The Russian Novel: Representing the Provinces (in Theory and Practice)

Course Description
In this course we will trace the development of the Russian novel from the 1840s to the 1870s, focusing on how authors such as Grigorovich, Goncharov and Dostoevsky represent the spaces of central Russia (the village, the estate, the provincial city) in narrative form. Alongside our primary texts we will read major Russian, Western European and American theories of the novel, mimesis, and narrative dynamics, asking: to what degree do they illuminate our texts and the artistic ambitions of the authors who wrote them? When and/or where does their explanatory power fall short? Do our texts demand that they be amended, and if so, in what ways?

Course Requirements
The seminar will be run as a workshop, combining close readings of the primary texts with critical investigations into important 20th- and 21st-century theories of the novel. You will be expected to:

• Participate actively and thoughtfully in seminar discussions.
• Write weekly mini-essays on a question or problem related to the week’s readings that particularly interests you. Mini-essays should be approximately 300 words long, and be posted on the Discussion Board of the course’s Blackboard page by 1 PM before class on Thursdays.
• Prepare several 15-minute, in-seminar presentations.
• Write a 20-25-page final paper on a topic approved by the instructor (plus a prospectus, which is to be submitted at least 4 weeks before the paper is due).

Course Materials
You will be expected to acquire your own copies of our primary texts (Anton Goremyka, Rudin, Detstvo, Oblomov, Besy, Gospoda Golovlevy) and to read them in the original Russian. Additional primary texts, along with excerpts from works of literary theory, will be made available under the “Content” heading of the course’s Blackboard page about one week before we discuss them in class. Works of literary theory will be provided in English, but you are welcome to read them in any language you choose.

Schedule of Assignments (Subject to Change)
The reading assignment for each class is split into three sections: 1) Primary text(s), 2) Theory, 3) Suggested secondary literature. The first two are required, the third is optional. In general, you will only be asked to read excerpts from the longer works of literary theory. More detailed reading assignments will be distributed on a week-by-week basis.
I. THEORIES OF THE NOVEL

8.25 Introduction

9.1 Theories of the Novel

Primary Text:

Theory:
Lukács, *Theory of the Novel* (focus on Part I + Part II, ch. 4)
Bakhtin, “Epic and Novel”

Suggested Secondary Reading
David Gasperetti, *The Rise of the Russian Novel*
Griffiths and Rabinowitz, *The Epic and the Russian Novel: From Gogol to Pasternak*
Iurii Mann, *Poetika Gogolia*
Anne Lounsbery, “‘No, this is not the provinces!’ Provincialism, Authenticity, and Russianness in Gogol’s Day”

II. MIMESIS

9.8 The Natural School and the “Poetry of Reality”

Primary Texts:
Grigorovich, *Peterburgskie sharmanshchiki* (selections)
----. *Anton Goremyka*
----. *Literaturnye vospominaniia* (selections)
Belinskii, “Vzgliad na russkuiu literaturu 1847 goda. Stat’ia pervaiia.”

Theory:
Auerbach, *Mimesis*

Suggested Secondary Reading
Iurii Mann, “Filosofiia i poetika ‘Natural’noi shkoly.’”
A.G. Tseitlin, *Stanovlenie realizma v russkoi literature (russkii fiziologicheskii ocherk)*

9.15 Representing Consciousness and Interiority

Primary Text:
Turgenev, *Rudin*
Theory:
Lydia Ginzburg, *On Psychological Prose* (Introduction + chapters I and II)
Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds*

Suggested Secondary Readings
Elizabeth Cheresh Allen, *Beyond Realism: Turgenev’s Poetics of Secular Salvation*
Jane Costlow, *Worlds within Words: The Novels of Ivan Turgenev*
Victoria Somoff, *The Imperative of Reliability: Russian Prose on the Eve of the Novel*

9.22 The *Bildungsroman*: Representing Social Integration

Primary Texts:
Tolstoy, *Detstvo*
---. *Dneviki* (selections)

Theory:
Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*
Bakhtin, “The Bildungsroman and its Significance in the History of Realism”

Suggested Secondary Readings
Eikhenbaum, *Young Tolstoy*
Gustafson, *Tolstoy: Resident and Stranger*
Donna Orwin, *Tolstoy’s Art and Thought, 1847-1880*
Andrew Wachtel, *The Battle for Childhood*

III. NARRATIVE STRUCTURE AND DYNAMICS

9.29 Time and Space in Narrative

Primary Text:
Goncharov, *Oblomov*, Part One

Theory:
Bakhtin, “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel”
Genette, *Narrative Discourse*
Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*

Suggested Secondary Readings
Milton Ehre, *Oblomov and his Creator*
Christine Borowec, “Time after Time: The Temporal Ideology of *Oblomov*”
Anne Lounsbery, “The World on the Back of a Fish: Mobility, Immobility, and Economics in *Oblomov*”
10.6 Point of View

Primary Text:  
*Oblomov*, Part Two, Part Three (ch. 1-6)

Theory:  
Genette, *Narrative Discourse*  
Uspensky, *A Poetics of Composition*  
Lanser, *The Narrative Act: Point of View in Prose Fiction*

Suggested Secondary Readings  
Iurii Mann, “Goncharov kak povestvovatel’”  
Richard Peace, *Oblomov: A Critical Examination of Goncharov’s Novel*  
Galya Diment, *Goncharov’s Oblomov: A Critical Companion*

10.13 Characters and Character Systems

Primary Texts:  
*Oblomov*, Part Three (ch. 7-11), Part Four  
Dobroliubov, “Chto takoe oblomovshchina?”

Theory:  
E.M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel*  
Alex Woloch, *The One vs. the Many*  
Lydia Ginzburg, *O literaturnom geroe*

Suggested Secondary Readings:  
Bella Grigoryan, “‘Figura blednaia, neiasnaia’: Obraz pomeshchika v romanakh Goncharova”

10.20 Polyphony: Pro and Contra

Primary Texts:  
Dostoevskii, *Besy*, Part One  
Pisarev, “Razrushenie estetiki”

Theory:  
Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*

Suggested Secondary Readings:  
Slobodanka V. Vladiv, *Narrative Principles in Dostoevskij’s Besy*  
Grossman, *Poetika Dostoevskogo*  
Mochulskii, *Dostoevskii: zhizn’ i tvorchestvo*
10.27 Narrative Progression

**Primary Text**
*Besy*, Part Two + “U Tikhona”

**Theory**
Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot*
Gary Saul Morson, *Narrative and Freedom: The Shadows of Time*

**Suggested Secondary Readings**
William J. Leatherbarrow, *Dostoevsky’s The Devils: A Critical Companion*
Gene M. Moore, “The Voices of Legion: The Narrator of *The Possessed*”
Adam Weiner, *By Authors Possessed*
David Stromberg, “The Enigmatic G—v: A Defense of the Narrator-Chronicler in Dostoevsky’s *Demons*”

11.3 Closure, Endings, and Open-endedness

**Primary Text:**
*Besy*, Part Three

**Theory**
Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending*
D.A. Miller, *Narrative and its Discontents*

11.10 The Structures of Late Russian Realism

**Primary Text**
Saltykov-Shchedrin, *Gospoda Golovlevy*, chapters 1-3

**Suggested Secondary Readings**
Bowers and Kokobobo, *Russian Writers and the Fin de Siecle: The Twilight of Realism*
Foote, *Saltykov-Shchedrin’s The Golovlyovs: A Critical Companion*
Kaminer, *Women with a Thirst for Destruction: The Bad Mother in Russian Culture*

11.11 (FRIDAY) Paper Prospectus Due at 5 PM via Email

11.17 NO CLASS: ASEES

11.24 NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING
12.1 Conclusion + Final Presentations

Primary Text:
Gospoda Golovlevy, chapters 4-7

12.13 (TUESDAY) Final Paper Due at 4 PM via Email

Grading Rubric
Your final grade for the course will be calculated according to the following guidelines:

Class Participation (attendance and thoughtful participation in discussion): 15%
Weekly Written Responses: 20%
Presentations: 15%
Final Paper Prospectus: 10%
Final Paper: 40%

93-100% = A, 90-92% = A-, 88-89% = B+, 83-87% = B, 80-82% = B-, 78-79% = C+, 73-77% = C, 70-72% = C-, 68-69% = D+, 63-67% = D, 60-62 = D-, under 60% = F.

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES

Instructor Availability

Office hours: I will hold office hours on Tuesdays from 2-4PM in 255B Taper Hall. You are always welcome to drop by. My door is open!

Appointments: If you have a scheduling conflict that will keep you from attending office hours, email me (or come talk to me after class) about setting up another time to meet.

Email: The best way to contact me outside of class is via email (matzner@usc.edu). I will respond as soon as possible, normally within 48 hours.

Electronic Devices

Electronic devices distract you and your classmates from the discussion. At the beginning of each class, please turn your phones to silent and put them away. In general, I do not permit the use of computers in discussion-based classes. If this policy poses a problem for you, please speak to me after class, drop by my office hours, or contact me by email.
ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Academic Conduct
Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standards https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/.

Discrimination and Assault
Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity http://equity.usc.edu/ or to the Department of Public Safety http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/ provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs
http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information http://emergency.usc.edu/will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

The Writing Center and Other Helpful Resources
The USC Writing Center is available to help students improve their critical thinking and writing skills. It offers free materials and online resources at https://dornsife.usc.edu/writingcenter/
Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students.

The USC Kortschak Center for Learning and Creativity offers free online resources for time management, note taking, paper writing, and goal setting, which can be accessed at http://kortschakcenter.usc.edu/

The USC Libraries offers free research guides on 22 subjects at http://libguides.usc.edu/

Lynda.com can be accessed from the Blackboard homepage and provides free video tutorials on a wide range of topics and academic skills.