

**McGill**Department of  
Languages, Literatures, and CulturesRussian Studies

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**RUSS 440****Winter 2021****Prof. Lyudmila Parts**[lyudmila.parts@mcgill.ca](mailto:lyudmila.parts@mcgill.ca)Tuesday **4:05-5:05** – live Zoom discussionThursdays, **by 5:30 pm**– students' written and video submissions.**Virtual office hours** Thursday **4:00-5:00** on Zoom, or by email.

### **Russia and Its Others**

#### **Course objectives:**

The course will take an in-depth historical approach to cultural construction of Russian national identity and to the concept of the Other as a condition of self-representation. We will discuss the multiple Others produced by Russian culture: East, West, Caucasus, America, Jews, Gays, and, more recently, Europe and Ukraine. The course will also introduce students to some of the theoretical tools for approaching issues of national identity, alterity, (post)colonialism, exoticism, and orientalism.

#### **Course requirements and policies:**

**Instructional Method:** the class will be a combination of (fixed) live Zoom discussions and flexible activities, such as discussion board posts, group discussion video reports, and small groups' presentations. Every Tuesdays we have live discussion. On Thursdays, you submit the written or video assignment for the week.

**Live Zoom discussions:** out of respect for the other students and your professor, please turn the video on. If your technical setup does not allow it, let me know.

Familiarize yourself with Zoom: <https://www.mcgill.ca/tls/students/remote-learning-resources/learning-zoom>. If you cannot attend all live sessions, you are still expected to complete all assignments. If you are having consistent issues, or if you have concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Readings:** primary texts and critical and theoretical sources are on *MyCourses*. There will be no prerecorded lectures. I will post notes and discussion topics for each segment on *MyCourses*.

**Graded assignments:**

**Attendance and participation:** this is an upper-level discussion seminar; your attendance and participation in live Zoom discussions is an integral part of the course work.

**Discussion posts and portfolio.** Several times you will post your response to the discussion prompt and respond to a posting by at least one other student (**5 posts and 5 responses**). See detailed instructions on MyCourses. This will allow all students to participate regardless of their ability to join live discussions on Zoom. You can suggest your own topic for discussion. I will read all posts and reply occasionally but will not grade individual posts. The discussion grade will reflect the quantity and quality of all your posts and responses.

**One group presentation (video).** In small groups, you will research a subject and share the results in a brief video presentation (~15 min.) on one of the topics below, in order to help the class contextualize some of the works read or viewed in the course (see MyCourses for details).

**Three group discussions reports (video).** You will meet in assigned groups (using Bongo tool on MyCourses) to discuss an important theoretical concept. You will submit a short video of the discussion (see MyCourses for details).

**Bongo group assignments:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6W0TzFK3Dcs> See MyCourses for detailed instructions.

**Final Paper:** at the end of the course, you will write **an analytical 10-12-page essay** in which you will employ theoretical tools acquired in the course. For this paper, you have two options: 1. you can analyze one of the works on the syllabus from a different angle so you do not merely repeat or summarize our class discussion; 2. you can choose a text that is not a part of the syllabus (write to me for suggestions as to relevant works). Your paper topic should not duplicate your presentation topic. Please discuss your topic with me before you start working on the paper. I will schedule meetings to discuss final paper in the last two weeks. You will be expected to conduct independent research, i.e., use at least 3 secondary sources on the work and theme you will analyze.

**Our liaison librarian, Tatiana Bedjanian,** will be happy to assist you in finding necessary literature: [tatiana.bedjanian@mcgill.ca](mailto:tatiana.bedjanian@mcgill.ca)

**Presentation topics and dates (you do one):**

1. The genre of *travelogue*: encountering the Other. [February 4]
2. The Jewish Question. [March 11]
3. Post-Soviet cultural texts in search of a national idea (music, TV shows, fashion, films, sport events, victory parades). [March 25]

**Group discussion topics and dates (you do all):**

1. Edward Said's *Orientalism* and its critics. [January 28]
2. *Ressentiment* in historical perspective. [February 18]

## 3. Occidentalism. [April 1]

**The final paper will be due by 5 pm on April 15, by email.**

***Final grade breakdown:***

|                            |     |
|----------------------------|-----|
| Attendance & participation | 10% |
| Discussion posts/responses | 20% |
| Presentation               | 15% |
| Group Discussions          | 30% |
| Final paper                | 25% |

**Selected Bibliography:**Books:

- Baddeley, John F. *The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus*.  
 Bonnett, Alastair. *The Idea of the West. Culture, Politics, History*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2004.  
 Buruma, Ian and Avishai Margalit. *Occidentalism. The West in the Eyes of Its Enemies*.  
 Dickinson, Sara. *Breaking Ground: Travel and National Culture in Russia from Peter I to the Era of Pushkin*.  
 Etkind, Alexander. *Internal colonization. Russia's Imperial Experience*.  
 Franklin, Simon and Emma Widdis, eds. *National Identity in Russian Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.  
 Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism*.  
 Greenfield, Liah. *Nationalism: Five roads to Modernity*.  
 Hutchings S., ed. *Russia and Its Other(s) on Film* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.  
 Layton, Susan. *Russian Literature and Empire: Conquest of the Caucasus from Pushkin to Tolstoy*.  
 Neumann, Iver B. *Uses of the Other. The "East" in European Identity Formation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.  
 Riasanovsky, Nikolas V. *Russia and the West in the Teaching of the Slavophiles: A Study of Romantic Ideology*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1952.  
 Said, Edward, *Orientalism*.  
 Schönle, Andreas. *Authenticity and Fiction in the Russian Literary Journey, 1790-1840*.  
 Todd, William Mills, III. *Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin: Ideology, Institutions, and Narrative*.  
 Venn, Couze. *Occidentalism. Modernity and Subjectivity*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications 2000.  
 Yurchak, Alexei. *Everything Was Forever, Until it Was No More. The Last Soviet Generation*.

Articles:

- Shlapentokh, Dmitry. "The Illusions and Realities of Russian Nationalism." *The Washington Quarterly*, winter 2000.
- Groys, Boris. "Russia and the West: The Quest for Russian National Identity." *Studies in Soviet Thought*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (May, 1992), pp. 185-198.
- Malinova, Olga. "Obsession with status and resentment: Historical backgrounds of the Russian discursive identity construction." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 47 (2014): 291-303.
- Marsh, Rosalind. "The Nature of Russia's Identity: The Theme of "Russia and the West" in Post-Soviet Culture." *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 35, No. 3, July 2007
- Moore, David Chioni. "Is the Post- in Postcolonial the Post- in Post-Soviet? Toward a Global Postcolonial." *PMLA*, Vol. 116, No. 1, Special Topic: Globalizing Literary Studies (Jan., 2001), pp. 111- 128.
- Kujundzic, Dragan. "After": Russian Post-Colonial Identity." *MLN* 115 (2000): 892-908.
- Scotto, Peter. "Prisoners of the Caucasus: Ideologies of Imperialism in Lermontov's 'Bela,'" *PMLA* 107:2 (1992): 246-60.
- Sobol, Valeria. "The Uncanny Frontier of Russian Identity: Travel, Ethnography, and Empire in Lermontov's "Taman'." *The Russian Review* 70 (January 2011): 2-16
- Beumers, Birgit. "National Identity through Visions of the Past: Contemporary Russian Cinema." In *Soviet and Post-Soviet Identities*, edited by Mark Bassin and Catriona Kelly, 55-72. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012.
- Graham, Seth. "The New American Other in Post-Soviet Russian Cinema." In *Russia and its Other(s) on Film*, edited by Stephen Hutchings. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

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- In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.
  - "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).
  - **"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/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/) for more information)." (Approved by Senate on 29 January 2003).
  - Copyright: All slides, video recordings, lecture notes, etc. remain the instructor's intellectual property. As such, you may use these only for your own learning (and research, with proper referencing/citation) ends. You are not permitted to disseminate or share these materials; doing so may violate the instructor's intellectual property rights and could be cause for disciplinary action.
  - Students with grades of D, F or J do NOT have the option of doing additional work to upgrade their final standing.
  - *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.*