

Russian Prose 1790-1850

RUS542

HUM 27

W 1:15-2:35

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HUM240, 442-4151

T 4:15-5:15, W 3-4

and by appointment

Course Description

If the big picture of Russian literature moves from the Golden Age of poetry to the great novels of the Russian realists, this course examines the minor and occasionally major artistic prose genres of short stories, novellas, sketches, *feuilletons*, fragments, portraits, letters, diaries, memoirs, literary criticism, and journalism. Such authors as Karamzin, Pushkin, Bestuzhev, Durova, Gogol, Lermontov, Pavlova, and Tur wrote in a variety of genres and mixed such various aesthetic movements as Sentimentalism, Romanticism, Naturalism, and Realism. But this period is more than a mere prelude to the inevitable conquest of Realism, valuable only for its contributions to Realism. We will analyze language, voice, characterization, dialogue, plot, description, place, and time as parts of complex aesthetic programs that were not displaced by Realism but incorporated by it in a process of literary conflicts. These literary struggles in a developing literary market were colored by characterizations based not only on aesthetics and politics, but also gender, as women first began to publish professionally at the same time as men.

Required Texts

Victor Terras, *Handbook of Russian Literature* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1985).

Reference: PG 2940 H29 1985

Xerox packet at Shipmates in Stuyvesant Plaza

Reference Books

Neil Cornwell, *Routledge Companion to Russian Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

Marina Ledkovsky, Charlotte Rosenthal, and Mary Zirin, eds., *Dictionary of Russian Women Writers* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994). Reference: PG 2997 D53 1994

Prince D. S. Mirsky, *A History of Russian Literature: From its Beginnings to 1900* (Evansville: Northwestern UP, 1999). PG 2951 M49 1958

Christine Tomei, ed., *Russian Women Writers*, 2 vols. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1999). PG 3203 W64 R868 1999

Requirements

- ◆ Weekly one-paragraph response to study questions, typed, due in class. I grade them with a √-, √, or √+. In Russian. (15%)
- ◆ A five-page paper on a literary work, in Russian, due Wed. October 19. (25%)
- ◆ A ten-page paper on an author, due Wed., November 30. Choose an author by November 2, with a list of 3 works you plan to read by him or her. (40%)
- ◆ Final exam on aesthetic movements based on passages from works in the course, which you must identify. (20%)

Syllabus

Week 1 -isms: Classicism, Sentimentalism, Romanticism, Naturalism, Realism
W Aug 31 Introduction to -isms.

Week 2 Karamzin, Sentimentalism, *Vestnik Evropy*, Shishkov, Beseda liubitelei rossiiskoi slovesnosti, Arzamas, novel
W Sept 7 Nikolai Mikhailovich Karamzin (1766-1826), «Бедная Лиза» (1792), «Отчего в России мало авторских талантов?» (1802), “О книжной торговле и любви ко чтению в России” (1802)

Gitta Hammarberg, “Poor Liza, Poor Erast, Lucky Narrator”, *SEEJ*, 31.3(1987): 305-21. JSTOR.
Margaret Cohen, *The Sentimental Education of the Novel* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001)

Week 3 Historical Novel, Picaresque Novel, Short story, Romanticism, *Feuilleton*, Bestuzhev, Zagoskin

W Sept 14 Alexander Alexandrovich Bestuzhev (aka Marlinsky) (1797-1837), “Изменник” (182?), “Взгляды”

Week 4 Pushkin, *Sovremennik*, Journalism

W Sept 21 Alexander Sergeevich Pushkin (1799-1837), “Повести Белкина” (1830)

William Mills Todd, *The Familiar Letter as a Literary Genre in the Age of Pushkin* (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1999, 1976). PG 3099 L4 T6 1999

Week 5 Gothic Novel

W Sept 28 Pushkin, “Пиковая дама” (1833)

Neil Cornwell, ed., *The Gothic-Fantastic in Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999). PG 3015.5 G67 G684X 1999

Week 6

W Oct 5 Classes suspended for Rosh Hashanah

Week 7

W Oct 12 Classes suspended for Yom Kippur

Week 8 Odoevsky, V. A. Sollugub, Perovsky/Pogorelsky, Panaev, Davydov, Gan, Autobiography

W Oct 19 Nadezhda Andreevna Durova (1783-1866), *Кавелерист-Девуца* (1836); Elena Andreevna Gan (1814-42), “Суд света” (1840)

Single work paper due

Week 9 Gogol, Somov, Narezhny, S. T. Aksakov, Belinsky

W Oct 26 Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol (1809-52), “Старосветские помещики” (1835)

Week 10 Physiological sketch, Natural school, Realism, *Otechestvennye zapiski*

W Nov 2 Gogol: “Невский Проспект” (1835), “Нос” (1836), “Шинель” (1842)

Choose author for final paper

Week 11 Lermontov, Society Tale, Rostopchina

W Nov 9 Mikhail Yurevich Lermontov (1814-41), “Герой нашего времени” (1837-40)

Scotto, Peter, “Prisoners of the Caucasus: Ideologies of Imperialism in Lermontov’s ‘Bela’,” *PMLA* 107.2 (March 1992): 246-60.

Week 12 Superfluous Man

W Nov 16 Lermontov: “Герой нашего времени”

Lydia Ginzburg, *On Psychological Prose* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991).

Roman Jakobson, “On Realism in Art” (1921), *Readings in Russian Poetics: Formalist and Structuralist Views*, ed. by Ladislav Matejka and Krystyna Pomorska (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1971), 38-46.

Week 13

W Nov 23 Classes suspended for Thanksgiving

Week 14 Zhukova, Pavlova

W Nov 30 Maria Semenovna Zhukova (1804-55), “Вечера на Карповке” (1837-38) PG3447 Z4 V44x 1986

author paper due

Week 15 Tur, Turgenev

W Dec 7 Evgeniia Tur (1815-92), “Племянница” (1850), Ivan Sergeevich Turgenev (1818-83), review of “Племянница” *PSS* Vol. 4 (Moscow 1980), 473-81.

Final Exam: December 13, 3:30-5:30 pm.