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### **RUSS 391.01: Russia and the West - From Peter the Great to Putin**

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### Russia and the West: From Peter the Great to Putin

The final years of the Cold War appeared to usher in an era of cooperation and joint ventures between Russia and the USA and major Western European powers. Many in the West seemed optimistic about Russia's ability to develop democratic and market-based institutions to facilitate Russia's eventual integration into the so-called family of Western European nation states. Few share such optimism today. Russia's relations with the United States and the West broadly conceived are among the most tense and confrontational in recent history. Many prominent Western commentators on Russia even go so far as to characterize the current period as a New Cold War. This course will attempt to place present-day relations between Russia and the West in a broader historical, cultural and political perspective.

#### REQUIRED TEXTS:

Available from your instructor:

Martin Malia, *Russia Under Western Eyes*  
The Marquis de Custine, *Empire of the Czar*  
*Chronicle of the Russian Tsars*  
*Readings in Russian Civilization*, Vol II (Imperial Russia)  
*The Three Whys of the Russian Revolution*  
Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Gambler*  
Oliver Stone, *The Putin Interviews*  
Anastasia Edel, *Putin's Playground*

DVD MATERIALS (for general background): *Russia: Land of the Tsars*

#### GRADING:

25% Attendance and General Class Participation  
10% Presentation (15 min presentation – may be individual or with a classmate)  
20% 3-4 page Response Paper on either: Custine, *Empire of the Czar* OR Dostoevsky, *The Gambler*  
20% 3-4 page Film Review: *Dr. Strangelove* in a Historical and Cultural Context  
25% Final Exam (Take-home essay response paper to Paul Sanders' essay "Under Western Eyes. How Meta-Narrative Shapes Our Perception of Russia – and Why It is Time for a Qualitative Shift" (2013).

#### GRADING SCALE

A = 93-100	B- = 80-82	D+ = 68-69
A- = 90-92	C+ = 78-79	D = 64-67
B+ = 88-89	C = 77-73	F = 63 and below
B = 83-87	C- = 70-72	

#### PAPER GUIDELINES:

All written work for this class should be typed or done on a computer. Use a standard 12 point font and double-space. Proofread each assignment for typos, poor wording, mechanics, etc. Late work will be penalized one letter grade per class day. Plagiarism will not be tolerated in any form. Please ask if you have a question about what constitutes plagiarism, but on the whole, if you consult another work for ideas, copy or paraphrase from another source, etc., then you need to acknowledge the source (including the work you consulted, the publication information, and the page number/s) in your paper with a footnote.

#### PRESENTATIONS:

Each of you needs to sign up for a presentation on one of the topics listed on the syllabus. I will pass around a sign-up sheet, and you should sign up for a slot that will work with your individual schedule. Some are presentations on a book that you will have to read on your own outside of class. You do not have to read the entire book, but at least enough so that you can do a solid presentation on what the book is about. Pretend that your classmates do not know anything about the book at all and it will make the task easier. Your presentations can be done individually or with a classmate, but you need to choose relatively early in the semester so that we can plan. I recommend you use Powerpoint or prepare slides and/or visual aids, but you are not required to do so. Each in-class presentation should last a minimum of ten minutes and a maximum of twenty minutes, and each presenter should take an active part (but it is fine if one member speaks a bit more—just try to share the responsibility for the work and spread things out evenly). Respect your classmates (and yourself!) and relate to these presentations seriously and maturely. If people take these presentations seriously, the class will be much more beneficial and enlightening for all of us (and naturally you will get better grades, too)!

## SYLLABUS

January

- Tues, 18                      Course Overview and Distribution of Materials  
Group Discussion: What is "the West"? How would you define it?  
What about Europe? What is Europe? Do you consider Russia part of "the West"? Part of Europe? During which period/s of history?  
Excerpts from *Russia: Land of the Tsars*  
Homework: Watch Volume 1 of *Russia: Land of the Tsars* up to the beginning of its discussion of the reign of Peter the Great
- Thurs, 20                      Background: Russia prior to Peter the Great (part one)  
Excerpts from *Russia: Land of the Tsars* and discussion  
Homework: 1) Watch the section of Vol 1 of *Russia: Land of the Tsars* covering the reign of Peter the Great  
2) Read the overview of Peter the Great's reign in *Chronicle of the Russian Tsars*  
Peter the Great as a Transformer of Russia
- Tues, 25                      Peter the Great as a Transformer of Russia  
Homework: 1) Watch the Biography Channel special on Peter the Great on Vol. 2 of *Russia: Land of the Tsars*  
2) Read "Russia Under Peter the Great" in *Readings in Russian Civilization*
- Thurs, 27                      Peter the Great and the West (overview of image and legacy)  
Homework: Read the overview on Catherine the Great in *Chronicle of the Russian Tsars* and "Catherine the Great's 'Instructions'" in *Readings in Russian Civilization*
- February
- Tues, 1                              Catherine the Great  
Homework: Read Malia, chapter 1 of *Russia Under Western Eyes* (p. 15-84)
- Thurs, 3                              Discussion: Malia, chap 1, *Russia Under Western Eyes* (p. 15-84)  
"Russia as Enlightened Despotism, 1700-1815"  
**Possible Presentation Topic:** Catherine, Russia & The French Revolution (1789)  
Homework: Read the overview on Alexander I in *Chronicle of the Russian Tsars*
- Tues, 8                              Alexander I (overview in *Chronicle of the Russian Tsars*)  
**Possible Presentation Topic:** The Decembrist Revolt  
Homework: Read the overview on Nicholas I in *Chronicle of the Russian Tsars* and "The Decembrists: Extracts from Documents" and "Apology of a Madman: Excerpts" by Peter Chaadaev in *Readings in Russian Civilization*
- Thurs, 10                              The Reign of Nicholas I  
Homework: Read Malia, chap 2 of *Russia Under Western Eyes* (p. 85-159)
- Tues, 15                              Discussion of "Russia as Oriental Despotism, 1815-1855"  
Discussion of Chaadaev's Philosophical Letters/Apology of a Madman and the beginning of the Westernizer/Slavophile Schism  
**Possible Presentation:** Westernizers in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Russia
- Thurs, 17                              The Slavophile/Westernizer Schism in Russian Cultural History  
**Possible Presentation:** Slavophiles in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Russia  
Homework: Read from Custine, *Empire of the Czar* and be ready to discuss in particular chapters V-XI, pages 47-172)
- Tues, 22                              Custine, *Empire of the Czar*  
For Discussion: What images of Russia does Custine present?  
What image/s of the West can you read into the way that he re-presents Russia in his book? What might be some

reasons for strong bias that would affect his presentation of Russia to his reading audience?

Homework: Continue reading from Custine, *Empire of the Czar*

Thurs, 24                      Custine, *Empire of the Czar* (general discussion)  
Pick at least two quotes/short sections that you think are key to Custine's image of Russia in the book and be ready to present them to the class.

Homework: Read Dostoevsky, *The Gambler*

March  
Tues, 1                              Dostoevsky, *The Gambler*  
General discussion, but with particular focus on images of Europe versus images of Russia in the novel

Thurs, 3                              Dostoevsky, *The Gambler* (continued)  
Liberals, Radicals, Political Terrorism  
**Possible Presentation:** the Assassination of Alexander II and Political Terrorism

**Homework: Response Paper One**

(see description of assignment below)

Tues, 8                                      The Russian Revolution (background lecture)  
**Response Paper One Due Today** (3-4 pages) on either: 1) the image of Russia in Custine's *Empire of the Czar*; or 2) images of Russia and/or Europe in Dostoevsky's *The Gambler*

Homework: Pipes, *The Three "Whys" of the Russian Revolution*

Thurs, 10                              Discussion: The Russian Revolution in the eyes of Pipes

Homework: Malia, *Russia Under Western Eyes* (p. 357-407)  
"Tails, The Empire: 1945-1991"

Tues, 15                              Discussion of Post WW II USSR: Stalin, Khrushchev, Cold War  
**Possible Presentation:** Cuban Missile Crisis

Thurs, 17                              Discussion: Post WW II USSR: Stalin, Khrushchev, Cold War  
**Possible Presentation:** Early Years of the Space Race

Homework over break: Watch the film *Dr. Strangelove* !!

Tues, 22                              **SPRING BREAK**

Thurs, 24                              **SPRING BREAK**

Tues, 29                              Discussion of *Dr. Strangelove*

**Homework: Response Paper Two**

(see below for assignment details)

Thurs, 31                              **Response Paper Two Due** Write a Film Review  
(3-4 pages) on the topic "*Dr Strangelove* in the Context of the Cold War"

Class Discussion: *Dr Strangelove*, Nuclear Weapons, the Cold War

April

Tues, 5                                      Gorbachev and the West

Thurs, 7                                      Yeltsin and the West  
**Possible Presentation:** "Shock Therapy" & Economic Reform

Tues, 12                                      Putin: Biography, First Term, 9/11 (lecture/video material)

Thurs, 14                                      The Putin Era  
**Possible Book Presentation:** *Petrostate* (Goldman):

Russia and Oil

Homework: Start reading *The Putin Interviews*

Tues, 19 Discussion of *The Putin Interviews*

Homework: Continue Reading *The Putin Interviews*

Thurs, 21 Discussion of *The Putin Interviews*

**Possible Book Presentation:** *The Crimean Nexus* (Pleshakov):  
Crimea then and now

Homework: Read *Putin's Playground* (as much as you can)

Tues, 26 Putin Era: Discussion of Topics Covered in *Putin's Playground*

**Possible Book Presentation:** *Invention of Russia* (Ostrovsky):  
Media/News and the Image of Russia

Homework: Continue reading *Putin's Playground*

Thurs, 28 Putin Era: Discussion of Topics Covered in *Putin's Playground*

May

Tues, 3 Putin Era: Discussion of Putin's Russia up to the present day

Thurs, 5 Course Wrap Up

Your **take-home final exam** response (5-7 pages)

to Paul Sanders' essay "Under Western Eyes. How Meta-Narrative Shapes Our Perception of Russia – and Why It is Time for a Qualitative Shift" (2013) will be **due on the Wed of finals period (May 11) by 5pm**. You may print it off and slide it under my office door in LA 330 or simply send it to me as an attached file.