

LLC 322
Sexuality and the Body in 20th c Russian Literature
Spring 2020

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Office hours: M/W 2:30-3:30
and by appointment



Class times: T/R 3:00-4:15
INTC 231

Course Description

This course is designed to act as an introduction to 20th century Russian literature, to the study of sexuality, gender, and the body, and to the best practices of advanced undergraduate academic writing. Because of the course's interdisciplinary nature, our readings will be quite diverse. We'll read some of the giants of classic Russian literature, including Chekhov, Bulgakov, and Akhmatova, and we'll introduce ourselves to some lesser known, but no less valuable names, such as Kuzmin and Mogutin. In addition, we'll familiarize ourselves with critical theory from both western and eastern cultures, including works of queer theory, feminist theory, and masculinity studies. Our primary texts date across Russia's long and tumultuous 20th century, beginning with Chekhov's fin de siècle works around 1895 and ending with Sorokin's controversial dystopias of the early 2000s. Throughout the course, we'll ask ourselves how focusing on one area of daily lived experience – sexuality and the body – can help us better stand both Russian culture and our own. We will discuss the ways gender, sexuality, sex, body politics, race, ethnicity, class, and power intersect to influence and build our understanding of the world around us.

Course objectives

- To read a lot of Russian literature
- To familiarize ourselves with some of the central fields of thought within feminist theory, queer theory, masculinity studies, and Slavic studies
- To practice and hone our academic writing skills

Content warning

Many of the readings assigned in this course deal with extremely sensitive, mature, and challenging topics. Some readings will deal with violence, some will be graphic, some will be vulgar. You may feel a range of emotional and personal responses to the texts, including anger, discomfort, confusion, humor, and excitement, to name a few. First, I ask that you approach all texts with an open mind and with great maturity. Secondly, while emotional responses to the texts and to our peers' understandings of the text are natural, I require that **you remain respectful at all times**, even if you disagree. Hate speech will not be tolerated. All of us are responsible for creating a space that is mutually respectful and safe. If you are

hurtful or disrespectful to your peers, I will ask you to leave immediately and schedule a separate time to meet with me outside of class. Depending on the situation, I may also ask you to drop the course and/or report you to the dean's office.

If you think that a particular topic or reading may be especially uncomfortable for you, please talk to me before the discussion. There are multiple ways we can ensure that everyone has safe access to the material. If you need to leave or miss class, you are still responsible for any work missed.

Required Texts:

The course is reading intensive. You will have roughly 50-75 pages to read each week and at times much more. Because of the high workload, I try to make sure that the heavier readings you have are always primary texts (fiction), which tend to require less time. Theoretical texts will be kept to a minimum (20-30 pages) as much as possible. If you find yourself having trouble keeping up with the readings, please reach out to me as soon as possible. Do not wait until the end of the semester to tell me you're struggling.

Most of our texts will be available through our course site on Canvas and I can bring some paper copies to class by request. Those that aren't on Canvas (listed below) are available in the bookstore (with the exception of Petrushevskaja's *The Time: Night*), but you are welcome to purchase less expensive copies online.

Mikhail Bulgakov, *Heart of a Dog*

Liudmila Petrushevskaja, *The Time: Night*

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*

Vladimir Sorokin, *Day of the Oprichnik*

Rubric

Short papers	30	Final presentation	5
Response papers	20	Attendance and participation	15
Final paper	20		
Annotated bibliography	10		

Grading scale

A+	100-98	B+	89-88	C+	79-78	D+	69-68	F	59-0
A	97-93	B	87-83	C	77-73	D	67-63		
A-	92-90	B-	82-80	C-	72-70	D-	62-60		

Attendance

You are allowed two absences without any effect on your grade. After two absences, your attendance/participation grade goes down by half. After three, your attendance/participation grade becomes zero and you must meet with me. After four, your final grade drops by one letter. After five, you receive a failing grade in the course.

Response papers

You are required to write at least four response papers (2-3 pgs) over the course of the semester, one at the beginning of each unit. These are responses to the theoretical texts that we read to introduce the unit and its central questions, themes, issues, and problems. The responses are structured to help your

understanding of both the theoretical texts, which will at times be very dense, and to prepare you to think critically about the primary texts we will read within that unit. Additional guidelines and instructions for the responses papers can be found attached to this syllabus. Additional response papers may be assigned for particularly difficult primary texts, but this will be decided on a case-by-case basis as the semester continues.

Short Papers

In addition to regular response papers, you are required to write two short (3-5 pg) papers. In these papers, you will form an original argument incorporating the theoretical text from that unit and at least one of the primary texts from that unit, if not more. For these papers, you do not need outside sources. Before each paper due date, we will have a “writing lab” day in which we address a few specific writing skills that I then ask you to incorporate into that paper (organizing your paper, forming a thesis, using quotes, etc.). Specific prompts and instructions will be given in advance of each paper due date.

Final Research Paper and Presentation

In lieu of a final exam, you will write a final research paper (7-9 pgs) in which you form an original thesis based on one or more of the units from our course. For this paper, you are required to incorporate both the theoretical text we’ve read for class and at least one of the “Further Reading” texts listed in this syllabus, plus additional outside sources you find on your own. You are allowed to use a theoretical text from your primary field of study if you ask me about it first. An annotated bibliography with at least five possible sources (including the suggested reading text) will be due roughly two weeks before the final research paper due date.

At the end of the course you will also give a brief presentation on your research paper. This presentation is designed to help you organize your ideas and run them by your classmates before you turn your paper in to me for grading. You may present with another student in the class who has a similar research topic, but it is not required. Specific instructions for both the final research paper and presentation will be given later on in the semester.

Academic Integrity

As members of the vibrant intellectual community that is the University of Richmond, students have a responsibility to maintain a high standard of academic integrity. Academic dishonesty, whether it takes the form of cheating, plagiarism, or aiding others in the aforementioned violations, will result in very serious consequences. Examples of plagiarism are:

- Copying an author’s work without proper quotation/citations.
- Copying the work of another student (past or present- this includes buying papers online and passing them off as one’s own work).
- Paraphrasing or rephrasing an author’s ideas/work without proper citations.
- Submitting the same paper, or significant parts of the same paper, for two different assignments.

This short list, of course, does not cover all possible instances of academic dishonesty. For a more comprehensive explanation, see UR’s Student Handbook or visit <https://studentdevelopment.richmond.edu/student-handbook/honor/the-honor-code.html>. If I encounter academic dishonesty, I will follow university guidelines and file a complaint with the honor council, as well as give you a failing grade for that assignment and the course.

Accommodation

I would like this course to function as an open, safe environment in which everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, dis/abledness, sexuality, religion, etc., can participate. If the current pedagogical set-up does not meet your learning needs, please let me know immediately and I will strive to accommodate you. Please note some solutions may require that you first obtain proper documentation, such as a DAN (Disability Accommodation Notice), from the Disability Services Office. For more information, see <https://disability.richmond.edu/general-accommodations/index.html>.

Academic Skills Center: Assists students in assessing their academic strengths and weaknesses; honing their academic skills through teaching effective test preparation, critical reading and thinking, information conceptualization, concentration, and related techniques; working on specific subject areas (e.g., calculus, chemistry, accounting, etc.); and encouraging campus and community involvement. **Boatwright Library Research Librarians:** Research librarians assist students with identifying and locating resources for class assignments, research papers and other course projects. Librarians also provide research support for students and can respond to questions about evaluating and citing sources. Students can email, text or IM or schedule a personal research appointment to meet with a librarian in his/her office on the first floor Research and Collaborative Study area. **Career Services:** Can assist you in exploring your interests and abilities, choosing a major or course of study, connecting with internships and jobs, and investigating graduate and professional school options. We encourage you to schedule an appointment with a career advisor early in your time at UR. **Counseling and Psychological Services:** Assists currently enrolled, full-time, degree-seeking students in improving their mental health and well-being, and in handling challenges that may impede their growth and development. Services include brief consultations, short-term counseling and psychotherapy, skills-building classes, crisis intervention, psychiatric consultation, and related services.

Disability Services: The Office of Disability Services works to ensure that qualified students with a disability (whether incoming or current) are provided with reasonable accommodations that enable that student to participate fully in activities, programs, services and benefits provided to all students. Please let your professors know as soon as possible if you have an accommodation that requires academic coordination and planning.

Speech Center: Assists with preparation and practice in the pursuit of excellence in public expression. Recording, playback, coaching and critique sessions offered by teams of student consultants trained to assist in developing ideas, arranging key points for more effective organization, improving style and delivery, and handling multimedia aids for individual and group presentations.

Writing Center: Assists writers at all levels of experience, across all majors. Students can schedule appointments with trained writing consultants who offer friendly critiques of written work.

Technology

This classroom functions as a **no screen** room, meaning that cell phones, laptops, tablets, and any device with a screen should not be visible during class time. If I see you on your phone during class, you will receive a zero in participation for that day. To help you with the adjustment, I promise to always have fun images and/or quotes in my PowerPoints to keep you entertained.

Further Reading

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1984. (on carnival, multiple editions available)

Borenstein, Eliot. *Overkill: Sex and Violence in Contemporary Russian Popular Culture*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2008.

Costlow, Jane and Stephanie Sandler, eds. *Sexuality and the Body in Russian Culture*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1993.

Etkind, Aleksandr. *Warped Mourning: Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2013.

Marsh, Rosalind. *Gender and Russian Literature: New Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2011.

Ghodsee, Kristen. *Why Women Have Better Sex under Socialism*. New York: Nation Books, 2018.

- Goscilo, Helena. *Dehexing Sex: Womanhood During and After Glasnost*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996.
- Goscilo, Helena and Andrea Lanoux, eds. *Gender and National Identity in Twentieth-Century Russian Culture*. DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois UP, 2006.
- Heldt, Barbara. *Terrible Perfection: Women and Russian Literature*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.
- Kaganovsky, Lilya. *How the Soviet Man was Unmade: Cultural Fantasy and Male Subjectivity under Stalin*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008.
- Makolkin, Anna. *Semiotics of Misogyny through the Humor of Chekhov and Maugham*. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992.
- Moss, Kevin. *Out of the Blue: Russia's Hidden Gay Literature*. San Francisco: Sunshine Gay Press, 1997.
- Parts, Lyudmila. *The Chekhovian Intertext: Dialogue with a Classic*. Columbus: Ohio State UP, 2008.
- Presto, Jenifer. *Beyond the Flesh: Alexander Blok, Zinaida Gippius, and the Symbolist Sublimation of Sex*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008.

Schedule

All dates and assignments tentative to change.

Date	Unit / Written assignment	Reading
T 1/14	Intro to course	
R 1/16	Unit One: Biopower 1st response paper	Foucault, <i>A History of Sexuality pt I</i> "We Other Victorians" (13 pgs) and "The Perverse Implantation" (13 pgs)
T 1/21		Zamiatin, <i>We</i> (1924) (excerpt, pgs 3-35)
R 1/23 - end drop/add		Kollontai, "Three Generations" (30 pg) Gippius, "Scoundrel" (6 pg)
T 1/28		Bulgakov, <i>Heart of a Dog</i> (1925) (pgs 1-64)
R 1/30		Bulgakov, <i>Heart of a Dog</i> (64-146)
T 2/04	Writing Day - structure	
R 2/06 - no class (professor at conference)	1st short paper due	_____
T 2/11	Unit Two: Queering power 2nd response paper due	<i>Saint Foucault</i> (excerpts, 13 pg) Rubin, "Catacombs" (15 pgs)

Date	Unit / Written assignment	Reading
R 2/13		Kuzmin, <i>Wings</i> (1906) (pt I - 40 pgs)
T 2/18		Kuzmin, <i>Wings</i> (1906) (pt III - 25 pgs) Gippius, “You are You” (7 pgs)
R 2/20		Tsvetaeva – “A Living Word about a Living Man” (1933) (excerpts) Tolstaia, “Fire and Dust” (2004) (15 pgs)
T 2/25	Writing Day - wordiness, vagueness, advanced grammar	
R 2/27 (mid-semester)	2nd short paper due	In class: Mogutin, “My First Man: Sentimental Vomit” (3 pgs) “Dreams Come True: Porn” (2 pgs) “We Were All Dying of the Same Diseases” (2 pgs) (1998-2000)
T 3/03	Unit Three: Rhetoric 3rd response paper due	<i>Sex, Politics, Putin</i> (Introduction – 28 pgs)
R 3/05		Grossman, “In the Town of Berdichev” (16 pgs) Akhmatova, <i>Requiem</i> (1935-61) (10 pg)
T 3/10 - no class (spring break)		_____
R 3/12 - no class		_____
T 3/17		Solzhenitsyn, <i>A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich</i> (1962) (170 pgs)
R 3/19		Baranskaia, “A Week Like Any Other” (1968) (60 pgs)
T 3/24		Sorokin, <i>Day of the Oprichnik</i> (2006) (pg 1 -83)
R 3/26		<i>Day of the Oprichnik</i> , con’t (84-191)
T 3/31	Unit Four: Affect 4th response paper	“Happy Objects” (20 pgs)
R 4/02		Chekhov, “Anna on the Neck” (1895) (11 pgs)

Date	Unit / Written assignment	Reading
T 4/07		Pasternak, <i>Doctor Zhivago</i> (excerpts – 40 pgs)
R 4/09		Petrushevskaja, <i>Time: Night</i> (pp. 3-54)
T 04/14		<i>The Time: Night</i> , con't (54-108)
T 4/21	Writing Day - quotes Annotated bibliography due	
R 4/23 - last day of classes		Course wrap-up
T 4/28 – Final	Final presentations Final paper due (7-9)	

Response papers

Throughout the semester, you will write several short response papers based on reading due the same day. Please bring a printed, hard copy to class that day.

Format:

These papers should be 2-3 pages long, with Times New Roman 12-pt font, double-spaced. You do not need a work cited page or outside sources, but you must include quotes or references to the primary reading with page numbers. You can use parenthetical citations or footnotes for the page numbers.

Tone:

The tone of these responses can be informal, but it should still be professional. So you can write from the first person and include your personal reactions to the reading, but you should still use proper grammar, punctuation, complete sentences, and keep your ideas organized.

Objective:

Your objective in these responses is two-fold. First, the response papers will help you better understand the reading, which at times will be difficult. Completing these response papers will prepare you for class discussion *and* for your longer papers later on.

Your second objective is to prove to me that you completed the reading. A few randomly picked quotes will not suffice. In order to show me you did the reading, you need to summarize the author's full argument (more details on structure below).

Structure:

First, take notes *while* reading the text. Then, before you start the response paper, see how your notes come together to form a narrative - how are the author's points connected? What's the overall story they are trying to tell?

Start your response paper by identifying the author's thesis. Do not copy it word for word from the text. Instead, tell me in one-two sentences what you understand the main argument to be.

Then, explain that thesis in your own words; summarize the author's points as you understand them. Don't worry about whether or not you agree with them (yet); for now, try to identify the author's main points and use quotes to indicate where you see these points.

Finally, in whatever room you have left (keeping the response to 2-3 pages), write your reflection to the argument. Do you agree? Disagree? Why? Note: this isn't about whether or not you like the reading; it's about whether or not you agree with the ideas within it. Maybe you agree with some parts, but not others or maybe you agree, but only to a limited extent or for a different reason. Whatever the case, make sure you include evidence for your reasoning.

Grading rubric:

5 - Response shows that I completed the reading and outlined the author's argument with textual evidence and thorough explanations in my own words in a clearly organized manner and then provided my own thoughts on it with evidence to support my points.

4 - Response shows that I completed the reading and wrote about some of the idea's points, but did not complete one or more of the tasks above.

3 - Response shows that I did most of the reading and/or skimmed parts, but did not address the text as a whole and thus did not complete one or more of the tasks above.

2 - Response shows that I skimmed the reading and guessed at its contents, thus I did not complete several or most of the tasks above.

1 - Response shows that I didn't really read the text, but I managed to guess at a few of its points, however I still did not complete one or more of the tasks above.

0 - I didn't read the text and it shows.