetics and politics of the 1930s (Lukacs, Brecht, Adorno, Benjamin, Radek, Clement Greenberg); the October group; Marxism, new Left criticism, and later lefts (Althusser, Williams, Eagleton, Jameson, Zizek). Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: COML 6050, ENGL 6050, ENGL 7905, FREN 6050, GRMN 6050, ITAL 6050

1 Course Unit

REES 6450 Approaches to Literary Texts

Most seminars focus on literary texts composed during a single historical period; this course is unusual in inviting students to consider the challenges of approaching texts from a range of different historical eras. Taught by a team of literary specialists representing diverse periods and linguistic traditions and conducted as a hands-on workshop, this seminar is designed to help students of literature and related disciplines gain expertise in analysis and interpretation of literary works across the boundaries of time, geography, and language, from classic to modern. Students will approach literature as a historical discipline and learn about key methodological issues and questions that specialists in each period and field ask about texts that their disciplines study. The diachronic and cross-cultural perspectives inform discussions of language and style, text types and genres, notions of alterity, fictionality, literariness, symbolism, intertextuality, materiality, and interfaces with other disciplines. This is a unique opportunity to learn in one course about diverse literary approaches from specialists in different fields.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CLST 7601, COML 6160, EALC 8290, ENGL 6160, ROML 6160

1 Course Unit

REES 6460 Linguistic Culture and Literary Development

The opening pages of Tolstoy's "War and Peace" (1869), set in July 1805, feature a conversation between two nobles who are speaking in a combination of Russian and "that elegant French in which our forefathers not only spoke, but also thought." Tolstoy's remark points to a shift in the relative status — both practical and symbolic — of each of these languages in Russian high society that was occurring as the eighteenth century gave way to the nineteenth. Shifts in the functions and values of language(s) comprise the subject of this graduate-level seminar, which traces the emergence of the modern Russian literary tradition as it took place in dialogue with evolving attitudes and ideologies surrounding language, translation, nation, and empire. We will adopt a diverse array of theoretical approaches as we examine the influence of linguistic culture on literary development as well as how ideas about literature can exert their own influence on realities and discourses of language.

Also Offered As: COML 6460

1 Course Unit

REES 6530 Communism

The rise and fall of Communism dominated the history of the short twentieth century from the Russian revolution of 1917 to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. As a system of government, Communism is more or less dead, but its utopian ideals of liberation from exploitation and want live on. Communism remains the one political-economic system that presented, for a time, an alternative to global capitalism. In this course, students will gain an introduction to socialist and Communist political thought and explore Communist political and economic regimes their successes and failures, critics and dissidents, efforts at reform, and causes of collapse. We will learn about the remnants of Communism in China, North Korea, and Cuba and efforts of contemporary theorists to imagine a future for Communism.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

REES 6630 Soviet and Post-Soviet Economy

The course will cover the development and operation of the Soviet centrally planned economy—one of the grandest social experiments of the 20th century. We will review the mechanisms of plan creation, the push for the collectivization and further development of Soviet agriculture, the role of the Soviet educational system and the performance of labor markets (including forced labor camps—GULags). We will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the Soviet system and the causes of its collapse. Privatization, called by some "piratization," will be one of the central issues in our consideration of the transition from central planning to a market economy in the early 1990s. Even though our main focus will be on the Soviet economy and post-Soviet transition, we will occasionally look back in time to the tsarist era and even further back to find evidence to help explain Soviet/Russian economic development.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

REES 6631 Anarchism: Theories and Ethnographies

"That we are Utopians is well known. So Utopian are we that we go the length of believing that the Revolution can and ought to assure shelter, food, and clothes to all..." -Pyotr Kropotkin, *The Conquest of Bread*. Although born in the West through the works of William Godwin and Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, anarchism as a political theory was subsequently developed by a variety of Russian and Ukrainian theorists and activists, including Mikhail Bakunin, Lev Tolstoy, Pyotr Kropotkin, Nestor Makhno, and Emma Goldman (in exile in the United States). Anarchism fundamentally questions the need for political power and authority, particularly as embodied in a state. As a political theory, anarchism makes moral claims about the importance of individual liberty and presents a positive theory of human flourishing that is based on ideals of non-coercive consensus building. This course investigates the 19th century theoretical foundations of Russian and Ukrainian anarchist theory through a close examination of key texts from the 19th and early 20th centuries and includes ethnographic explorations of anarchist practices in eastern Europe in the 21st century. All readings will be in English.

Spring

1 Course Unit

REES 6670 Population and Public Health in Eastern Europe

Since the collapse of communism in 1989 in Eastern Europe (and 1991 in the Soviet Union), many of the countries in the region have experienced public health crises and demographic catastrophe. Below replacement fertility rates and massive out migration have decimated the populations of these countries even as populations age and place unsustainable strains on pension systems and medical services. The demographic collapse has also been accompanied by falling male life expectancy and the rise of alcoholism, depression, domestic violence, and suicide. The economic exigencies of the transition from communism to capitalism dismantled welfare states at the exact moment when health services were most needed, leaving charities and nongovernmental organization to try to fill in the gaps. Through a combination of readings from the fields of epidemiology, demography, and medical anthropology, this course examines the public health implications of poverty and social dislocation in post-communist states. All readings and assignments are in English.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

REES 6683 Topics in Criticism & Theory: Object Theory

Topics vary annually

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 5730, CIMS 5730, COML 5730, ENGL 5730, GRMN 5730

1 Course Unit

REES 9900 Masters Thesis

Mandatory thesis writing course for REES MA students seeking to maintain full time status and fulfill their Masters Thesis requirement, normally in the second year of the program.

0 Course Units