Class code: CORE-UA 9510
Instructor Details:
Dr Janusz Salamon
janusz.salamon@nyu.edu
Office hours immediately before and after class, and by arrangement via e-mail

Class Details:
Russia Between East and West
Tue & Thu, 10:30-11:50
Location to be confirmed.

Prerequisites:
None

Class Description:
Russia’s rich and multifaced cultural identity has been shaped in a thousand year long process of interaction with a range of diverse cultural formations of the ‘West’ and the ‘East’ (including the Byzantine/Christian ‘East’, the Central Asian/Muslim ‘East’, the East Asian/Confucian ‘East’, and to a lesser extent the South Asian/Indian ‘East’). For the last 300 years, since the era of Tsar Peter the Great, Russia’s greatest statesmen, philosophers, religious thinkers, writers, poets and artists of genius have been obsessed with the question of Russia’s distinctive cultural identity. This passionate search for understanding of the ‘Russian soul’ and of the unique contribution of the Russian people to the world culture is apparently far from over, as the recent developments in the Russian foreign policy and the rise of interest in the ideas of (anti-Western) Eurasianism testify. This course in the Russian intellectual history explores the sources of Russia’s unique cultural blend through examination of some of the principal textual and artistic images representative of Russia’s cultural heritage, including the great works of the Russian literature and music for which Russia is justly famous. While exploring Russia’s past and present at the geographic and cultural crossroads of Eastern Europe, students will be encouraged to think critically and with a historically informed sensibility about the diverse perceptions of reality in cultures different from their own, especially about such fundamental categories as nation, community, individual, gender, identity, morality, religion, and the ‘other’.

Lectures, discussion, video and audio resources.

Desired Outcomes:
On completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of key issues in the Russian cultural and intellectual history
2. Analyze critically and with a historically informed sensibility the principal textual and artistic images of Russian culture
3. Compare and contrast the key ideas, beliefs, and values that have shaped the cultural identities of Russians and their European and Asian neighbors

Assessment Components:
A. Mid-term Paper (ca. 2000 words): 15% - Due on November 6 (before Session 18)
B. Final Paper (ca. 2000 words): 15% - Due on December 16 (before Session 29)
C. Mid-term Exam: 25% - October 23 (= Session 16). The exam will last 75 minutes and will contain 5 questions covering the material explored in the first part of the course, answerable in about 15 sentences (= no less than one page per question).
D. Final Exam: 25% - December 18 (= Session 30). The exam will last 75 minutes and will contain 5 questions covering the material explored in the second part of the course, answerable in about 15 sentences (= ca. one page per question).
E. Class presentations and individual contribution to class discussions: 20%. Students will be expected to have read the assigned literature and to participate actively in the discussion. (The instructor will be regularly testing the students’ knowledge of the assigned readings.)

Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class.
Assessment Expectations

Grade A: Excellent work. Shows a full mastery of the topic and an ability to express thoughts cogently and persuasively. It shows the stamp of an individual approach to the problem set.

Grade B: Very good work but falling short of the highest level.

Grade C: Satisfactory and sufficiently accurate work, lacking in clarity and individual insights.

Grade D: Passable work. Meets minimum requirements but not very well focused. Probably based on very limited reading.

Grade F: Failure to achieve a passable standard. Muddled, poorly presented written work.

Grade conversion

A=94-100
A-=90-93
B+=87-89
B=84-86
B-=80-83
C+=77-79
C=74-76
C-=70-73
D+=67-69
D=65-66
F=below 65

Attendance Policy

If students miss two or more classes, they will be penalized by a by a two percent deduction from their final course grade for every two unexcused absences. Absences only for medical reasons will be excused. To obtain an excused absence, you are obliged to supply either a doctor’s note or corroboration of your illness by a member of the housing staff (either an RA or a Building Manager). Absences due to travel will not be excused.

Late Submission of Work

(1) Work submitted within 5 weekdays after the submission time without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 5 points on the 100 point scale.

(2) Work submitted after 5 weekdays after the submission date without an agreed extension fails and is given a zero.

Plagiarism Policy

According to the Liberal Studies Program Student Handbook, plagiarism is defined as follows:

Plagiarism is presenting someone else’s work as though it were one’s own. More specifically plagiarism is to present as one’s own a sequence of words quoted without quotation marks from another writer, a paraphrased passage from another writer’s work; facts or ideas gathered, organized and reported by someone else, orally and/or in writing. Since plagiarism is a matter of fact, not of the student’s intention, it is crucial that acknowledgment of the sources be accurate and complete. Even where there is no conscious intention to deceive, the failure to make appropriate acknowledgment constitutes plagiarism.

The College of Arts and Science’s Academic Handbook defines plagiarism similarly and also specifies the following:

“Presenting an oral report drawn without attribution from other sources (oral or written), writing a paragraph which, despite being in different words, expresses someone else’s idea without a reference to the source of the idea, or submitting essentially the same paper in two different courses (unless both teachers have given their permission in advance).

Receiving help on a take-home examination or quiz is also cheating – and so is giving that help – unless expressly permitted by the teacher (as in collaborative projects). While all this looks like a lot to remember, all you need to do is give credit where it is due, take credit only for original ideas, and ask your teacher or advisor when in doubt.”
“Penalties for plagiarism range from failure for a paper, failure for the course or dismissal from the university.” (Liberal Studies Program Student Handbook)

Most of the required texts (drawn from the sources listed below) are included in the Course Reader available in the library. The remaining texts are available in the NYU-P library or in electronic format.


Supplemental Text(s) (not required to purchase as copies are in NYUP Library)


Internet Research Guidelines

Additional Required Equipment

Session 1
Tuesday, September 2
Why Russia Matters
(Overview of the course)

Session 2
Thursday, September 4
Russia’s Past and Present: A View of a Russian Liberal
(Prof. Fyodor Stanzhevsky, Sankt Petersbourg University)

Session 3
Tuesday, September 9
Russia’s Future: In Search for New Identity
(Prof. Fyodor Stanzhevsky, Sankt Petersbourg University)

Session 4
Thursday, September 11
Geography as Destiny: Russian Geography and Geopolitics
*Required Readings*: R. Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime*, pp. 1-24 (= Chapter 1)

Session 5
Tuesday, September 16
Holy Russia and the “Third Rome”: The Byzantine Heritage and the Leadership of the ‘Christian East’
*Required Readings*: R. Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime*, pp. 221-245 (= Chapter 9)
*Additional homework*: Watching short documentaries about the Orthodox and listening to the Russian Orthodox sacred music (links will be provided at our course site at the NYU Classes)

Session 6
Encountering the ‘Far East’: The ‘Mongol Yoke’
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Required Readings</th>
<th>Additional homework</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, September 23</td>
<td>Session 7</td>
<td>The Long Middle Ages: Missing the Boat of the Renaissance and the Reformation</td>
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<td>Thursday, September 25</td>
<td>Session 8</td>
<td>‘Acquainted with Grief': Ivan the Terrible</td>
<td><em>Required Readings:</em> 'A Foreigner Describes the Oprichnina of Tsar Ivan the Terrible (1565-70)', in <em>Reinterpreting Russian History</em>, edited by D. Kaiser and G. Merker, pp. 151-154 (= Reading 08) – (total: 4 pages)</td>
<td><em>Additional homework:</em> Watching a documentary about the reign of Ivan the Terrible</td>
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<td>Tuesday, September 30</td>
<td>Session 9</td>
<td>The First Clash with the West: The Polish Commonwealth and the ‘Times of Troubles' (<em>Smuta</em>)</td>
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<td>Thursday, October 2</td>
<td>Session 10</td>
<td>Opening the ‘Window on Europe’: Peter the Great’s ‘Revolution from Above’</td>
<td><em>Required readings:</em> Richard Pipes, <em>Russia Under the Old Regime</em>, pp. 112-138 (= Chapter 9) - (total: 26 pages)</td>
<td><em>Additional homework:</em> Watching a documentary about Sankt Petersburg</td>
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<td>Tuesday, October 7</td>
<td>Session 11</td>
<td>Setting the Stage for the Russian Golden Age: Catherine the Great and the Age of Empresses</td>
<td><em>Homework:</em> Watching A. Sokurov’s film “Russian Ark” (2002) [at least the following fragments: 04:00-18:00; 54:00-1:01; 1:08-1:30 min.]</td>
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<td>Thursday, October 9</td>
<td>Session 12</td>
<td>From the Victory over Napoleon to the Defeat in the Crimean War: The “Post-Decembrist” Identity Crisis</td>
<td><em>Required readings:</em> A. Pushkin’s and M. Lermontov’s selected poems.</td>
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<td>Thursday, October 16</td>
<td>Session 14</td>
<td>The Russian Slavery: Serfdom and the Fate of Russian Peasants</td>
<td><em>Required Readings:</em> R. Pipes, <em>Russia Under the Old Regime</em>, pp. 141-70 (= Chapter 6) – (total: 30 pages)</td>
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<td>Tuesday, October 21</td>
<td>Session 15</td>
<td>The Golden Age of Russian Music: From Glinka to Prokofiev</td>
<td>(Listening to excerpts from the greatest works of the leading Russian composers with the instructor’s commentary)</td>
<td><em>Homework:</em> Listening to Russian music</td>
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<td>Thursday, October 23</td>
<td>Session 16</td>
<td>Mid-term written exam</td>
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<td>October 27-31</td>
<td>Fall Break</td>
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<td>Tuesday, November 4</td>
<td>Session 17</td>
<td>Two Russian Prophets: Fyodor Dostoyevsky (Session 1)</td>
<td><em>Required readings:</em> Walicki, Chapter 15 (part 1: about Dostoyevsky) – (total: 10 pages)</td>
<td><em>Additional homework:</em> Watching a film adaptation of Dostoyevsky’s „Crime and Punishment”</td>
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<td>Thursday, November 6</td>
<td>Session 18</td>
<td>Two Russian Prophets: Fyodor Dostoyevsky (2)</td>
<td><em>Homework:</em> Watching a film adaptation of Dostoyevsky’s „Karamazov Brother’s“</td>
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<td>Session</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Assignments</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>November 6</td>
<td><strong>Mid-term paper due</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Two Russian Prophets: Lev Tolstoy (1)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Homework:</strong> Watching a documentary about Lev Tolstoy</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>November 11</td>
<td><strong>Two Russian Prophets: Lev Tolstoy (2)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Required readings:</strong> Tolstoy’s „The Sevastopol Sketches“ – (total: 30 pages)</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>November 13</td>
<td>‘Chekhovian Tragedy’: Anton Chekhov on the Life in Russia around 1900</td>
<td><strong>Required readings:</strong> Chekhov’s “Peasants” and “The Cherry Orchard” – (total: 30 pages)</td>
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<td><strong>Additional homework:</strong> Watching the play „The Cherry Orchard“</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>November 18</td>
<td>The Russian Revolution: Failure of the Monarchists and Liberals, and the Communist Takeover</td>
<td><strong>Homework:</strong> Watching a documentary about the October revolution</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>November 25</td>
<td>Building Communist Utopia: The Soviet “Golden Age” of 1920s and Stalin’s Industrial Revolution</td>
<td><strong>Homework:</strong> Watching a documentary about Stalin</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>November 27</td>
<td>The Soviet Inferno: The Gulag and Stalin’s Empire of Fear</td>
<td><strong>Required readings:</strong> Fragments of Anne Applebaum’s “The Gulag” – (total: 30 pages)</td>
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<td><strong>Additional homework:</strong> Watching N. Michalkov’s Oscar winning film: “Burnt by the Sun”</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>December 2</td>
<td>Preserving Humanity in Inhumane Times</td>
<td><strong>Required readings:</strong> Selected poems by Anna Akhmatova and Osip Mandelstham (PDF) – (total: 30 pages)</td>
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<td><strong>Additional homework:</strong> Listening to fragments of the compositions of Dmitri Shostakovich</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>December 4</td>
<td>Armageddon Avoided: The Fall of Soviet Union and the Rise of Oligarchic Capitalism</td>
<td><strong>Additional homework:</strong> Watching a documentary about the Fall of Soviet Union and about the transition of power in 2000 (from Boris Yeltsin to Vladimir Putin)</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>December 9</td>
<td>Putin’s Russia: The Age of Restoration</td>
<td><strong>Required readings:</strong> Fragments of Anna Politkovskaya’s A Russian Diary – (total – 30 pages)</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>December 16</td>
<td>Revision session and concluding discussion</td>
<td><strong>Final paper due</strong></td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>December 18</td>
<td>Final written exam</td>
<td><strong>Final exam</strong></td>
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**Classroom Etiquette**

**Required Co-
curricular Activities

Suggested Co-
curricular Activities