Class code: CORE-UA9510001

Instructor Details
Dr Janusz Salamon
janusz.salamon@nyu.edu
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
Russia’s rich and multifaced cultural identity has been shaped in a thousand-year-long process of interaction with a range of diverse cultural formations of the ‘West’ and the ‘East’ (including the Byzantine/Christian ‘East’, the Central Asian/Muslim ‘East’, the East Asian/Confucian ‘East’, and to a lesser extent the South Asian/Indian ‘East’). For the last 300 years, since the era of Tsar Peter the Great, Russia’s greatest statesmen, philosophers, religious thinkers, writers, poets and artists of genius have been obsessed with the question of Russia’s distinctive cultural identity. This passionate search for understanding of the ‘Russian soul’ and of the unique contribution of the Russian people to the world culture is apparently far from over, as the recent developments in the Russian foreign policy and the rise of interest in the ideas of (anti-Western) Eurasianism testify. This course in the Russian intellectual history explores the sources of Russia’s unique cultural blend through examination of some of the principal textual and artistic images representative of Russia’s cultural heritage, including the great works of the Russian literature and music for which Russia is justly famous. While exploring Russia’s past and present at the geographic and cultural crossroads of Eastern Europe, students will be encouraged to think critically and with a historically informed sensibility about the diverse perceptions of reality in cultures different from their own, especially about such fundamental categories as nation, community, individual, gender, identity, morality, religion, and the ‘other’.

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 cultural and intellectual history
2. Analyze critically and with a historically informed sensibility the principal textual and artistic images of Russian culture
3. 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. Mid-term Paper (ca. 2000 words): 15% - Due on November 6 (before Session 18)
B. Final Paper (ca. 2000 words): 15% - Due on December 16 (before Session 29)
C. Mid-term Exam: 25% - October 23 (= Session 16). The exam will last 80 minutes and will consist of two parts: a multiple-choice test and 3 questions answerable in about one page per question.
D. Final Exam: 25% - December 18 (= Session 30). The exam will last 80 minutes and will consist of two parts: a multiple-choice test and 3 questions answerable in about one page per question.
E. Class presentations and individual contribution to class discussions: 20%. Students will be expected to have read the assigned literature and to participate actively in the discussion. (The instructor will be regularly testing the students’ knowledge of the assigned readings.)

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

Attendance Policy

Absences only for medical reasons and for religious observance 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). To be excused for religious observance, you must contact the instructor and the Associate Director via e-mail one week in advance of the holiday. Your absence is excused for the holiday only and does not include days of travel associated with the holiday. Unexcused absences will be penalized with a two percent deduction from your final course grade for every week of classes missed.

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)

Part 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.


**Supplemental Texts (not required to purchase as copies are in NYU-P Library)**


**Internet Research Guidelines**

**Additional Required Equipment**

**Session 1**  
Tuesday, Feb 3

**Session 2**  
Thursday, Feb 5

**Session 3**  
Tuesday, Feb 10

**Session 4**  
Thursday, Feb 12

**Why Russia Matters**

*Homework:* Watching a documentary about Russia under Putin

**Divergent Paths: Russia and East Central Europe since the Fall of Communism**

*Homework:* Watching a documentary about the fall of Communism

**Russia’s Past in Russia’s Present: A View of a Russian Liberal**

(Prof. Fyodor Stanzhevsky, Sankt Petersburg University)

**Where is Russia Heading?**

(Prof. Fyodor Stanzhevsky, Sankt Petersburg University)
Session 5
Tuesday, Feb 17
How Russia’s Geography Has Shaped Its Social and Political Life
Required Readings: R. Pipes, Russia Under the Old Regime, pp. 1-24 (= Chapter 1 in Pipes) – (total: 26 pages)

Session 6
Thursday, Feb 19
Between Constantinople and Rome: Geopolitics of Christianization of Russia and East-Central Europe

Session 7
Tuesday, Feb 24
Muscovite Russia as Heir to the Mongol Empire and Its Political Traditions

Session 8
Thursday, Feb 26
Missing the Boat of the Renaissance and the Reformation (I)

Session 9
Tuesday, March 3
Missing the Boat of the Renaissance and the Reformation (II)
Required readings: P. Wandycz, „Renaissance and Reformation in East Central Europe” (from Wandycz, , pp. 47-76 [= Reading 11 in the Reader] – (total: 29 pages)

Session 10
Thursday, March 6
Russian State Against the Russian People: Ivan the Terrible
Required readings: ‘A Foreigner Describes the Oprichnina of Tsar Ivan the Terrible (1565-70)’, in Reinterpreting Russian History, edited by D. Kaiser and G. Merker, pp. 151-154 [= Reading 08 in the Reader] + Correspondence between Prince Kurbsky and Ivan the Terrible [= Reading 09 in the Reader] – (total: 16 pages)

Session 11
Tuesday, March 10
Russia’s Failed Reformation: The Russian Church Schism
Required readings: Avvakum’s Autobiography & Zenkovsky on the Russian Church Schism [=Reading 04 in the Reader] – (total: 19 pages)

Session 12
Thursday, March 12
Peter the Great’s ‘Revolution from Above’
Required readings: Richard Pipes, Russia Under the Old Regime, pp. 112-138 (= Chapter 5: ‘The Partial Dismantling of the Patrimonial State under Peter the Great’ - (total: 26 pages)

Session 13
Tuesday, March 17
Catherine the Great and the Russian Enlightenment: Setting the Stage for the Russian Golden Age
Required readings: “Trends in the Enlightenment Thought in Russia under Catherine the Great” (from: Andrzej Walicki, A History of Russian Thought from the Enlightenment to Marxism) – (total: 28 pages)

Session 14
Thursday, March 19
The Russian Slavery: Serfdom and the Birth of Russian Social Thought
Required Readings: R. Pipes, Russia Under the Old Regime, pp. 141-70 (= Chapter 6) – (total: 30 pages)

Session 15
Tuesday, March 24
The End of Dreams about Liberty: The “Post-Decembrist” Identity Crisis
Required readings: “The Decemberists: Extracts from Documents” [= Reading 17 in the Reader] + Poems by A. Pushkin and M. Lermontov (available online, in the public domain) – (total: 19 pages)

Session 16
Thursday, March 26
In Search for the ‘Russian Soul’: The Slavophiles

Session 17
Tuesday, March 31
Revision Session

Session 18
Thursday, April 2
Mid-term written exam
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<td>Tuesday, April 14</td>
<td>Romantic Nationalism and the Spring of Nations in East Central Europe Mid-term Essay Due</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Thursday, April 16</td>
<td>Two Russian Prophets: Fyodor Dostoyevsky Homework: Watching a film adaptation of Dostoyevsky’s „Crime and Punishment”</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Tuesday, April 21</td>
<td>Two Russian Prophets: Lev Tolstoy Required Readings: Walicki, A History of Russian Thought from the Enlightenment to Marxism, Chapter 15 (about Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy) – (total: 30 pages)</td>
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<td>Thursday, April 23</td>
<td>The Russian Revolution and the Communist Takeover Homework: Watching a documentary about the October revolution</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Tuesday, April 28</td>
<td>Building Communist Utopia: The Soviet “Golden Age” of 1920s and Stalin’s Industrial Revolution Homework: Watching a documentary about Stalin</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Thursday, April 30</td>
<td>The Soviet Inferno: The Gulag and Stalin’s Empire of Fear Required Readings: Fragments of A. Solzhenitsyn’s Gulag Archipelago</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Thursday, May 7</td>
<td>East Central Europe and Russia Today [No homework]</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Tuesday, May 12</td>
<td>Russia “Rising from Her Knees”: Ideological Sources of Putinism Required readings: David Remnick’s “Watching the Eclipse” (from The New Yorker, August 2014)</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Thursday, May 14</td>
<td>Towards New Cold War (?) Required Reading: Fragments of recent press publications on the situation in Russia</td>
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<td>Tuesday, May 19</td>
<td>Revision Session Final Essay Due</td>
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<td>Thursday, May 21</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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**Classroom Etiquette**

**Required Co-curricular Activities**

**Suggested Co-curricular Activities**