Beyond the Closet
Queer Russia from the Silver Age to the Putin Era

Syllabus

Though fascinating and vibrant, the history and culture of queer Russia are little known in the West and in Russia itself. Despite a long-standing tradition of the domination of heteronormative subjectivities, the ideas of a "queer self" have proliferated in Russia even in what may seem the most obscure times. This course opens avenues for the exploration of practices and discourses of sexual non-heteronormativity from the early 20th century until nowadays by giving voice to cultural texts and historical research on queer selves and others in the Russian context. It delves into the defining moments of the Russian LGBTQ history to trace its ups and downs and question how queer subjectivities have been constructed under quite varying circumstances of tolerance.

Course requirements: regular attendance; active participation in class; one oral presentation on a chosen topic; (at least) one watched film from the film screening series; a course paper of 10 or 20 pages (depending on the respective program's requirements)

1–2. Seminar: October 23, 2018 (a double session, 4 p.m.–8 p.m.)
Organizational Matters & Theoretical Approaches

Sedgwick 1990, 1–22;1
Sedgwick 1990, 22–60; Karlinsky 1992; Barker and Scheele 2016; Butler 1990; Foucault 1990; Solie 1993; Greenberg.

3. Seminar: October 30, 2018
Lesbian Prose of the Queer Liberation

Lidiia Zinov’eva-Annibal, Tridtsad’ tri uroda (Thirty-Three Abominations, 1907)
Ekonen 2014; Chantsev 2009.

4. Seminar: November 6, 2018
Gay Voices in Early Modern Russia

Mikhail Kuzmin, Kryl’ia (Wings, 1906)
RU: Kuzmin 1980, Part II; ENG: Kuzmin 1972, Part II; GER: —
Malmstad and Bogomolov 1999; Malmstad 2000; Field and Kuzmin 1963; Rylkova 2002; Panova and Pratt 2011.

1 In this course plan, obligatory reading for each session is underlined. Please, always have obligatory texts with you in class in a printed or digital form. Texts for further reading that are given in a smaller font size only serve as recommendations for additional information on each topic. For the details on the texts, refer to the bibliography on pages 5–8.
5. Seminar: November 13, 2018

**From Queer Desire to the Closet: The Fruits of October Revolution**

- Case files: male and female cross-dressing, homophobic discourses (Healey 2001 44-49; 66-73; 181–196)

6. Seminar: November 20, 2018

**Homolag: Histories and Herstories of the Gulag Era**

- Case files: Sergei Parajanov (Steffen 2013, pp. 186–201); lesbian lives in Soviet Russia (Stella 2014, pp. 45–66)
- Clech 2018; Healey 2017 (27-50); Stella 2014 (26-44).

7. Seminar: November 27, 2018

**Crossing the Double Line: Queer Sexualities in Late Soviet Literature**


The December 4, 2018 seminar will take place on

Wednesday, January 23, 2019, as an evening film screening session

8. Seminar: December 11, 2018

**Performing Homosexual Desire: Queerness on Stage in Post-Soviet Russia**

  - Beumers 2001; Ross 2006; Freedman 2010.

9. Seminar: December 18, 2018

**Disrupting the Canon: The Caucasian Theme with a Twist**

### 10. Seminar: January 8, 2019
**Media Visibility and Owning One's Voice: Queer Press in Post-Soviet Russia**
- Sender 2001; Case files: queer media from the 1990s until today
- Photos from the Russian queer journals of the 1990s (see the seminar folder in Stud-IP)
- Baer 2002; Baer 2009; Fejes and Balogh 2013; Mole 2018.

### 11. Seminar: January 15, 2019
**Art as a Tool of Queer Empowerment**
- Lomasko 2017, 225–53

### 12. Seminar: January 22, 2019
**A Queer Eye on Russian Cinema**
- Schoonover and Galt 2016, pp. 6–26; Case files: films from the film screening series “A Queer Eye on Russian Cinema”

### 13. Seminar: January 23, 2018 (in place of December 4, 2018), 8 p.m.
**Film Screening: Campaign of Hate: Russia and Gay Propaganda** (dir. Scott Stern/Michael Lukas, USA 2014), 79 min

### 14. Seminar, January 29, 2019
**Hypermasculinities and Traditional Values: Quo vadis, Russia?**
- Dan Healey 2017, pp. 131–147, 1–23
- Wilkinson 2014; Bosia and Weiss 2013; Hylton et al. 2017; Soboleva and Bakhmetjev 2015

### 15. Seminar, February 5, 2019
**Concluding Discussion**
Film Screening Series “A Queer Eye on Russian Cinema”
(Wednesdays, 8 p.m., HS 4)

October 31  
Tret’iia meshchanskaia (Third Meshchanskaia Street, 1927), dir. Abram Room

November 7  
Strogii iunosha (A Severe Young Man, 1936), dir. Abram Room

November 14  
Pervyi paren’ (The Top Guy, 1958), dir. Sergei Parajanov

November 21  
Serp i Molot (Hammer and Sickle, 1994), dir. Sergei Livnev

November, 28  
Vesel’chaki (Jolly Fellows, 2009), dir. Feliks Mikhailov

December 19  
Zimnii Put’ (Winter Trail, 2013), dir. Sergei Taramaev and L’vova

January 16  
Uchenik (The Student, 2016), dir. Kirill Serebrennikov

January, 23  
Campaign of Hate: Russia and Gay Propaganda (2014), dir. Scott Stern/Michael Lukas (an obligatory documentary film)
Bibliography

Legend:
“UL + Book Number”: available at the University Library
“UL —”: not available at the University Library
“KT”: key texts, available from the course reference shelf (Semesterapparat) at the University Library
“Scan in Stud-IP”: digital copy available in the session folder on the seminar's page in Stud-IP.


UL 03/RR 13980 P762 W6.

UL —.


Ross, Yana. 2006. "Russia's New Drama from Togliatti to Moscow." Theater 36 (1): 27–43. UL —.


