



Russian Short Story: From Pushkin to Contemporary Literature

RUSS 340 - Fall 2023

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Meeting Times and Location: TTh 1:05-2:25 p.m., ARTS 260

Office Hours: T 11:30-12:30 or by appointment

Course Description

This course examines the short story genre in Russian literature from the 19th century until present. We will trace the development of the genre through textual analysis and interpretation. We will examine the writers' major themes and storytelling techniques and understand them in relation to Russian social, political, and cultural developments of the time. Through reading and discussing these texts, you will gain a thorough understanding of some of the masterpieces of Russian short fiction. You will also appraise and evaluate your values and the social values of your respective culture(s). The course is taught in English; no knowledge of Russian required.

Course Structure and Policies

- Class time will be a mixture of presentation and discussion, which are designed to hone your skills in literary analysis and interpretation.
- 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 may bring a laptop to class, but please restrict use to class-related activities. 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. This is distracting and thus disrespectful to other students.
- Please turn off your phone when you enter the classroom.

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%

Assignments

- Participation:** This course is based on the premise that literature cannot be passively absorbed but must be actively engaged with. To that end, attendance and class participation are essential components of the course. You are expected to have completed the assigned reading before coming to class and to **arrive to class prepared** to discuss it. Please bring the reading with you to class. To obtain a good grade, you must actively participate in class and group discussions. More than three (3) absences must be discussed with me. You will also have a chance to participate in online discussions. These can be independent comments, questions, or responses to comments and questions posted by other students.
- Reflections:** You will write two reflections (2-3 pages, double-spaced). The first one will be based on selected quotations from the readings, and the second one will be a compare-and-contrast reflection of your choice. A list of topics will be available. See details on myCourses.
- Presentation:** In groups of 2-3, you will present on an assigned topic. You will also prepare discussion questions. See details on myCourses.
- Exam:** At the end of the course, you will demonstrate--in an oral presentation--your ability to analyze the works discussed in class. The exam will draw on the discussions and your own analysis skills. A list of 3-5 questions will be available. See details on myCourses.

Final Grade Breakdown

- Participation (in class and online): 15%
- Presentation: 25%
- Reflections (2): 30%
- Exam: 30%

Required Materials

All readings will be made available on myCourses.

Course Schedule

Week	Day of Week	Date	In Class	Reading Due
1	Thursday	31-Aug	Course Introduction	
2	Tuesday	5-Sep	Introduction to the Genre	
	Thursday	7-Sep	Pushkin	“The Shot” and “The Station

				Master” (1831)
3	Tuesday	12-Sep	Pushkin	“The Queen of Spades” (1834)
	Thursday	14-Sep	Gogol	“Nevsky Prospekt” (1835)
4	Tuesday	19-Sep	Gogol	“The Overcoat” (1842)
	Thursday	21-Sep	Dostoevsky	“A Gentle Creature” (1876)
5	Tuesday	26-Sep	Tolstoy	“The Death of Ivan Ilych” (1886)
	Thursday	28-Sep	Chekhov	“Darling” (1899)
6	Tuesday	3-Oct	Chekhov	“In the Cart” (1897)
	Thursday	5-Oct	Chekhov	“Lady with the Dog” (1900)
7	Thursday	12-Oct	Bunin	“Light Breathing” (1916)
8	Tuesday	17-Oct	Reflections	
	Thursday	19-Oct	Reflections	
9	Tuesday	24-Oct	Zoshchenko	“Aristocrat” (1923), “Electrification” (1924), “The Crisis” (1925), “The Galosh” (1927)
	Thursday	26-Oct	Babel	“Through the Fanlight” (1924), “A Hardworking Woman” (1928), “Guy de Maupassant” (1932)
10	Tuesday	31-Oct	Platonov	“Fro” (1936)
	Thursday	2-Nov	Aksyonov and Shukshin	“Victory” (1965) and “I believe!” (1971)
11	Tuesday	7-Nov	Kazakov	“You Cried Bitterly in Your Sleep” (1977) or “Fall in the Oak Woods” (1970)
	Thursday	9-Nov	Sorokin	“Passing Through” (1992) and “Petrushka” (2008)
12	Tuesday	14-Nov	Pelevin	“Nika” (1992)

	Thursday	16-Nov	Tolstaya	“The Poet and the Muse” (1986)
13	Tuesday	21-Nov	Petrushevskaya	“Our Circle” (1988)
	Thursday	23-Nov	Petrushevskaya	“The New Robinson Crusoes: A Chronicle of the End of the Twentieth Century” (1989)
14	Tuesday	28-Nov	Reflections	
	Thursday	30-Nov	NO CLASS!	
15	Tuesday	5-Dec	Reflections Discussion of exam	

McGill Policy Statements

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/).

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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.

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.

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).

McGill University is on land which 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.

L'Université McGill est sur un emplacement qui a longtemps servi de lieu de rencontre et d'échange entre les peuples autochtones, y compris les nations Haudenosaunee et Anishinabeg. Nous reconnaissons et remercions les divers peuples autochtones dont les pas ont marqué ce territoire sur lequel les peuples du monde entier se réunissent maintenant.

Health and Wellness Resources at McGill

Student well-being is a priority for the University. All of our health and wellness resources have been integrated into a single Student Wellness Hub, your one-stop shop for everything related to your physical and mental health. If you need to access services or get more information, visit the Virtual Hub at mcgill.ca/wellness-hub or drop by the Brown Student Services Building (downtown) or Centennial Centre (Macdonald Campus). Within your faculty, you can also connect with your Local Wellness Advisor (to make an appointment, visit mcgill.ca/lwa).

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.