Sl.4: Russian Literature and Culture from the Golden Age to the Silver Age

Chekhov and Tolstoy in Crimea (1901)

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Handbook 2019-20
(updated June 2019)
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Introduction
The nineteenth century saw the rapid development of Russian literary culture – from the emergence of the modern Russian literary language in poetry, to the rise of the great Russian novel, and, by the end of the century, the launch of modernism in Russia. Bold in their formal and aesthetic innovations, the works of this period pose the decisive questions of Russian modernity and pursue urgent issues of social, political and theological import.

The course is a study of Russian literature from the beginning of the nineteenth century through to the very early twentieth century and introduces students to a range of authors, genres and issues. In order to achieve a balance of depth and breadth, the paper is organized around the study of two set texts and four topics. (There are suggested pathways through the texts and topics tailored to Part IB, option A (ex-ab initio) students, but students should not feel limited to these.)

Overview of Texts and Topics for 2019-20

Set Texts:
A1. Aleksandr Pushkin, Evgenii Onegin (1825-32)
A2. Lev Tolstoi, Anna Karenina (1873-77)

Topics:
B1. Lyric Poetry (1820s-80s)
B2. Petersburg Tales (1830s-40s)
B3. Fiction and Ideology in the 1860s
B4. Chekhov: Prose and Plays (1880s-1904)
Teaching

Weekly lectures in Michaelmas and Lent; weekly revision seminars in Easter.
Ten fortnightly supervisions throughout the year.
Students taking the Long Essay option can discuss adjustments to the schedule below that best accommodate their interests.

Lecture Schedule

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Easter
Revision sessions in lecture slots, Weeks 1-3 (2hrs).
2 x revision supervisions.

Assessment

Assessment by Long Essay instead of final examination is available in this paper for students in Part IB (Options A & B).

The examination is structured as follows: Section A will consist of a commentary on one of the set texts and essay questions on the other. Section B will offer several questions on each of the prescribed topics as well as more open questions that might be answered with reference to a wide range of texts and periods. All questions in Section B will require candidates to write about at least two texts of which at least one must be a literary text.

All candidates must answer three questions.

Students for Part IB (Options A & B) answer:
1 question from Section A
any other 2 questions (which may include 1 further question from Section A)

Students for Part II answer:
1 question from Section A
2 questions from Section B
Preparatory Reading and General Background
Students are urged to buy and read both Set Texts during the summer (or Year Abroad), as well as any optional longer texts they wish to cover (i.e. *Prestuplenie i nakazanie*). The following reading list serves as an introduction to the subject.

Todd, William Mills, III. *Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin: Ideology, Institutions and Narrative*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986. [Especially chapters 1, 2, 3]
Wachtel, Michael. *Cambridge Introduction to Russian Poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. [Especially chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4; Available online through the library catalogue]

Students should read through a scholarly history of 19th-century Russia such as:

Reading Lists

Using the Reading Lists
The lists below specify Primary and Secondary texts. The lists are extensive but not exhaustive: in other words, you should feel neither daunted nor limited by them!

Sections B & C (Prescribed Authors & Topics)
• Remember that you will be making selections from among the primary texts here; they are not all compulsory reading.
• In particular, students are reminded that the novel *Prestuplenie i nakazanie* by Dostoevsky (B3) is optional, and you should plan ahead if you want to read it.
• Students should consult with their supervisor to select primary texts from the suggested options according to their interests and experience in Russian. Students may also choose to read relevant primary texts that are not listed here.

Secondary Readings
The suggestions for secondary reading represent a collection of resources and menus of possibilities: no one expects you to do all of the reading below! Your supervisor will help you to orientate yourself within the bibliography, and to use your time efficiently, by suggesting those texts which most closely relate to the themes and approaches that interest you.
Section A: Set Texts

A1. A.S. Pushkin, Evgenii Onegin (1825-32)

- **Former ab initio students** (i.e. those in Part IB, Option A) are only required to read chapters 1, 2, 7 and 8 in Russian; they must read the entire novel in English in order to follow the plot.
- **Recommended translation:** James E. Falen
- In addition, although it does not make for ‘smooth reading’, Nabokov’s literal translation, read side by side with the original, is very helpful: it makes for an excellent primer in reading Russian verse, understanding the flexibility of word order etc.
- Students in **Part IB, Option B and Part II** should read the entire novel in Russian.

Background, Biography, Reference


Commentary


Other Secondary Readings

(i) *Introductory/student survey studies:*

(ii) *Seminal Russian scholarship:*
Lotman (see ‘Commentary’ above)

(iii) *Seminal/extensive studies in western scholarship:*


**(iv) Articles with useful, specific focus:**


Ketchian, S. I. “‘What’s Hidden in My Name?: Names as a Window into Pushkin’s ‘Evgenij Onegin.’” *Russian Literature* 60, no. 2 (August 2006): 159–183.


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**A2: L.N. Tolstoi, Anna Karenina (1873-77)**

• **Former ab initio students** (i.e. those in Part IB, Option A) read at least the extracts specified below in Russian (roughly one third of the novel); they read the entire novel in English in order to follow the plot: Part I: 1-4, 7-11, 13, 16-23, 26-34; Part 2: 7-12, 21-29; Part 3: 1-5, 13-16, 22-25, 31-32; Part 4: 1, 3-5, 9-13, 15-23; Part 6: 3, 7-16, 19-20, 31-33; Part 7: 9-16, 23-31; Part 8: 8-19.
• Recommended translations: either Rosemary Edmonds OR Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky.
• Students in Part IB, Option B and Part II read the entire novel in Russian.

Background, Biography, Reference

Relevant Theoretical Works (not dealing with Anna Karenina explicitly):
• for wrestling with 'Realism': see also entries for Gustafson, Kliger and Kovarsky below.

Works which promote something approaching a “comprehensive” reading of the novel, through extensive engagement with the text and/or by dint of interpretative approach:
On the epigraph:

Other Secondary Readings: use the titles to navigate issues that interest you, or consult your supervisor for recommendations.
• a number of articles appear in editions of the *Tolstoy Studies Journal* (abbreviated below: *TSJ*) [in UL: North Front, Fl 5, P576.b.29]

Emerson, Caryl. “Prosaics in *Anna Karenina*: Pro and Con.” *TSJ* VIII: 150-76.
Herman, David. “Allowable Passions in *Anna Karenina*.” *TSJ* VIII: 5-32.

Section B: Topics

**B1: Lyric Poetry (Michaelmas)**
Selected poems by Pushkin, Lermontov, Tiutchev, Fet. The year in brackets indicates the year of composition.
Poems marked * are suggested for the attention of Part IB, Option A students.

A.S. Pushkin

*K *** <Kern> (Ia pomniu chudnoe mgnoven’e) (1825)
*Prorok (1826)
*“Ia vas liubil: liubov’ eshche, byt’ mozhet” (1829)
Stikhi, sochinennye noch’iu vo vremia bessonnitsy (1830)
Osen’ (Otryvok) (1833)
“Pora, moi drug, pora! pokoia serdtse prosit” (1834)
*“Ia pamiatnik sebe vozdvig nerukotvorny” (1836)

M.Iu. Lermontov

*“Net, ia ne Bairon, ia drugoi” (1832)
*Parus (1832)
Smert’ poeta (1837)
I skuchno i grustno (1840)
Tuchi (1840)
*“Vykhozhu Odin ia na dorogu” (1841)
F.I. Tiutchev
   Silentium! (1830)
   *Posledniaia liubov’ (1854)
   “Kak khorosho ty, o more nochnoe” (1865)
   *“Pevuchest’ est’ v morskikh volnakh” (1865)
   *“Umom Rossiiu ne poniat’” (1866)

A.A. Fet
   *“Shepot. Robkoe dykhane” (1850)
   Neotrazimyi obraz (1856)
   *A.L. Brzheskoii (Dalekii drug, poimi moi rydan’ia) (1879)
   “Stranitsy milye opiat’ persty raskryli” (1884)
   *“Net, ia ne izmenil. Do starosti glubokoi” (1887)

Secondary Readings

On versification
The gold standard for Russian versification is Barry Scherr’s book:


However, it is fairly long and contains much more than you may need. Instead, I suggest looking at Scherr’s articles in Victor Terras’s Handbook of Russian Literature:


You might also look at Michael Wachtel’s book, The Cambridge Introduction to Russian Poetry. Chapters 1-3 are about reading a poem and chapter 1 also gives a good overview of versification.


On poetry


**Works on individual poets**
To set the poets quickly into the contexts in which they were writing, it might be helpful in the first instance to refer to encyclopaedias and other references. For example:


**Pushkin**
Lermontov

Tiutchev

Fet
B2. Petersburg Tales of Gogol and Dostoevsky (Michaelmas)

N.V. Gogol’
Petersburg Tales (1835-36)
   “Nevskii Prospekt”
   “Portret”
   “Zapiski sumasshedshego”
   “Nos”

Dostoevskii, F.M.
   Dvoinik (1846)

Secondary readings

Gogol:
Nabokov, Vladimir. Nikolai Gogol. [various editions]
Links to critical works on Gogol in Russian:

Collections of essays on Gogol can be found in the journal editions *Essays in Poetics*, (2003 & 2004), Vols. 28 & 29.

**Dostoevsky:**
-----------. “The Double, the Ruble, the Real: Counterfeit Money in Dostoevsky’s *Dvoinik*.” *The Slavic and East European Journal* 58.3 (Fall 2014): 378-93.

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**B3: Fiction and Ideology in the 1860s (Lent)**

**Core Texts:**
Turgenev, Ivan. *Otsy i deti* (1862).
Chernyshevskii, Nikolai. “Chetvertyi son Very Pavlovny” (excerpt from *Chto delat’?,* 1863)
Dostoevskii, Fedor. *Zapiski iz podpol’ia* (1864) *Part IB, Option A* students should read Part I in Russian; Part II may be read in English.
Dostoevskii, Fedor. *Prestuplenie i nakazanie* (1866) – this long novel is optional, but should be read in the vacation/year abroad by those with a particular interest in Dostoevskii.

**Secondary Readings**


**Turgenev**


**Chernyshevsky (“Chetvertyi son Very Pavlovny” from *Chto delat’*?)**


**Dostoevsky**

*Zapiski iz podpol’ia*


**Prestuplenie i nakazanie**


**General/both texts**

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**B4: Chkehov: Prose and Plays (Lent)**

**Core texts**

Prose: Any – but the following are suggested.
The stories marked * are suggested for the attention of Part IB, Option A students.

Early stories:
   *“Smert’ chinovnika”
   *“Meliuzga”
   *“Eger’”
   *“Aniuta”
   *“Sobytie”
   *“Toska”
   *“Van’ka”
   *“Vragi”

Novella: ‘Step’
Later stories: “Skuchnoe istoriiia”
“Chernyi monakh”
*“Dom s mezzaninom”
“Kryzhovnik”
*“Dama s sobachkoi”
“Palata nomer 6”
“Student”
“Chelovek v futliare”
“O liubvi”
*“Anna na shee”

Plays: 
Chaika (1896)
Diadia Vania (1899)
Tri sestry (1901)
Vishnev’yi sad (1904)

Secondary Reading (General)
Chekhov, A.P. Letters on the Short Story, the Drama, and Other Literary Topics. Selected and edited by Louis S. Friedland. London: Vision, 1965. [This contains Chekhov’s interesting commentaries on his own writing]

Secondary Readings on Prose
Story-specific, as titles indicate, with the exception of the first piece which is quite widely applicable:


Secondary Readings on Drama:


On Chaika:


On Vishnev’yi sad:

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