Course title: Mentality, Social Behavior, and the Representation of Russia
Course code: RUSI 3010 RLPR
Programs offering course: Russian Language
Language of instruction: Russian
U.S. semester credits: 3.00
Contact hours: 45.00
Term: Spring 2021

Course Description

This course analyzes issues of social behavior as they emerge in the representation of contemporary Russia. Topics covered include intellectual life, religion, gender, living conditions, us/them mentality, as well as some topical current events. The course focuses mainly on specific patterns that shape individual values and attitudes of the Russians, such as the notion of justice, values of the family, the ideas of communal survival and others.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- analyze the complex evolution of Russia’s intellectual, political, religious life in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries;
- interpret and evaluate popular stereotypes in the representation of Russia: traditionalism, spiritualism, conformism, alcoholism;
- examine a media piece on Russian politics, economics, or culture and evaluate it, using conceptual frameworks acquired in this class;
- advance Russian reading, writing and conversation skills by preparing and giving presentations on various aspects of Russian social, political and economic life, as well as by creating several response papers throughout the course.

Course Prerequisites

Students are expected to possess knowledge and skills corresponding to advanced level of Russian language competence.

Methods of Instruction

Class meetings consist of lectures, question-and-answer sessions, class discussions, and screenings.

Assessment and Final Grade

1. Quizzes 20%
2. Midterm Test 20%
3. Essay 20%
4. Final Test 20%
5. In-Class Participation 20%
TOTAL 100%

Course Requirements

Quizzes

There will be two quizzes during the term. These quizzes will be a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions, and they will check the students’ knowledge of facts and data, presented at lectures and in the readings.

Midterm Test
The midterm test and the final test will gauge the students’ knowledge of the main concepts and ideas presented at the lectures and in the visual and verbal texts. Both tests will consist of short answer questions and one large essay question.

**Essay**

The goal of the essay is to provide an in-depth look at one of the topics covered in this course, i.e. intellectual life, religion, gender, everyday life in Russia. Please, discuss your choice of the topic with the instructor before the Midterm. Your essay should seek to explore the intersection between your individual, first-hand experience of living in Russia and larger patterns of Russian culture and mentality.

**Final Test**

The midterm test and the final test will gauge the students’ knowledge of the main concepts and ideas presented at the lectures and in the visual and verbal texts. Both tests will consist of short answer questions and one large essay question.

**In-Class Participation**

Taking part in class discussions is essential for learning. It is important that all students prepare course readings for the assigned date and come to class ready to analyze and debate issues raised by the readings.

**Attendance**

Attendance is crucial for successful completion of the class. Students are allowed to have two unexcused absences for each course for the whole semester program. These allowed unexcused absences should be used for situations such as minor illnesses without a doctor’s note or personal situations that prevent the student from attending the class. Allowed unexcused absences should not be used in a planned way for travel or other activities.

Unexcused absences beyond the limit of two will lower a student’s grade by 2 points on the 100-point scale each. For example, if your overall score in the class is 90 (an equivalent of A-) and you have had three unexcused absences, your final score will be 88 (B+).

*N.B. Course schedule is subject to change due to study tours, excursions, or local holidays. Final schedules will be included in the final syllabus provided to students on site.*

**Weekly Schedule**

**Week 1**

- **Class: 1.1** Seminar: Syllabus
  - Practical matters.

- **Class: 1.2** Lecture: “Russian Mindset Part 1”
  - Geography and Culture
  - Screening: episodes from “Born in the USSR. Age 28”
  - Readings: Andrei Sinyavskiy “Holy Fools”, “Skomorokh”

**Week 2**

- **Class: 2.1** Lecture: “Russian Mindset Part 2”
  - Politics, Philosophy and Religion

- **Class: 2.2** Seminar: Cultural determinism of Russian Mindset
  - Screening: episodes from “Born in the USSR. Age 28”; “Island”
  - Reading: Nancy Ries, Our Fairy-Tale Life
**Week 3**

Class: 3.1 Lecture: “Anthropology of Russian Childhood”

Class: 3.2 Seminar: Political, Philosophic and Religious Determinism of Russian Mindset

Film: episodes from TV Series: “Fizruk”, “School”


**Week 4**

Class: 4.1 Lecture: “Radicalism and Hooliganism in Russia”

Part 1: Political Radicalism

Class: 4.2 Seminar: Russian Childhood: Games, Toys, Habits

Screening: episodes from TV Series: “Fizruk”, “School”

Reading: from Yurchak Alexei "Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More," pp. 45-67

**Week 5**

Class: 5.1 Lecture: Radicalism and Hooliganism in Russia

Part 2: Religious Radicalism, Street Art

Class: 5.2 Seminar: Brain-drain, Emigration and “Image of the Future”

Screening: episodes from “Revolution that wasn’t”

Reading: articles from contemporary Russian press (to be distributed by the instructor)

**Week 6**

Class: 6.1 Seminar: Radicalism in Russia

Reading: articles from contemporary Russian press (to be distributed by the instructor)

Class: 6.2 Midterm test

**Week 7**

Class: 7.1 Lecture: Us/ Them Mentality: Russia and Former Soviet Republics

Class: 7.2 Seminar: Russia after 2014

Screening: excerpts from the film Maidan

Reading: articles from contemporary Russian press (to be distributed by the instructor)

**Week 8**

Class: 8.1 Lecture: Us/ Them Mentality: Russia and “The West”

Class: 8.2 Seminar: Inferiority Complex in Russian Society

Home assignment: watch film: Brother, Part 2 (dir. A. Balabanov)

Reading: articles from contemporary Russian press (to be distributed by the instructor)

**Week 9**

Class: 9.1 Lecture: The Emergence of Civil Society in Russia

Class: 9.2 Seminar: Patriots and Foreign Agents
Screening: episodes from the film Event (dir. Sergei Loznitsa)

Reading: Sinyavsky Andrei “Soviet Civilization”

Week 10

Class: 10.1 Seminar: Russian Society: Trust and Confrontation

Reading: articles from contemporary Russian press (to be distributed by the instructor)

Class: 10.2 Essay is due

Week 11

Class: 11.1 Lecture: Problems of Civil Society in Contemporary Russia

Screening: excerpts from film Leviathan

Reading: Mitrokhin Nikolai Russkaia Pravoslavnaja tserkov: sovremennoje sostojanie i aktualnie problemi

Kaariainen Kimmo, Furman Dmitry (ed.) Novye tserkvi, starie veruyuschie: religia v postsovetskoi Rossi

Class: 11.2 Seminar: Religion in Contemporary Russia

Film: “Pussy Riot: Punk Prayer”

Week 12

Class: 12.1 Seminar: Religion in Contemporary Russia

Reading: from Mitrokhin Nikolai "Russkaia Pravoslavnaja Tserkov: sovremennoje sostojanie i aktualnie problemi

Seminar: Russian Orthodoxy and Human Rights (15.05.2017)

Class: 12.2 Final Test

Course Materials

Readings


Kaariainen Kimmo, Furman Dmitry (ed.) Novye tserkvi, starie veruyuschie: religia v postsovetskoi Rossi. SPb 2007


Mitrokhin Nikolai "Russkaia Pravoslavnaja Tserkov: sovremennoje sostojanie I aktualnie problemi M, 2006


Online Resources