

Prof. Greta Matzner-Gore
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Office: 255B Taper Hall
Office Hours: Tuesdays: 3:30-5:30 PM

GESM 120g (35349D)
Tues./Thurs. 11:00-12:20 PM
Location: VPD 107

THE RUSSIAN NOVEL

Course Description

How can we live meaningful lives in the face of our own mortality? Which is more important, romantic love or our obligations to family and friends? Religious faith or rational reasoning? The good of each individual or the glory of the state? Nineteenth-century Russian novels grapple with all of these questions. In this course we will throw ourselves headfirst into the fundamental moral, social, and philosophical dilemmas that Russian novels pose, weighing and debating the questions, and proposing our own answers to them.

Russian novelists are not only renowned as moral and philosophical thinkers, however. They are also famous—or infamous—for their formal innovations: their use of *skaz* (their chatty, sometimes bumbling narrators), the enormous number of minor characters that “clutter up” the pages of their novels, and their meandering plots, which sometimes privilege mushroom picking and jam making over international politics. As we read we will continually ask ourselves why our authors might have made the formal choices that they did, how these choices shape our reading experience, and how they reflect our authors’ moral and political commitments.

Learning Goals

This course is designed not only to introduce students to nineteenth-century Russian literature, but also to help them develop their close reading, writing, and discussion skills. By the end of this course, students who complete all assignments in a satisfactory manner (with an average grade of B- or higher) will be able to:

- Use textual evidence to construct compelling arguments about the works we read, and present them both orally and in writing.
- Analyze textual details (such as our authors’ narrative strategies, their use of repeating imagery and metaphoric language) and link them to the most important questions, problems and ideas our works raise.
- Independently develop and pose their own critical questions about the works we read and explore potential answers to them, both in writing and in class discussion.

Assignments and Course Breakdown

Class Participation (15%)

To understand a work of literature you must engage with it actively (think about it, debate it, and sometimes even argue with it). To that end, attendance and active participation in discussion are essential components of this course. Students will be expected to **attend every class (arriving on time, with book in hand!)**, and

participate thoughtfully and respectfully in classroom discussions and in-class group work.

In order to receive a high score for class participation:

- Each student will be expected to make a thoughtful contribution to the general discussion *at least* **once per week**.
- Any student who accrues **more than 2 unexcused absences** will receive a **reduced participation grade**. A student with 3 unexcused absences will receive a 10% grade reduction; a student with 4 unexcused absences will receive a 20% grade reduction, and so on. If you would like to be excused from class for a religious observance, family emergency, or documented illness, please let me know as soon as you are able.
- When you arrive to class late you miss important material and disrupt the general discussion. For that reason, students who regularly arrive late for class will receive a **reduced participation grade**, calculated in the following way: **3 late arrivals to class = 1 unexcused absence**. If you are finding it difficult to get to class on time because of a scheduling conflict, please speak to me.

Weekly Reading Quizzes (10%)

To encourage you to keep up with the readings, you will be required to fill out a brief 3-question reading quiz on the course's Blackboard page before class every Tuesday, starting the **second week of class**.

- Reading Quizzes will be due by 3:00 PM before class on Tuesdays. Late quiz submissions will not be accepted.
- **Your lowest reading quiz score will be dropped.**

Reading Journal (25%)

Starting the **second week of class**, students will write **weekly** journal entries (**minimum 200 words**) and post them to the course's Blackboard page. Prompts will vary from week to week, sometimes asking you to address a particular question that a text raises, to pose a question of your own (and explore potential answers to it), or to write a personal response to one of the works we have read.

- Each journal entry will receive a score of **0 - 3 points**. Your score will reflect not so much *what* your post concludes as the *process* by which you reach that conclusion. Generally, in order to receive 3 points on a journal post you will need to:
 - Cite the text **at least twice**, providing the relevant page numbers for each citation/passage you introduce.
 - Thoughtfully analyze the passages you cite.
 - Take into account the text's complexities and nuances.
- Journal Entries should be posted to Blackboard by 12:00 PM before class on Thursdays. Late submissions will receive a 1-point markdown (for example, a journal entry that would have received a score of 3 if handed in on Thursday will receive a score of 2 if handed in on Friday).
- **Your lowest score on a journal entry will be dropped.**

2 Essays (Essay 1: 20%; Essay 2: 30%)

Students will be required to write two formal essays for the course, one (5 pages) due in the middle of the semester, and one (6-8 pages) due at the end of it.

- **Late papers:** Late papers will be marked down **1/3 of a letter grade for every day they are late**, including weekends. For example, a paper that, had it been handed in on time would have received an A-, will receive a B+ if it is handed in one day late, a B if it is two days late, and so on.
- **Appointments:** I strongly encourage you to drop by office hours or make an appointment to discuss your ideas for your essay or a draft in progress. If you choose to make an appointment, you must do so at least **48 hours** before the paper is due.
- **Rewrites:** You will be permitted to rewrite your first essay, if you choose. Rewrites are due **one week** after you receive your graded paper back. Your final grade for the paper will be equal to the average of the grades you receive on the original submission and the rewrite.

GRADING RUBRIC

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

Class Participation (attendance, participation, in-class group work):	15%
Reading Quizzes:	10%
Reading Journals:	25%
Essay 1:	20%
Essay 2:	<u>30%</u>
Total:	100%

94-100% = A, 90-93% = 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.

Course Materials

Unless otherwise indicated, all of the required readings for the course are available for purchase and/or rent at the University Bookstore. They are also available on Amazon, from used bookstores, and in libraries. (**NOTE:** If you would like to borrow copies of our books, but they are already checked out of the university libraries, you can order them through ILL via USC's library website).

To facilitate our class discussions, **please use the translations and editions listed on the syllabus.** That way you and your classmates will always be, as it were, on the same page!

Alexander Pushkin, *The Bronze Horseman* (Handout).

Nikolay Gogol, *The Diary of a Madman, The Government Inspector and Selected Stories*, trans. Ronald Wilks (New York: Penguin Books, 2005).

Mikhail Lermontov, *A Hero of Our Time*, trans. Nicolas Pasternak Slater (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Ivan Turgenev, *Fathers and Children*, Second Edition, ed. and trans. Michael R. Katz (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009).
Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *Crime and Punishment*, trans. Oliver Ready (New York: Penguin Books, 2014).
Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina*, trans. Marian Schwartz, ed. Gary Saul Morson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).

Schedule of Assignments

T Jan. 9 Introduction

R Jan. 11 Pushkin's *The Bronze Horseman*

T Jan. 16 Gogol's "The Nose" and "The Overcoat" (in *The Diary of a Madman*, pp. 113-173)

R Jan. 18 Gogol's "Diary of a Madman" (in *The Diary of a Madman*, pp. 174-196)

T Jan. 23 Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time*, Preface, "Bela," "Maxim Maximich," "Pechorin's Journal: Forward" (pp. 5-50)

R Jan. 25 *A Hero of Our Time*, "Taman" (pp. 51-62)

T Jan. 30 *A Hero of Our Time*, "Bela" and "The Fatalist" (pp. 63-140)

R Feb. 1 Turgenev's *Fathers and Children*. Chapters 1-10 (pp. 3-45).

T Feb. 6 *Fathers and Children*. Chapters 10-24 (pp. 45-133).

R Feb. 8 *Fathers and Children*. Chapters 25-end (pp. 133-163).

T Feb. 13 Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, Part I, ch. i-v (pp. 3-59)

R Feb. 15 *Crime and Punishment*, Part I, ch. vi-vii (pp. 59-81)

T Feb. 20 *Crime and Punishment*, Part II + Part III, ch. i-iii (pp. 85-219)

R Feb. 22 *Crime and Punishment*, Part III, ch. iv-vi (pp. 219-259)

F Feb. 23 Paper # 1 Due at 5 PM via Blackboard

T Feb. 27 *Crime and Punishment*, Part IV (pp. 263-335)

R Mar. 1 *Crime and Punishment*, Part V, ch. i-iii (339-380)

T Mar. 6 *Crime and Punishment*, Part V, ch. iv-v + Part VI (pp. 380-499)

R Mar. 8 *Crime and Punishment*, Epilogue (pp. 503-518)

SPRING BREAK

T Mar. 20 Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, Part 1, chapters 1-18 (pp. 3-62)

R Mar. 22 *Anna Karenina*, Part 1, chapters 18-36 (pp. 63-107)

T Mar. 27 *Anna Karenina*, Part 2 (pp. 109-217)

R Mar. 29 *Anna Karenina*, Part 3, chapters 1-12 (pp. 219-255)

T Apr. 3 *Anna Karenina*, Part 3, chapters 13-31 (pp. 256-323)

R Apr. 5 *Anna Karenina*, Part 4 (pp. 325-399)

T Apr. 10 *Anna Karenina*, Part 5 (pp. 401-503)

R Apr. 13 *Anna Karenina*, Part 6, chapters 1-15 (pp. 505-553)

T Apr. 17 *Anna Karenina*, Part 6, chapters 16-32; Part 7, chapters 1-16 (pp. 553-654)

R Apr. 19 **CLASS CANCELLED. Professor Matzner-Gore in Montreal.**

T Apr. 24 *Anna Karenina*, Part 7, chapters 17-31 (pp. 654-698)

R Apr. 26 *Anna Karenina*, Part 8 (pp. 699-742) and Conclusion.

R Apr. 26 Screening of Joe Wright and Tom Stoppard's *Anna Karenina* at 8 PM

T May 8 Paper #2 due at 5 PM via Blackboard

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES

Instructor Availability

Office hours: I will hold office hours on **Tuesdays from 3:30-5:30 PM in 255B Taper Hall**. You are welcome to drop by to discuss Russian literature, the readings, your written work, or any other academic question you may have. 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.

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/academic-support/center-programs/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/>