This course uses the culture and history of one country to explore general questions of interpretation and critical thought. Our purpose is to use the details of one national history and culture to form general arguments and pose general questions. Russia is a good example for examining certain questions in particular. What holds a society together? How does it collapse? How do various groups of political activists and professionals try to engineer their societies? What can we learn from art – literature, music, architecture – that might not be clear from a written document, and what methods can we use to extract that knowledge? On a more critical level, does poverty produce revolutions? Is there such a thing as “the people”? Is coercion an adequate tool to maintain order and power, even in the most brutal dictatorships?

The purpose of such an approach is two-fold. It raises questions and analytic problems that will be useful throughout your academic career. And it sharpens analytic skills and critical faculties that will be useful in any number of non-academic contexts.

Additional assistance for this class is available to you free of charge at the College Learning Center located on the 1st Floor of Weinstein Hall (right behind Java City). For information on one-on-one and group peer tutoring, please stop by the CLC or go to their website: http://www.nyu.edu/cas/clc/index.html

Format:
The course combines lectures with film, visual art, music, and literature. The textbook is required, and will provide the necessary background. We will look at each of these media as sources that require their own type of analysis, in ways that will be explained in the lectures and the recitations. Familiarity with all of these media will be necessary to do well in the course.

Grading and Requirements:
A mid-term exam in class is worth 30 percent of the final grade;
A final exam during exam period in December is worth 30 percent of the grade;
Attendance at lectures, and attendance and participation in discussion sections are mandatory, and comprise 40 percent of the final grade. Final grades will be reduced by four or more unexcused absences from either the lecture or the recitation, at the discretion of the preceptor and the lecturer. Preceptors may also add small assignments, at their discretion.
Participation means rhetoric, i.e., the ability to convey and defend an idea orally. This is a component part of a college education, and will be weighed heavily by the preceptor.
Books: The following are available for purchase at the Book Centre:
Nicholas Riasanovsky and Mark Steinberg, *A History of Russia* (Seventh Edition)
Short stories in books, or full novels, are also available:
Nikolai Gogol, “The Nose” and “The Overcoat”
Fedor Dostoyevskii, *Notes from the Underground*
Evgeny Zamiatin, *We*
Mikhail Bulgakov, *Heart of Dog.*
Lidia Chukovskaya, *The Deserted House*, aka Sof’ia Petrovna

Other documents will be distributed in the sections by the preceptors.

**SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS**

September 6: Introduction to World Cultures; requirements and structure
September 8: Lecture: West and East: Representations of Kiev, the Mongols, and Ivan the Terrible.
   Riasanovsky, pt.II and chs.8-9
**Discussion sections, week 1: “Orientalism.”**

September 13: Lecture: Visions of Ivan the Terrible:
   Riasanovsky, ch.15
September 15: Viewing of excerpts of Sergei Eisenshtein’s “Ivan the Terrible, pt. 2”
**Discussion sections, week 2: Ivan: History as representation; Tropes and stereotypes.**

September 20: Lecture: Invented Tradition: The Time of Troubles and the Rise of the Romanovs
   Riasanovsky, chs.16-18
September 22: Muscovite Architecture
   Riasanovsky, ch.19
**Discussion sections, week 3: The Invention of Tradition.**

September 27: Lecture: Russia as a Laboratory: Peter and Catherine
   Riasanovsky, chs.20-23
September 29: Architecture from the Eighteenth Century
   Riasanovsky, ch.24
**Discussion sections, week 4: Catherine’s Instruction of 1767.**

October 4: Lecture: Russia in Europe: Alexander I, Napoleon, and the Post-War Social Settlement
   Riasanovsky, chs.25-28
October 6: What Art Can Tell Us: Music, Culture, and the Self until the 1860s
**Discussion sections, week 5: Gogol, “The Nose” and “The Overcoat”**.
October 11: Lecture: Russia as a Laboratory: The Great Reforms
Riasanovsky, ch.29
*October 13: In-class test: identification and short essay*

Discussion Sections, week 6: Discussion of “The Valuev Rescript”.

October 18: Lecture: Can an Empire Be a Nation?
Riasanovsky, ch.33
October 25: Music and Empire: Rimskii-Korsakov, Borodin, Mussorgskii; Music and Class: Chaikovskii

Discussion sections, week 7: Nation-states and empires; music and story.

November 1: Lecture: Who Are “The People”? Lessons of the 1905 Revolution
Riasanovsky, chs.30-31
November 3: Culture and Rationality; Music of the Revolutions.

Discussion Sections, week 8: Dostoyevskii, *Notes from the Underground*

November 8: Lecture: Russia as a Laboratory: Stolypin, Property, and Constitutions, 1906-1914
Riasanovsky, ch.32
November 10: Lecture: How We Remember Things: The Bolshevik Seizure of Power and the Civil War
Riasanovsky, chs.34, 36

Discussion Sections, week 9: Zamiatin, *We*

November 15: Excerpts of Eisenshtein's *October*
November 17: Art of the Avant-garde

Discussion sections, week 10: Mikhail Bulgakov, *Heart of a Dog*

November 22: Lecture: Stalinist Russia as a Modern Society, or Why Monarchy and Dictatorship Are Two Different Things
Riasanovsky, chs.37, 39

Discussion sections, week 11: Lidia Chukovskaya, *The Deserted House*

November 29: Soviet Architecture
December 1: Lecture: Late Soviet Culture and Society
Riasanovsky, chs.41-42

Discussion sections, week 12: The Soviet Union as a Civilization

December 6: Lecture: Perestroika
December 8: Viewing of “Little Vera”

Discussion Sections, week 13: Can a Dictatorship Reform Itself?

December 13: Post-Soviet Russia
Riasanovsky, chs.43-44

Discussion sections, week 14: revision