

Russian 360
Russian Dreams and Nightmares: The Modern Russian Experience through Film
GEC in Visual/Performing Arts
Non-Western Focus

Winter 2003
M – 9:30-12:18 UH 43; W – 9:30-10:18 MP 1035

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In this course we will explore some of the most revealing hopes and disappointments of Russian people presented in internationally acclaimed Russian films. (Knowledge of Russian not necessary; all films are with English subtitles.) We will examine how the Revolution and socialism encouraged people to dream and to believe in the “bright future” of socialism, and how reality crushed their dreams. In the second part of the course we will focus on the transition to democracy after the collapse of the Soviet system and will discuss why freedom brought the rise of nationalism, crime, and violence. We will watch Academy Awards nominated films and Winners by Menshov, Tarkovsky, and Balabanov, and we will attempt to decipher the cinematic medium and study how to read these films.

Course policies

In addition to viewing the films the students will be assigned additional texts which will guide and stimulate class discussions. Students will be responsible for the presentation of one film/director during the term. There will be two reviews (250 words each), one paper (3-5 pages), and a final exam. Detailed instructions on the writing assignments will be given.

Grade policies

Attendance and participation –	20%
Reviews -	10% (5% each)
Presentation -	15%
Paper -	25%
Final exam -	30%

100 -93 A

90-92 A-

88-89 B+

83-87 B

80-82 B-

78-79 C+

73-77 C
70-72 C-
68-69 D+
65-67 D
< 65 E

Attendance & Participation – 20%

A – clear evidence of preparation, frequent voluntary participation, and significant contribution to class discussions – 20%

B – clear evidence of preparation and some participation – 16%

C – presence, evidence of preparation, and no voluntary participation – 13%

Late assignments – minus 1% each

Absence (beyond three) – minus 3% (each)

Oral Presentations

Present the author and the work in their cultural, social, and political context. Also, prepare questions for a discussion which would shed light on the work and the period. (Handouts are encouraged.)

Course plan

Jan. 6 - Introduction; The Dream of the revolution and Russian post-revolutionary society

Eisenstein, *October*

Jan 8 – Eisenstein, *October* (Giannetti, *Understanding Movies*, chapters “Photography” and “Editing” – SBX)

Jan. 13 - Aleksandrov, *Circus* and Vasilev, *Chapaev* (*Understanding Movies*, chapters “Movement” and “Sound” – SBX)

Jan. 15 – Maya Turovskaya “The Tastes of Soviet Moviegoers during the 1930s,” *Late Soviet Culture* **in Main Library - Closed Reserve**

Jan. 20 – World War II

Kalatozov, *Cranes Are Flying* (*Understanding Movies*, chapter “Acting” – SBX)

Jan. 22 – “Russian Cinema - National Cinema? Three Views,” *Russia on Reels* **in Main Library - Closed Reserve**

Review 1

Jan. 27 - Week 3 – **Post WWII – Hopes and Disappointments**

East-West (dir. Régis Wargnier) (*Understanding Movies*, chapter “Story” – SBX)

Jan. 29 – Natasha Zhuravkina, “Fathers for the Fatherland,” in *Russia on Reels: The Russian Idea in Post-Soviet Cinema*, (ed. B. Beumers) **in Main Library - Closed Reserve**

Feb. 3 – **Building Socialism – Victory and Failure**

Mirror (dir. A. Tarkovsky) (*Understanding Movies*, chapter “Mise en scene” – SBX)

Feb. 5 - selected chapters from Tarkovsky’s *Sculpting In Time* **in Main Library - Closed Reserve**
Review 2

Feb. 10 – *Moscow Does Not Believe In Tears* (dir. Menshov) (*Understanding Movies*, chapter “Drama” – SBX)

Feb.12 – Anna Lawton, “The Waning of the Brezhnev Era,” *Kinoglasnost* **in Main Library - Closed Reserve**

Feb. 17 – **The Transition to Democracy – Spoils of Freedom**

Window to Paris (dir. Mamlin)

Feb. 19 – Susan Larsen, “In Search of an Audience: The New Russian Cinema of Reconciliation,” *Consuming Russia: Popular Culture, Sex, And Society Since Gorbachev* **in Main Library - Closed Reserve**

Feb. 24 – *To See Paris and Die* (dir. Proshkin)

Feb. 26 – TBA

Paper

March 3 – *Of Freaks and Men* (dir. Balabanov)

March 5 – Richard Taylor, “Now That the Party’s Over: Soviet Cinema and Its Legacy,” *Russia on Reels* **in Main Library - Closed Reserve**

March 10 - *War* (dir. Balabanov)

March 12 – Conclusions

Exam

Bibliography

- Barker, Adele Marie. *Consuming Russia: Popular Culture, Sex, And Society Since Gorbachev*. Durham: Duke U Press, 1999.
- Beumers, Birgit, ed. *Russia on Reels: The Russian Idea in Post-Soviet Cinema*. London: I.B. Tauris, 1999
- Braudy, Leo, ed. *Film Theory and Criticism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Iyengar, Shanto. *Late Soviet Culture: From Perestroika To Novostroika*. Durham: Duke U Press, 1994.
- Horton, Andrew and Michael Brashinsky. *The Zero Hour: Glasnost and Soviet Cinema in Transition*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1992.
- Lahusen, Thomas. *Late Soviet Culture: From Perestroika To Novostroika*. Durham: Duke U Press, 1994.
- Lawton, Anna. *Kinoglasnost: Soviet Cinema in Our Time*. NY: Cambridge UP, 1992.
- ed. *The Red Screen: Politics, Society, Art in Soviet Cinema*. London: Routledge, 1992.
- Liehm, Mira and Antonin J. *The Most Important Art: Soviet and East European Film After 1945*. Berkeley: U of CA P, 1977.
- Woll, Josephine. *Real Images: Soviet Cinema and the Thaw*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2000