Course Objectives
This course offers an introduction to the Russian literary classics of the second half of the nineteenth century. Through reading the novels of the great “Russian realists” – Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy – as well as shorter works by Chekhov—we will explore the ways these authors used literature to address the major societal, philosophical, moral, and religious questions of their time. The course is also designed to teach skills in literary analysis, with an emphasis on both discussion and persuasive, critical writing.

Structure of the Course
These continue to be crazy times. I have designed this course based on what we learned last semester about what needs to change in our new remote learning environment and on what my students reported well in the courses I taught in fall. So the course will be a combination of (super awesome) readings, podcasts I have recorded for you that give you the background information that would normally have been covered in a lecture, some activities for engaging with the texts on a flexible schedule, and Zoom sessions where we come together to discuss. A note about the reading: if any of you have looked at the syllabus for this course from past years I’ve taught it (or talked to friends who took it), you will see that I have cut down the reading load and removed several works. It is a sacrifice not to be able to cover as many fascinating pieces of literature, but in our present context, I believe this sacrifice is worth it. Hopefully the slightly reduced reading load will help lower the stress level a little and give you more time to focus on the works we do include.

Our hub for everything will be our myCourses page. I will post announcements regularly when there are any updates or changes you should be aware of. The Contents section includes a module for each of the literary texts we are covering (some we will spend one week on, others several weeks). In each module you will find the readings (or information about how to access them). There are also a series of learning activities, some involving listening to pre-recorded podcasts, some involving small group work (discussing questions I have provided and writing up an answer via an online platform).

The culmination of each week is a Zoom session where we will have the opportunity to really engage with texts through discussion, often breaking into small groups. IMPORTANT NOTE: these Zoom meetings come on Thursdays 4:05-5:25, and the reading and listening should be done before the Zoom as preparation for it; so Thursday marks the end of each week for us. The Zoom links can all be found in the Zoom tab at the top of the myCourses homepage. These sessions will be active and participatory. The idea is to synthesize the material covered in the week’s reading and activities and push our understanding to a deeper level. Some sessions may
use polling. While attendance will not count to your grade, it will be very important to your learning, so I hope that you will choose to come each week, have your video on (internet permitting!), and engage with your peers so we can form a real spirit of community in the class as we wrestle with some very exciting novels. My expectations for class conduct are that everyone will be respectful and open-minded, ready to share and test out ideas and to reconsider the assumptions they brought to the texts we read. I will try recording the sessions to see how this goes, but since they are about active participation, if the recordings are not helpful I will discontinue them (this will be based on your feedback in a mid-semester survey).

If you are not able to attend the Zoom session and have ideas to share, or there are ideas that we didn’t get to in the session, or if there is a discussion you wish to continue further, there is a discussion board where you can share ideas and continue our discussion about each text. When appropriate, I will raise issues from the discussion board in future Zoom meetings.

**Communication Plan**
I will be holding office hours via Zoom on Wednesdays 4-5. (the one exception is January 20, when we have a guest speaker at that time, so office hours are cancelled). If you would like to meet with me, but are not available Wednesdays 4-5, please email me and we may be able to set up another time to meet. I can also be reached by email: anna.berman@mcgill.ca I will do my best to reply promptly, but please remember that even professors sometimes observe evenings or weekends as non-work time.

**Policies and Expectations**
My expectation is that this class is going to be awesome because we’re studying some of the world’s greatest novels 😊 That said, I realize there are going to be unforeseen complications arising this winter. You may experience technical difficulties accessing online materials or participating in online discussions. You may not be able to attend Zoom meetings. We may experience a third/fourth wave of the virus and people may get sick. I am happy to try to accommodate your needs as the situation evolves, but you need to inform me if you are having difficulty completing an assignment so that I can help you find a solution. If you will need an extension for one of the writing assignments, out of fairness to your fellow students, you need to ask for that in advance of the deadline.

As I noted above, myCourses is our hub for everything. All deadlines are listed there, all links to activities and discussions, all Zooms, all links to readings, guidelines for assignments and links to them, this syllabus… everything. Please check it regularly. I will post announcements if we discover glitches or need to modify activities.

**Assignments** (more details will be provided on myCourses closer to the date each is due)
- **Quizzes:** In order to give you credit for having done the readings and listened to the podcasts, there will be a series of very short quizzes on myCourses that cover just the material for that week. The quizzes will be available for 24 hours, starting at 4:00pm on Wednesday and closing five minutes before the Thursday Zoom session (i.e. closing at 4:00pm). They are only 5 minutes long (but I give you a little extra time) and if you have done the reading and listened to the podcasts, you should know all the answers without
trouble. If you are registered with OSD and will require more time, please be sure to have them let me know so I can make that accommodation.

- **Small Group Assignments:** These will give you a chance to have more informal discussion with a small group of your classmates based on questions or a task I have given you and then to write up the results of your discussion as a single submission for the group (first assignment) or share a video of the discussion (second assignment). They will be pass/fail.

- **Turgenev Assignment:** This will be a standard critical essay on *Fathers and Children* based on prompts provided (1000 words).

- **Crime and Punishment Create Assignment:** For this assignment you have two options to choose from, with more details to be posted on myCourses: Option 1) Dostoevsky originally planned to write *Crime and Punishment* as a first-person narrative. Choose a passage to rewriting from the first-person perspective of Raskolnikov (300-400 words). After your passage, include one paragraph about how the process of writing it influenced your perception of the character or the way the novel is structured. Option 2) Raskolnikov and Bazarov walk into a bar… (300-400 words)

- **Anna Karenina Labyrinth of Linkages Assignment:** Trace one recurring motif through *Anna Karenina*, posting 2x about its appearance across the novel on a myCourses discussion board. Topics include: trains, books, mushrooms, portraits, dreams, Anna’s red handbag, bears, or any other motif you see cropping up throughout the book.

- **Anna Karenina Writing Assignment:** For this assignment you will pick two passages from *Anna Karenina* to read “against each other.” How does one influence the way we read the other? What can a close reading of the two passages together tell us about the novel as a whole? (1200 words)

**Final Grade Breakdown**

- Quizzes: 25%
- Small Group Assignments (pass/fail): 15%
- Turgenev Assignment: 20%
- *Crime and Punishment* Creative Assignment: 15%
- *Anna Karenina* Labyrinth of Linkages: 5%
- *Anna Karenina* Writing Assignment: 20%

**Readings**

There are three primary novels for this course, all of which are available at the McGill Bookstore. I **highly recommend** getting a paper copy as a break from all the screen time and to facilitate taking notes in the book and being able to easily refer to it while simultaneously participating in Zoom on your computer.

  - NOTE: it is ESSENTIAL to get the Norton Critical Edition because we will be reading a number of the critical selections it includes and these will not be there in a different version.
- All additional readings will be made available on myCourses as links or PDFs.
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So this means that podcasts, videos and other course material I provide on myCourses are not to be reproduced or placed in the public domain. You can use them for your own educational purposes, but you cannot share them or put them online. Please refer to McGill’s Guidelines for Instructors and Students on Remote Teaching and Learning for further information. Thank you for respecting these rules.

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

McGill University is on land that has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous people whose footsteps have marked this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.
WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Introduction (material for the half-week created by the delayed start to classes)
Welcome Video: This will orient you to the class and give you an overview of how things will work.

Listening: Introductory Podcast, “Setting the scene for our course: the Historical Context” – to be listened to before the first reading

Week 1: Turgenev and the state of Russia leading up to the emancipation
Reading: Turgenev, “Loner” and “Two Landowners” (1850) (PDF on myCourses)
Zoom: Thursday, January 14 at 4:05-5:25 (all Zooms will be at 4:05, password: IheartRUSS)
   In this first meeting we will be discussing Turgenev’s two short stories and getting oriented in the historical period in Russia.

Week 2: Fathers and Children, first half
Listening: Podcast, “Intro to Fathers and Children”
Zoom: Thursday, January 21
   We will be discussing the first half of the novel.

Week 3: Fathers and Children, second half
Listening: Podcast, “Fathers and Children and its political context”
Reading: Fathers and Children – Chap. XX to end; Berlin, “Fathers and Children: Turgenev and the Liberal Predicament” (in back of Norton Critical Edition or PDF on myCourses)
Zoom: Thursday, January 28
   Turgenev Essay due Monday, February 1 by 8:00am

Week 4: Critical Responses to Fathers and Children
Small Group Activity: due by 9:00am on Wednesday, February 3
   • This assignment is your chance to meet with your group and prepare for our Zoom debate which will be held in class the next day – you will submit your plans so I can go over them and send comments before the debate. Details on myCourses.
Zoom: Thursday, February 4
   We will be staging a debate about which of the authors we read for this week best captures the essence of Turgenev’s novel.

Week 5: Crime and Punishment
Reading: Dostoevsky, Crime and Punishment (1866), Parts 1 & 2 (pp. 1-193)
Quiz 1: opens February 10 at 4:00pm
Zoom: Thursday, February 11
Week 6: Crime and Punishment 2
Listening: Podcast, “The spiritual heart of Crime and Punishment”
Reading: Dostoevsky, Crime and Punishment, Parts 3 & 4 (pp. 195-358); excerpt from Dostoevsky’s notebooks (PDF on myCourses); Lazarus story from the Gospels of John and Luke (PDF on myCourses)
Zoom: Thursday, February 18

Week 7: Crime and Punishment 3
Listening: Podcast, “The End of the Novel,” second podcast, “Mikhail Bakhtin’s Dostoevsky”
Reading: Finish Crime and Punishment, Parts 5, 6 & Epilogue (pp. 359-551); Bakhtin, excerpt from Problem of Dostoevsky’s Poetics (PDF on myCourses)
Quiz 2: opens February 24 at 4:00pm
Zoom: Thursday, February 25

Crime and Punishment Creative Assignment: due Friday, February 26 by 11:59pm

WINTER BREAK WEEK ☺

Week 8: Introducing Tolstoy and Anna Karenina
Listening: Podcast, “Introduction to Tolstoy,” second podcast, “Introduction to Anna Karenina”
Reading: Tolstoy, Anna Karenina (1873-7), Part 1 (pp. 1-115)
Zoom: Thursday, March 11

Week 9: Anna Karenina 2
Listening: Podcast, “Anna Karenina, Parts 2 & 3”
Reading: Anna Karenina, Part 2 & Part 3 chapters 1-12 (pp. 117-278)
Quiz 3: opens March 17 at 4:00pm
Zoom: Thursday, March 18

Week 10: Anna Karenina 3
Listening: Podcast, “Anna Karenina, Parts 3 & 4”
Reading: Anna Karenina, rest of Part 3 & Part 4 (pp. 278-435)
Small Group Activity: Due Wednesday by 9:00am.
Zoom: Thursday, March 25

Week 11: Anna Karenina 4
Listening: Podcast, “Anna Karenina, Parts 5 & 6”
Reading: Anna Karenina, Parts 5 & 6 (pp. 437-669)
Quiz 4: opens March 31 at 4:00pm
Zoom: Thursday, April 1

Week 12: Anna Karenina 5
Listening: Podcast, “The Endings of Anna Karenina”
Reading: Anna Karenina, Parts 7 & 8 (pp. 671-817)
Zoom: Thursday, April 8
Week 13: Chekhov responds to Anna Karenina
Listening: Podcast, “Introduction to Chekhov”
Reading: Chekhov, “A Calamity” (1886), Chekhov, “Lady with the Pet Dog” (1899) (available on myCourses)
Quiz 5: opens April 12 at 4:00pm
Zoom: Tuesday, April 13

Anna Karenina Writing Assignment: due April 20 by noon