## Russian 3460

**Spring 2019**

**Tu/Th – 9:35-10:55**

**Russian Dreams and Nightmares: The Modern Russian Experience through Film GEC in Visual/Performing Arts**

**Non-Western Focus**

**Department of Slavic and East European Languages and Literatures**

**Instructor:** Randall Rowe

**Location:** Campbell Hall 251

**Office Hours:** Tu/Th at 11:30am-12:30pm and by appointment

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In this course we will explore some of the most revealing hopes and disappointments of the Russian people in modern times, as presented in internationally acclaimed Russian films. (All films are shown with English subtitles.) We will examine how the 1917 Revolution and the subsequent introduction of Communist Party rule encouraged people to dream of and believe in the “bright future” of socialism, and how reality crushed those dreams. We will also discuss the Soviet film response to the Second World War. In the second part of the course we will focus on the transition to democracy after the collapse of the Soviet system in 1991; we will discuss why this shift brought about the rise of nationalism, crime, violence, and more hope. We will watch award-winning films by directors such as Eisenstein, Tarkovsky, Abuladze, and Zviagintsev, discuss how to decipher the cinematic medium, and how to “read” these films visually.

*“For us, cinema is the most important of all the arts.” V.I. Lenin.*

## Objectives:

* Mastering the terms and concepts of filmmaking and film criticism
* Applying these terms and concepts to internationally acclaimed Soviet and post-Soviet films both verbally (in classroom discussions) and in writing (assigned writing exercises)
* Understanding the socio-historical context that produced these Soviet and post-Soviet films as well as the prevailing aesthetic philosophies that guided these directors and their critics
* Understanding the unique qualities of the Soviet and post-Soviet film industry
* Questions we will discuss and resolve to answer: What unique qualities of film prompted Lenin and his successors to value film so highly?
* What is proletarian art? (Did the Soviets ever clearly resolve this?)
* What were the goals of Soviet and post-Soviet filmmakers? (What messages were they trying to convey? To whom did they address their films and why?
* How did these goals change over time to reflect contemporary politics?) What contributions have these films and/or these directors made to world cinema?
* What are the recurring motifs / themes / images of Soviet and post-Soviet films?
* How did film map out the roles of the (post-) Soviet Man and Woman (*Homo sovieticus*)?

## GE Visual and Performing Arts

### Students evaluate significant works of art in order to develop capacities aesthetic and historical response and judgment; interpretation and evaluation; critical listening, reading, seeing, thinking, and writing; and experiencing the arts and reflecting on that experience. The expected learning outcomes are:

1. Students analyze, appreciate, and interpret significant works of art.
2. Students engage in informed observation and/or active participation in a discipline within the visual, spatial, and performing arts.

How do the course goals address the general and specific expected learning outcomes above?

* + By watching, reading, and discussing political, social, and cultural issues, as reflected in outstanding cinematic examples, which belong to the Russian tradition of cinema, students develop abilities to analyze, appreciate, and interpret significant works of art as well as learn about mechanisms of cultural/cinematic construction.

How do the assigned readings address the general and specific expected learning outcomes above?

* + The assigned types of readings teach 1) appreciation and analysis of film as form of art and the specific social and cultural issues it expresses 2) knowledge about Russian cinema and its national tradition; 3) knowledge about cultural constructions as reflected in Russian cinema.

How do course topics address the general and specific expected learning outcomes above?

* + The course content is organized chronologically in order to address the issues of social and political changes in Russia during the 20th century. The selection of readings and films for analysis for each region addresses each of the above mentioned learning objectives.

How do the written assignments address the general and specific expected learning outcomes above?

* + Assignments of various kinds (quizzes on film terminology and Russian cinema readings, clip analysis, essays) are designed to teach students 1) master important terms and concepts of filmmaking and film criticism that will empower them to engage in critical analysis of the issues involved; 2) apply these terms and concepts to analysis of work of art, i.e. internationally acclaimed Russian films both verbally (in classroom discussions) and in writing (assigned writing exercises); 3) understand the socio- historical and cultural context that produced these films as well as the prevailing aesthetic philosophies that guided the directors and their critics.

Russian 3460 is also a **GE** **Diversity course, Global Studies.** The goals Diversity/Global Studies: Students understand the pluralistic nature of institutions, society, and culture in the United States and across the world in order to become educated, productive, and principled citizens. Outcomes;

* Students understand some of the political, economic, cultural, physical, social, and philosophical aspects of one or more of the world’s nations, peoples and cultures outside the U.S.
* Students recognize the role of national and international diversity in shaping their own attitudes and values as global citizens.

How do the course goals address the general and specific expected learning outcomes above?

* + Students will examine some of the aspects of ethnic, religious, gender, and political diversity in the non-Western culture of Russia. In particular, by watching, reading, and discussing social and cultural issues as reflected in outstanding cinematic examples, students will learn how the identity of diverse groups is constructed and manipulated.

How do the assigned readings address the general and specific expected learning outcomes above?

* + The assigned types of readings teach knowledge about political and cultural constructions in Russian cinema.

How do the written assignments address the general and specific expected learning outcomes above?

* + Assignments of various kinds (quizzes on Russian cinema readings, clip analysis, essays) are designed to help students to understand the socio-historical and cultural context that produced major works of Russian cinema.

1. **Film Studies**: This course is approved for the interdisciplinary major in film studies. For more information about film studies as a major or minor at OSU, go to

[<http://film-studies.osu.edu>](http://film-studies.osu.edu/), or email <[filmstudies@osu.edu>](mailto:filmstudies@osu.edu).

1. **Course policies:** In addition to viewing the films at home, students will be assigned readings that will guide and stimulate class discussions. There will be a midterm in class, two quizzes in class (on film terminology and Russian cinema readings), and a final examination during finals week. Detailed instructions on these tests and exams will be given in class.
2. **Texts:** We will be using the following materials.
   1. Readings posted on Canvas
   2. Films on the OSU secured media site (the links will be provided on Canvas)
   3. Films made on the studio Mosfilm posted on youtube.com (the links will be also provided on Canvas)
   4. Highly recommended: *Understanding Movies* (***TWELFTH*** *or* ***THIRTEENTH*** *Edition*), by Louis Giannetti (ISBN-13: 978-0132347396). On Amazon, a new copy of the thirteenth edition is sold for about $101 when last checked, and used copies start at $71.

This textbook is admittedly expensive, but we will be reading six to seven chapters from it during the semester. You will be tested on definitions and other terms contained in these chapters— terms that will be discussed in class as well as utilized in the analysis of the films. It is your responsibility to be proficient in this material for class discussions, quizzes, and exams. If you do not wish to buy *Understanding Movies*, there will be an older copy on two-hour reserve for you to read in the Thompson Library. You cannot take it from the library overnight. (NB: The 10th and 11th editions are sufficient for our purposes, but you may not be able to resell them back as easily as the 12th or the 13th editions.)

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| **IV. Grading scale** |  | | |
| 93–100: A | 83–87.99: B | 73–77.99: C | 65–67.99: D |
| 90–92.99: A– | 80-82.99: B- | 70-72.99: C- | Below 65: E |
| 88–90.99: B+ | 78–79.99: C+ | 68–69.99: D+ |  |

#### Grading Policies

Attendance and professionalism 15%

Short presentation about one Soviet or Russian film 5% Quiz on analysis of film techniques 10%

Quiz on readings 15% Midterm 25%

Final exam 30%

#### Attendance & Professionalism – 15%

Attendance: Your regular attendance and constructive participation (when required) will be a crucial component of this course; thus, attendance will be taken. **Two (2)** absences can be excused with proper documentation (i.e., a legitimate doctor’s note, NOT a note from the CVS pharmacy), and **one (1)** can be excused without proper documentation. Otherwise, you will receive a three-percent (1%) deduction from your total course grade for each additional class you miss.

You will be responsible for viewing films on your own (Netflix, youtube.com, OSU secured media library – the links will be provided on Canvas). The instructor is unable to lend you copies.

Professionalism: What do we mean by ‘professionalism?’ Attendance only reflects that you were present in class on a given day; professionalism reflects that you were (or were not) attentive during the screening and lecture/discussion (i.e., not sleeping, doing homework, reading the newspaper, texting, surfing the internet on your laptop, etc.), that you were (or were not) well- prepared for that day’s lesson, and/or that you were willing and able to offer constructive observations/questions to that day’s lecture/discussion. Comments should be substantive, germane, and appropriate. In other words, your professionalism grade should sound very much like a typical participation grade.

The following criteria are used in establishing participation grades:

1. (15%): There is clear evidence of preparation and adequate participation (when required). (Adequate participation means participation in 70% of class during the semester. Students’ answers should relate to the topic and their arguments should based on class material).
2. (10%): There is some evidence of preparation and some participation (in 50% of the semester).
3. (5%): There is little evidence of preparation and inadequate participation.

#### Texting, updating facebook, twitting, emailing, or surfing during class will result in a participation grade of no higher than 5% after only ONE warning.

1. **Short presentation – 5%**

Every student will be required to prepare one short (7-10 min) presentation about a Soviet or Russian film of his or her choice. Introduce the film to the class and give as much information as you can for such a short period of time. Feel free to show a clip and be prepared to answer questions about the film. Make sure to briefly analyze cinematic techniques used by the film director.

#### Quizzes - 25% (quiz on film terminology – 10%, quiz on readings – 15%)

Quizzes will be taken in class and will last 20-30 minutes. Each quiz will be short-answer, fill-in- the-blank, and multiple-choice, and will oblige students to analyze film clips and/or provide brief explanations of certain ideas and arguments pertaining to Soviet and Russian cinema. Specific examples from the films viewed in class must be included. Plot summaries are not necessary and are discouraged.

1. **Quiz on analysis of film techniques (from *Understanding Movies,* powerpoints, and discussions).** Students will be asked to identify films terms, know their definitions, and give examples from the films watched.
2. **Quiz on readings.** Students will be asked to identify/provide brief explanations of certain ideas and arguments pertaining to the Soviet and Russian cinema, based on articles and readings from the course packet.

#### Midterm - 25%

The midterm will be conducted in class (scene identification, clip analysis, fill-in-the-blank, multiple-choice, short essay.)

#### Final Examination - 30%

The final is cumulative and will be the same format as the midterm.

#### Extra-Curricular Activities:

Students of Russian at Ohio State may take advantage of a wealth of extra-curricular activities sponsored by the Department and by other units at Ohio State, including lectures, informal conversation gatherings (Russian Table), films, Russian news broadcasts, parties and more. You may receive up to three percent for three attended events added to each test grade. Extra-curricular activities will be announced in class, but we also encourage you to sign up for the Slavic Center Monday e-mail list at [csees@osu.edu](mailto:csees@osu.edu) that provides a comprehensive list of all Slavic related events at OSU and beyond.

#### Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish

procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term

“academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever

committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in

connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic

misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the

Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>.

# Disability Services

**The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information:** [**slds@osu.edu**](mailto:slds@osu.edu)**; 614-292-3307;** [**slds.osu.edu**](http://slds.osu.edu/)**; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.**

## Class schedule (subject to change as instructor deems appropriate)

#### Be prepared to discuss any listed readings from the textbook and course packet on the day that they are listed below. That means that you must read them in advance.

**Week One: Introduction Tu, January 8**

Introduction. Review of the syllabus, class materials and expectations

#### Th, January 10

Discussion of the October Revolution of 1917 and Russian culture at that time Discussion of the Soviet montage school: Kuleshov, Pudovkin, Eisenstein

#### Week Two: The Dream of the Revolution and Russian post-Revolutionary Society Tu, January 15

Viewing of Sergei Eisenstein, *October / Oktiabr’* (1927), (selected scenes, in-class screening) [youtube.com, the link on Canvas]

Peter Kenez, “Birth of the Soviet Film Industry”

#### Th, January 17

Discussion of Sergei Eisenstein, *October / Oktiabr’* (1927)

Continued discussion of Soviet montage school and October Revolution Discussion of *Understanding Movies*, “Editing”

#### Week Three: Early Soviet Film and Social Concerns of the 1920s Tu, January 22

Viewing of Abram Room’s *Bed and Sofa/* Tret’ia meshchanskaia (1925) [OSU secured media library, the link on Canvas]

Julian Graffy, *Bed and Sofa* (on Canvas)

#### Th, January 24

Discussion of *Bed and Sofa*

#### Week Four: The 1930s and the Birth of Socialist Realism Tu, January 29

Viewing of Grigory Aleksandrov’s *Circus / Tsirk* (1936) (in-class screening) [youtube.com] Discussion of *Understanding Movies, “Photography”*

#### Th, January 31

Discussion of *Circus*

Discussion of *Understanding Movies*, “Ideology”

#### Week Five: World War II Tu, February 5

Discussion of Great Patriotic War

Viewing of Mikheil Chiaurelli’s *The Fall of Berlin Part 1/ Padenie Berlina* (1949) (selected scenes, in-class screening)[youtube.com, the link on Canvas]

#### Th, February 7

Viewing of Mikheil Chiaurelli’s *The Fall of Berlin Part 2/ Padenie Berlina* (1949) (selected scenes, in-class screening)[youtube.com, the link on Canvas]

Discussion of “Soviet Cinema in the Age of Stalin” by Peter Kenez (Canvas)

**\*\*\*Quiz on analysis of film techniques from *Understanding Movies* (on chapters we’ve covered)**

#### Week Six: Building Socialism – Victory and Failure (The Thaw part 1) Tu, February 12

Discussion of *The Fall of Berlin*

Viewing of Mikhail Kalatozov’s *Cranes Are Flying / Letiat zhuravli* (1957) (selected scenes, in- class screening)[youtube.com, the link on Canvas]

#### Th, February 14

Discussion of *Cranes Are Flying*

Discussion of “The Big Sleep: Introduction” by Josephine Woll (Canvas)

#### Week Seven: Building Socialism – Victory and Failure (The Thaw part 1) Tu, February 19

Discussion of *Understanding Movies*, “Movement”

Viewing of Andrei Tarkovsky’s *Ivan’s Childhood* (1962) (selected scenes, in-class screening)[youtube.com, the link on Canvas]

#### Th, February 21

Discussion of *Ivan’s Childhood*

Denise Youngblood, “ *Ivan’s Childhood* and *Come and See*” (Canvas)

#### Week Eight: Stagnation and the 1970s:

**Tu, February 26**

*\*\*\****MIDTERM** (in class: scene identification, clip analysis, multiple-choice, short essay)

#### Th, February 28

Discussion of Lawton, “The Waning of the Brezhnev Era,” *Kinoglasnost*

Vladimir Menshov’s *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears / Moskva slezam ne verit* (1979) (in- class screening, selected scenes) [youtube.com, the link on Canvas]

#### Week Nine: Perestroika and Glasnost: The Soviet 1980s (1986-1991) Tu, March 5

Continued viewing of Vladimir Menshov’s *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears / Moskva slezam ne verit* (1979) (in-class screening, selected scenes) [youtube.com, the link on Canvas] Discussion of *Understanding Movies*, “Mise en scene”

#### Th, March 7

Discussion of *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears*

Discussion of “The Return of History” by David Remnick

#### Week Ten: SPRING BREAK

**Tu, March 12**

*No Class*

#### Th, March 14

*No Class*

#### Week Eleven: The Fall of the Soviet State Tu, March 19

Tengiz Abuladze’s *Repentance* / Pokaianie (1987) (in-class screening, selected scenes, Part I&II. OSU secured media library, the link on Canvas)

Discussion of *Understanding Movies*, chapter “Acting”

#### Th, March 21

Discussion of *Repentance*

Discussion of Perestroika, Glasnost’ and other sociopolitical processes in Russia in the 1990s

#### Week Twelve: The New Millennium. Old and New Challenges Tu, March 26

Aleksei Balabanov’s *Brother / Brat* (1997) (selected scenes, in-class screening)[OSU secured media library, the link on Canvas]

#### Th, March 28

Discussion of *Brother*

Discussion of Susan Larsen, “National Identity, Cultural Authority, and the Post-Soviet Blockbuster: Nikita Mikhalkov and Aleksei Balabanov” (Canvas)

#### Week Thirteen: The New Millennium. Old and New Challenges Tu, April 2

Fedor Bondarchuk *Stalingrad* (2013) (selected scenes, in-class screening)

#### \*\*\*Quiz on course packet readings (#2)

**Th, April 4**

Discussion of *Stalingrad*

Read Norris “The war film in Putin’s Russia” and Graham “Stalingrad”

#### Week Fourteen: The New Millennium and Universal Human Concerns

**Tu, April 9**

Andrei Zviagintsev’s *Leviathan* (2015) (selected scenes, in-class screening) Discussion of Leviathan

#### Th, April 11

Discussion of *Stalingrad* and *Leviathan*

Discussion of Graffy “Leviathan” and Dolgopolov “Leviathan”

#### Week Sixteen: Contemporary Issues in Russia and Conclusions Tu, April 16

Marusya Bociurkiw *This is Gay Propaganda: LGBT Rights & the War in Ukraine* (2015) Blog Post—Randall Rowe: “Queer Migration: Identity and Representation Challenges”

#### Th, April 18

Conclusions

# Final Exam during the week of finals