This course explores post-war Soviet cinema and society through the lens of Andrei Tarkovsky. Considered by many critics to be one of the greatest directors of all time, Tarkovsky directed such luminary films as *Ivan’s Childhood* (1962), *Andrei Rublev* (1966), *Solaris* (1972), *Mirror* (1975), and *Stalker* (1979). Since their first appearance, these films have challenged viewers with their deep philosophical questions, stunning visual style and – yes – excruciating length. But have no fear! This course will equip you with all the tools you need to watch even the longest of art films. Besides watching Tarkovsky’s films, we will read Tarkovsky’s writings and those of his critics, as well as watch the films of his lesser-known contemporaries who probe questions of gender and ethnicity in the Soviet Union. These include the unspeakably beautiful works of Larisa Shepitko (*Wings, You and I*), Kira Muratova (*Brief Encounters, The Long Farewell*), and Sergei Parajanov (*The Color of Pomegranates*). By the end of the class, students will have developed an extensive vocabulary for watching, discussing, and writing about film.
Students will also have the opportunity to make an extra-credit film of their own imitating Tarkovsky’s style.