



RUSS 229:
Introduction to Russian Folklore
(3 credits)
Fall 2022
T/Th: 1:05-2:25
STBIO S3/3

Instructor: Daniel W. Pratt
Office: 688 Sherbrooke West, Room 333
Email: daniel.pratt@mcgill.ca
Office Hours: T/Th, 2:30-3:30 PM or by appointment

TA: Mr. Benjamin Sauvé
Email: benjamin.sauve@mail.mcgill.ca



Course Description: Folklore remains an integral part of Russian culture. It figures into the literary works of Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Tolstaya, Pelevin, in the music of Mussorgsky, Rachmaninoff, Prokofiev, and in various filmic adaptations. Introduction to Russian Folklore will provide students with a background not only in Russian folk beliefs and the major tales, but also in the history of folklore analysis. Students will be introduced to various folktales collected in the 19th century, as well as the literary, musical, and filmic versions of folktales of the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. The course introduces different theoretical approaches to folklore, providing the students with an arsenal of interpretive methodologies. Key questions that will be asked will include: What is folklore? How have folktales changed? Why do folktales and folkloric figures remain so popular today (see American TV shows like *Grimm*, *Once Upon a Time*, and *Game of Thrones*, or the recent *Beauty and the Beast* or even *The Shape of Water*)? No Russian is required as all texts and films will be in English (or with English subtitles), however the originals will be provided upon request.

Required Materials: All texts will be available at The Word Bookstore (469 Milton St, Montreal, QC, H2X 1W3). I have chosen to have the books for purchase at The Word because it supports an independent, local bookstore.

1. *Russian Fairy Tales*, Alexander Afanasyev, New York: Random House, 2006. ISBN: 9780394730905 (Link to The Word: <https://www.wordbookstore.ca/russ-229>)

All other texts will be made available through My Courses or through library course reserves

Course Objectives: This course introduces Russian folklore, as well as the study of folklore more broadly. Additionally, the course gives students a beginner's guide to the history of literary interpretation by examining the chronology of folklore interpretation.

Structure of the Course and Course Policies

- Class time will be a mixture of lecture, discussion, film/media, and other activities designed to hone our skills in literary analysis. **During lectures, I do not consent to being recorded.** If recordings will become necessary during this semester, I will ensure that they are posted online for you.
- I am available and always happy to see you in my scheduled office hours, or by appointment if you have a conflict that does not allow you to come at those times. I can be reached by email as well. However, I have a 48-hour email rule, meaning that I may not respond to any given email before 48 hours. If I do not respond before that point, you may email me with the title 48-Hour Rule, and I will respond as quickly as possible.
- No late assignments will be accepted without **prior** written consent. If you feel you may need an extension, please speak to me well in advance of the deadline. You will have **one (1)** automatic extension of 48 hours to be taken during the semester. Please let me know in advance that you will be taking the extension so I can plan my grading accordingly.
- In this class we will be discussing political, cultural, and national issues. While robust debate is good, you are expected to respect your classmates' rights to their opinions and beliefs. This includes not interrupting people, dominating the floor, raising your voice, insulting, threatening, etc.
- Under no circumstances should you be texting, playing games, checking social media, checking your email, surfing the web, talking on the phone, or otherwise engaging in activities that are unrelated to what is happening in class. Please turn off your phone when you enter the classroom. You may bring a laptop to class, but please restrict use to class-related activities and sit towards the back of the classroom so as not to distract other students.

Important Note: Right now, the province of Quebec has ordered us to teach in-person and for students to wear masks at all times. The McGill policy is to obey the provincial governments decrees in all situations concerning the health and safety of our students. Should these regulations change, we will adapt to the new realities as they emerge. Please follow the rules as listed on the Coronavirus Information Page: <https://www.mcgill.ca/coronavirus/>

Assignments (more details will be provided on myCourses closer to the date each is due)

- **Attendance and Class Participation:** This course is based on the premise that Russian literature cannot be passively absorbed but must be actively engaged with. To that end, attendance and class participation are essential components of the class. You are expected to have completed the assigned reading before coming to class and to arrive each day prepared to discuss it.
 - There may be occasional “spot-check” quizzes based on the assigned reading as an extra motivator for keeping up. These will count toward the attendance and participation portion of your grade.
 - Should you be unable to be in class or to participate due to illness, absence, or any other reason including just being shy, there will be a discussion board for additional participation. Please make use of this as a way to develop your ideas and bounce them off of your peers and your instructor. The goal is to additionally foster discussion, so using the board must be done in a timely manner. Responding (respectfully) to other students will be understood as creating more robust discussion.

- **Fairy Tale:** For the assignment, you will be asked to write a piece of folklore in the Russian style. You will be graded on accuracy with the principal structures of the folktale discussed in class, as well as on creativity. You will also be asked to justify the style and content in a short analytical addendum.
- **Armchair Analysis and Folklore Defense:** These are two assignments in which you will be expected to apply some of the lessons from the lectures and readings. For the Folklore defense, you will be expected to submit a piece of folklore and defend that it *is* folklore. For the armchair analysis, you will need to perform a psychological analysis à la Bruno Bettelheim. Both will be graded on a pass/fail rubric.
- **Midterms:** The midterms will be a take-home assignment with multiple choice questions, as well as short identifications of significant passages, characters, and concepts. The midterm should take no more than 45 minutes, but you will be given a substantial grace period to complete it. These tests should be easy if you've been doing all the reading and watching the lectures.
- **Final Paper (Take-home Final):** The final paper will be 4-5 pages double-spaced (1500 word limit). This is your chance to formulate an argument about one or more of the texts we read or watched after the first half of the class and to back-up your ideas with evidence from the text and your choice of theoretical analysis.
- **Extra Credit:** At the end of the semester, the Russian Undergraduate Students' Society throws a celebratory event. If you put together a folklore-themed skit, song, or other short film for the event, then you will be given extra credit based on your work. More information will be provided as we approach the event itself.

Final Grade Breakdown

- Discussions: 10%
- Fairy Tale: 20%
- Psychological Analysis and Folklore Justification: 20%
- Midterms: 25%
- Final paper: 25%

Grade	Percentages
A	100%-85%
A-	84%-80%
B+	79%-75%
B	74%-70%
B-	69%-65%
C+	64%/-60%
C	59%-55%
D	54%-50%
F	49%-0%

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Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

I remind everyone of their responsibility in ensuring that videos and associated material are not reproduced or placed in the public domain. This means that each of you can use it for your educational (and research) purposes, but you cannot allow others to use it, by putting it up on the Internet or by giving it or selling it to others who may also copy it and make it available. Please refer to McGill's [Guidelines for Instructors and Students on Remote Teaching and Learning](#) for further information. Thank you very much for your help with this.

McGill policy statements:

Academic Integrity:

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). (approved by Senate on 29 January 2003)

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/).

If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating, plagiarism, or other academic offences, do not hesitate to contact me!

Inclusive Learning Environment :

As the instructor of this course, I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the Office for Students with Disabilities, 514-398-6009.

Evaluations:

End-of-course evaluations are one of the ways that McGill works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. You will be notified by e-mail when the evaluations are available on Mercury, the online course evaluation system. Please note that a minimum number of responses must be received for results to be available to students.

Student Rights: "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. This does not apply to courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives." (Approved by Senate on 21 January 2009 - see also the section in this document on Assignments and Evaluation.)

« Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue). »

Know Your Rights! (you have more than 3 of them!): Additional policies governing academic issues which affect students can be found in the McGill Charter of Students' Rights" (The Handbook on Student Rights and Responsibilities is available here <https://www.mcgill.ca/deanofstudents/rights>)

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

Weekly Schedule:

Week	Date	Day of the Week	In Class:	Homework/Reading Due
Part 1: The Folk of Folklore and Their Myths				
1	8/29/22	T	No Class	
	9/1/22	Th	Syllabus, Introduction, What is Folklore?	"On the Concepts of Folklore" by Oring.
2	9/6/22	T	Defining Folklore, Introduction to the Russian Peasantry.	Bring in a work of folklore and be prepared to defend it as such in class. Please also upload your reference and a brief justification to MyCourses Boris B. Gorshkov, <i>Peasants in Russia from Serfdom to Stalin</i> , chapters 1-4. Optional: "Russia" Alexander Panchenko.
	9/8/22	Th	Folk Beliefs in Pagan Russia	Ivanits 3-50 (+127-68 for examples)
3	9/13/22	T	Functions of Spirits: The Lower Demonology	Ivanits 51-82 (+178-89 for examples)
	9/15/22	Th	Sorcery and Spells	Ivanits 83-124 (+190-205 for examples).
Part 2: The Lore of Folklore and Its Interpretations				
4	9/20/22	T	Epic Heroes, <i>Byliny</i> , and the beginnings of secular tales	Epics: Volkh Vseslavyevich, Ilya Muromets and the Falconer, Ilya Muromets Quarrels with Prince Vladimir, Dobrynya and the Dragon, Alyosha Popovich, His Squire Yekin, and Tugarin, Sadko Ilya Muromets Folk Tales: Afanas'ev (AA): 142-45, 284-87, 569-75, Optional Viewing: <i>Sadko</i> (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zedi4fgeMeI)
	9/22/22	Th	Tales of Baba Yaga and Kashchey the Deathless	Afanas'ev (AA): Baba Yaga and the Brave Youth 76-79, Baba Yaga 194-95, The Sea King and Vasilisa the Wise 427-437, Vasilisa the Beautiful 439-47, Koshchey the Deathless 485-94, Maria Morevna 553-62
	9/25/22	F		Midterm Due

5	9/27/22	T	On the Study of Folklore: Structuralism	Bogatyrev & Jakobson, "Folklore as a Special Form of Creativity," Propp, Selections
	9/29/22	Th	"Youngest child" tales: Ivan the Fool/Simpleton	Afanas'ev (AA): Salt 40-44, The Three Kingdoms 49-53, Ivanushka the Little Fool 62-65, The Dead Body 118-9, The Wicked Sisters 356-60, The Three Kingdoms, Copper, Silver, and Golden 375-87, Prince Ivan, the Firebird, and the Gray Wolf 612-24
6	10/4/22	T	"Two siblings" tales	Misery 20-24, The Armless Maiden 294-99, The Magic Swan Geese 349-51, Two Ivans, Soldier's Sons 463-75, Shemiaka the Judge 625-27
	10/6/22	Th	Psychoanalytic Analysis of Fairy Tales	<i>The Uses of Enchantment</i> , Bruno Bettelheim, pp. 3-66 (later BB)
	10/7/22	F		Fairy Tale & Addendum Due
7	10/11/22	T	NO CLASS	Happy Thanksgiving!
	10/14/22	Friday	Animal Groom/Bride Tales, The Frog Princess	BB: 277-310 AA: The Frog Princess 119-23, The Feather of Finish, the Bright Falcon 580-88 From Marie-Louise von Frantz, <i>The Interpretation of Fairy Tales</i> , chapter 5, "The Three Feathers" Completed. Russian film of "The Frog Princess" by M. Tsekhanovsky available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l8-rpTsN5zE (38 mins)
8	10/18/22	T	"Stepmother" tales	*BB: 66-73, 194-99 *AA: 146-50, 229-34, 278-79, 366-69, film <i>Morožko</i>
	10/20/22	Th	"Snow White" Tales	"Snow White" tales "Magic Mirror" BB: 199-215 AA 283-84 Lieberman—"Someday My Prince Will Come"
9	10/24/22	M		Armchair Analysis due
Part 3: The Collectors and Revivalists of Folklore				
	10/25/22	T	Introduction to Romanticism, Discussion of Afanasyev the person	Optional: Zipes, "On the Use and Abuse of Folk and Fairy Tales with Children"
	10/27/22	Th	Pushkin	"The Golden Cockerel," "Rusalka," "Tsar Sultan"
10	11/1/22	T	Pushkin & Sleeping Beauty Tales	Pushkin, "Tale of the Dead Princess" Russian film of Pushkin's "Dead Princess and the Seven Knights/Epic Heroes" available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rgp5h-59rIg

				AA: 482-84, *AA 600-611
	11/3/22	Th	Gogol	“A Terrible Vengeance,” “May Night or the Drowned Maiden,” “Viy,” <i>Viy</i> , 1967
11	11/8/22	T	Stalinist Folklore	Frank J. Miller, ‘The Origins of Folklore for Stalin’, in <i>Folklore for Stalin: Russian Folklore and Pseudofolklore of the Stalin Era</i> , pp. 3–24; Noviny by M. S. Kriukova, pp. 25-51.
	11/10/22	Th	Folklore against the Government	NO CLASS IN PERSON: Please watch video on: Evgeny Zamyatin, excerpts from “Fairy-Tales for Grown-up Children,” and others.
12	11/15/22	T	New Folklore	The Malachite Box—Selections, Zipes, “Once there was a Time”
	11/17/22	Th	Late Soviet Fairy Tales	Tatyana Tolstaya, "Date with a Bird" Tatyana Tolstaya, "The Poet and the Muse" AA: 580-88 Nina Sadur, "The Witch's Tears," “Rings” AA: 31-37, 110-113
Part 4: Folklore Today				
13	11/22/22	T	Post-Soviet Fairy Tales	Petrushevskaya—Selections
	11/24/22	Th	<i>Night Watch</i> , Vampires, and the post-Soviet World	<i>Night Watch</i> , 2004, Bekmambetov Bendix—Authenticity
14	11/29/22	T	<i>Viy</i> , and the Return of the Classics	<i>Viy</i> , 2014, Stepchenko Bendix—Critiquing the Canon
	12/1/22	Th	Final Class, Wrap Up	
	12/2/22	Friday		Midterm 2 Due
	TBA			Final Exam (take home paper due).