Class code: MAP-UA 9510-001

Instructor Details:
Dr. Janusz Salamon
janusz.salamon@nyu.edu
Tel: (+420)731816202
Office hours immediately before and after class, and by arrangement via e-mail

Class Details:
Russia Between East and West
Tue & Thu, 10:30-11:50
Location to be confirmed.

Prerequisites:
None

Class Description:
The course examines the key ideas, beliefs, and values that have shaped the identities and worldviews of past and present generations of Russians. Due to its geographic location and historical circumstances, the problem of its cultural identity vis-à-vis Europe (the West) and Asia (the East) has always been on the minds of the Russian thinkers, writers, artists, religious leaders and policy makers. As one of the primary goals of the course is to provide students with an opportunity for improving their skills to analyze complex dynamics of the processes of identity formation at cultural crossroads, the intellectual and cultural history of Russia will be explored in juxtaposition to parallel developments of Russia’s European and Asian neighbors. The students will be encouraged to think critically and with a historically informed sensibility about the diverse perceptions of reality expressed in the principal textual and artistic images of Russian culture, including those which constitute Russia’s unique contribution to world culture.

Lectures, discussion, video and audio resources.

Desired Outcomes:
On completion of the course, students should be able to:
1. Demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of key issues in the Russian intellectual and cultural history
2. Analyze critically and with a historically informed sensibility the principal textual and artistic images of Russian culture

Compare and contrast the key ideas, beliefs, and values that have shaped the cultural identities of Russians and their European and Asian neighbors

Assessment Components:
A. Short Paper (ca. 1500 words): 15%
Topic: Sources of Russia’s Cultural Identity – due on March 26 (before Session 15)

B. Research Paper (ca. 2500 words): 25% - due on May 16 (before Session 28)
Topic to be selected by each student after a consultation with the instructor.
Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class.

C. Mid-term Exam: 25% - March 28 (≈ Session 16). (The exam will last 75 minutes and will contain 5 questions explored in the first part of course, answerable in about 10 sentences.)

D. Final Exam: 25% - Final week. (The exam will last 75 minutes and will contain 5 questions explored in the second part of the course, answerable in about 10 sentences.)

E. Individual contribution to class discussions: 10% (Students will be expected to have read the assigned literature and to participate actively in the discussion.)

Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class.

Assessment Expectations

Grade A: Excellent work. Shows a full mastery of the topic and an ability to express thoughts cogently and persuasively. It shows the stamp of an individual approach to the problem set.

Grade B: Very good work but falling short of the highest level.

Grade C: Satisfactory and sufficiently accurate work, lacking in clarity and individual insights.

Grade D: Passable work. Meets minimum requirements but not very well focused. Probably based on very limited reading.

Grade F: Failure to achieve a passable standard. Muddled, poorly presented written work.

Grade conversion

A=94-100
A-=90-93
B+=87-89
B=84-86
B-=80-83
C+=77-79
C=74-76
C-=70-73
D+=67-69
D=65-66
F=below 65
Grading Policy

NYU Prague aims to have grading standards and results similar to those that prevail at Washington Square. At the College of Arts and Sciences, roughly 39% of all final grades are in the B+ to B- range, and 50% in the A/A- range. We have therefore adopted the following grading guideline: in any non-Stern course, class teachers should try to ensure that no more than 50% of the class receives an A or A-. A guideline is not a curve. A guideline is just that—it gives an ideal benchmark for the distribution of grades towards which we work.

Attendance Policy

Each unexcused absences will result in your final grade being reduced by 3%. Absences only for medical reasons will be excused. To obtain an excused absence, you are obliged to supply either a doctor’s note or corroboration of your illness by a member of the housing staff (either an RA or a Building Manager). Absences due to travel will not be excused.

Late Submission of Work

(1) Work submitted within 5 weekdays after the submission time without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 5 points on the 100 point scale.

(2) Work submitted after 5 weekdays after the submission date without an agreed extension fails and is given a zero.

Plagiarism Policy

According to the Liberal Studies Program Student Handbook, plagiarism is defined as follows:

Plagiarism is presenting someone else’s work as though it were one’s own. More specifically plagiarism is to present as one’s own a sequence of words quoted without quotation marks from another writer, a paraphrased passage from another writer’s work; facts or ideas gathered, organized and reported by someone else, orally and/or in writing. Since plagiarism is a matter of fact, not of the student’s intention, it is crucial that acknowledgment of the sources be accurate and complete. Even where there is no conscious intention to deceive, the failure to make appropriate acknowledgment constitutes plagiarism.

The College of Arts and Science’s Academic Handbook defines plagiarism similarly and also specifies the following:

“presenting an oral report drawn without attribution from other sources (oral or written), writing a paragraph which, despite being in different words, expresses someone else’s idea without a reference to the source of the idea, or submitting essentially the same paper in two different courses (unless both teachers have given their permission in advance).

Receiving help on a take-home examination or quiz is also cheating – and so is giving that help – unless expressly permitted by the teacher (as in collaborative projects). While all this looks like a lot to remember, all you need to do is give credit where it is due, take credit only for original ideas, and ask your teacher or advisor when in doubt.”

“Penalties for plagiarism range from failure for a paper, failure for the course or dismissal from the university.” (Liberal Studies Program Student Handbook)

Required Text(s)

Most of the required texts (drawn from the sources listed below) are included in the Course Reader available in the library. The remaining texts are available in the NYU-P library or in
electronic format.


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**Internet Research Guidelines**

**Additional Required Equipment**

**Session 1**

Tuesday, February 12

Course Overview and Introduction

(Watching a documentary)

**Session 2**

Thursday, February 14

(Our) Stereotypes of Russia

(Quiz and discussion)

**Session 3**

Tuesday, February 19

Russia in Pictures

(Video presentation)

**Session 4**

Thursday, February 21

Defining Vectors of Russian Destiny: Geopolitics and Religion

**Required Readings**: G. Freeze (ed.), *Russia: A History*, Chapter 1, pp. 1-26 – (total: 26 pages)

Session 5
Friday, February 22
(Make up for Tuesday)

The Second Rome: The Byzantine East

(Watching a documentary)

Session 6
Tuesday, February 26

The “Third Rome”: Between Otherworldly Spirituality and Imperialistic Theocracy


Supplementary Readings: N. Riasanovsky, A History of Russia, Chapters 6, 13 & 19

Session 7
Thursday, February 28

Russia’s “Dark Ages”: Encountering the Mongol East


Supplementary Readings: N. Riazanovsky, Chapters 8, 11 & 15

Session 8
Tuesday, March 5

The Inheritance of Terror: Ivan the Terrible and the Great Schism


(Watching fragments of a documentary about Ivan the Terrible)

Supplementary Readings: G. Freeze, Russia. A History, Chapter 2; ‘The Correspondence between Ivan the Terrible and Prince Kurbsky’, in Riha, Vol. 1, pp. 86-97 [= Reading 09 in the Reader]

Session 9
Thursday, March 7

Enemies from the West: Defending Orthodox Russia Against Catholic Poles and Protestant Swedes

Required Readings: N. Riazanovsky, Chapter XVI, pp. 157-175 – (total: 18 pages)

(Watching fragments of Vladimir Chotinenko’s film “1612”)

Session 10
Friday, March 8
(Make up for Thursday classes)

The Long Middle Ages: Missing the Boat of the Renaissance and Reformation


Session 11
Tuesday,

Russia’s New Beginning: Peter the Great’s “Revolution from Above”

Required Readings: F. Prokopovich, ‘Sermon on Royal Authority and Honor’ & M. Lomonosov,
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Reading/Assignment</th>
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<td></td>
<td><em>Supplementary Readings</em>: G. Freeze, Chapters 3-4.</td>
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<td><em>Session 12</em></td>
<td>Sankt Petersburg: Russia’s “Window on Europe” or Russia's “European Theater”?</td>
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<td>(Watching fragments of A. Sokurov's film “Russian Ark” (2002) followed by discussion)</td>
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<td><em>Supplementary Readings</em>: N. Riasanovsky, Chapters 11-19.</td>
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<td><em>Session 13</em></td>
<td>Catherine the Great: The Russian Enlightenment, Territorial Expansion and the Suppression of the Peasants</td>
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<td>Tuesday, March 19</td>
<td><em>Required Readings</em>: G. Freeze (ed.), <em>Russia: A History</em>, Ch. 5, pp. 111-143 – (total: 32 pages)</td>
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<td><em>Supplementary Readings</em>: N. Riasanovsky, Chapters 21-22.</td>
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<td><em>Session 14</em></td>
<td>Defeating Napoleon and Liberty: Russian Romanticism and the Post-Decembrist Identity Crisis</td>
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<td>Thursday, March 21</td>
<td><em>Required Readings</em>: N. Riasanovsky, Chapters 25-26, pp. 300-340 – (total: 40 pages)</td>
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<td><em>Session 15</em></td>
<td>Russia’s “Colonies”: Siberia, Caucasus, Central Asia</td>
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<td>Tuesday, March 26</td>
<td>(Video presentation)</td>
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<td>[+ Revision session before the mid-term exam]</td>
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<td><em>Short Paper Due</em></td>
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<td><em>Session 16</em></td>
<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
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<td>Thursday, March 28</td>
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<td><em>Session 17</em></td>
<td>Spring Break April 1-5</td>
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<td><em>Defining Russia’s Uniqueness: Slavophiles vs Westernizers</em></td>
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Session 17
Tuesday, April 9
Light from the East: Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy on Russia and the West


Session 18
Thursday, April 11
The Golden Age of Russian Music: From Mussorgsky to Rachmaninoff

(Listening to excerpts from the works of Russian composers with a commentary)

Session 19
Tuesday, April 16
A Writer’s Writer and A Playwright’s Playwright: Anton Chekhov on the Life in Russia

Required Readings: A. Chekhov’s short story “Peasants”

Supplementary Readings: A. Chekhov’s play “Three Sisters”

Session 20
Thursday, April 18
Russia’s Path to the Communist Takeover


Session 21
Tuesday, April 23
From the Soviet “Golden Age” of 1920s to Stalin’s Empire of Fear

Required Readings: G. Freeze, Chapter 10, pp. 263-290 (total: 28 pages)


Session 22
Thursday, April 25
Lights in the Darkness: Preserving Humanity in Inhumane Times

Required Readings (for Sessions 26 & 27): O. Figes, Natasha’s Dance: A Cultural History of Russia, pp. 431-475 (total – 44 pages)

(Reading poems of A. Akhmatova and O. Mandelstham, and listening to excerpts of the compositions of D. Shostakovich and S. Prokofiev)

Supplementary Readings: A. Solzhenitsyn, One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich

Session 23
Tuesday, April 30
Private Lives in Soviet Russia

(Watching fragments of B. Basternak’s Dr. Zhivago and V. Pichul’s film “Little Vera” followed by discussion)

Session 24
From Ideological Vacuum to Moral Panic: The Thaw, the Decline of Communism and the
Thursday, May 2

**Failure of Perestroika**


*Recommended:* V. Pichul’s film “Little Vera”

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**Session 25**

**Putin’s Russia**

(Watching a BBC documentary followed by discussion)


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**Session 26**

**Solzhenitsyn in Russia: Back to What?**

(Watching a documentary followed by discussion)

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**Session 27**

**Post-traumatic Disorder?: Cultural Struggles of the Contemporary Russia**


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**Session 28**

**Concluding Discussion: Where is Russia Heading Today?**

[+ Revision session before the final exam]

*Research Paper Due*

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**Session 28**

**Final Exam**

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**Session 29**

Thursday, May 23

Final exam

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**Classroom Etiquette**

**Required Co-curricular Activities**

**Suggested Co-curricular Activities**