

Russia and Its Others

Course #: RUSS 440 (Section #1)

Term and year: Fall 2022

Room: SH688 # 294

Course pre-requisite(s): At least 2 literature/cultural studies courses at the 200 or 300 level; or permission of the Department.

Course schedule: T/R 8:35–9:55

Number of credits: 3

Instructor information

Name and title: Dr. Adalyat Issiyeva

E-mail: adalyat.issiyeva@mcgill.ca (e-mail will be checked Monday to Friday typically during regular business hours. Allow up 48hrs for reply).

Office hours: Thursdays from 10:00 to 11:00 AM in SH680 #0347 (or by appointment)

Course overview:

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: East, West, Caucasus, class enemies, dissidents, ethnic and sexual minorities, etc. The course will also introduce students to theoretical tools for approaching issues of national identity, alterity, (post)colonialism, exoticism, and orientalism.

Required course materials:

- Mikhail Lermontov, *A Hero of Our Time*, translated by Natasha Randall (New York: Penguin Books, 2009).
- Leo Tolstoy, *Hadji Murat* (Paperback), translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (2012).
- All other course materials (readings, videos, films) are available online or will be provided on myCourses.

Course requirements and policies:

Attendance and participation. This is a discussion-format seminar, therefore regular attendance and active participation is expected from all students. After the drop/add period, unexcused absences (without a doctor's note or short email explaining a family emergency, for example), will count against you: half a grade point will be deducted for every two unexcused absences within the attendance and participation category. Out of courtesy to your fellow classmates (and me!) late arrivals cannot be tolerated. Extensions on assignments will not be granted unless my written permission is requested in advance. Your participation will be evaluated on the basis of your contributions to class discussions, and response to your fellow students' postings on the Discussion board of our MyCourses site.

If you at any point feel overwhelmed by your academic work and/or would like to develop your time and workload management skills, please consult [Student Services](#).

Use of Laptops. Given the type of participation that is expected, and out of respect for your fellow students, laptops, iPads, and other mobile computing and communication devices will not be permitted. Class notes should be taken with pen or pencil on paper. If you have special circumstances requiring you to use one of these devices, you must speak to me about it during my office hours.

Bi-weekly Discussion Questions (5). Every other Tuesday (beginning with the third week of classes) you must prepare one discussion question or comment on the reading assigned for this class or week. Everyone submits the first question on Sept. 19. Students with last names starting with A – S submit on week 4, 6, etc.; with last names S – Z submit on week 5, 7, etc. Questions have to be submitted through MyCourses the evening before class (by 8 PM) via a dedicated folder under the Assignment Function. You will be expected to raise these questions during our class discussions. The questions should be between one and two paragraphs long, and interpretative rather than factual. They should relate the theoretical points addressed in critical sources and in class to the texts you are reading.

Leading class discussion. One time in the course of the semester you will lead a part of the class discussion. You will prepare and submit a plan: what issues to discuss and which elements of the text(s) to analyze.

Individual presentation should be no longer than 20 minutes, plus 10 minutes for audience questions. You should use a PowerPoint slideshow to organize your presentation and reinforce your main points. You will be graded on content, clarity, delivery style, and your ability to fit your presentation within the allotted time. You can choose any topic related to our class discussions or your final paper.

Take-home Exam: at the end of the course you will write a longer analytical essay (10–12 pages) in which you will employ theoretical tools acquired in the course. For this essay, you have two options: 1. you can analyze one of the works from the syllabus from a different angle, so you do not merely repeat or summarize our class discussion; 2. you can choose a work that is not a part of the syllabus ([see me for suggestions as to relevant works](#)). Please discuss your topic with me before you start working on the paper. I will schedule meetings to discuss final paper on the second week of November. Evaluation criteria will include structure, clarity, and persuasiveness of the argument; observance of formatting formalities and originality. Use at least 3 secondary sources on the work/theme you will be analyzing.

Our liaison librarian, Tatiana Bedjanian, will be happy to assist you in finding necessary literature: tatiana.bedjanian@mcgill.ca

Final grade breakdown:

| | |
|---|-----|
| Attendance and participation | 15% |
| Discussion questions | 25% |
| Leading discussion | 15% |
| Presentation (last week of classes) | 15% |
| Final essay proposal and bibliography (due Nov. 17) | 5% |
| Take-home exam (due Dec. 15) | 25% |

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course students will:

- Know the works studied in class extremely well.
- Be able to talk and think about literary, music, and visual art works in their intellectual and cultural contexts.
- Analyze and apply appropriately scholarly resources by incorporating them in to a written document and or/in classroom discussions/presentations.
- Effectively lead in-class discussions with limited instructor support.
- Synthesize your understanding/critical engagement through a research paper.
- Develop writing skills reflecting university standards.
- Have acquired strategies for doing research and creating a bibliography.

Recommended Literature (besides the scheduled readings):

- Brower, Daniel and Edward J. Lazzerini, eds. *Russia's Orient, Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700–1917*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997.
- Cvetkovski, Roland and Alexis Hofmeister, eds. *An Empire of Others: Creating Ethnographic Knowledge in Imperial Russia and the USSR*. Budapest: CEU Press, 2014.
- Demski, Dagnoslaw and Dominika Czarneska, eds. *Staged Otherness: Ethnic Shows in Central and Eastern Europe 1850–1939*. Budapest, Vienna, New York: CEU Press, 2021.
- Evtukhov, Catherine, Boris Gasparov, Alexander Ospovat, and Mark Von Hagen, eds. *Kazan, Moscow, St. Petersburg: Multiple Faces of the Russian Empire*. Moscow: O.G.I., 1997.
- Geraci, Robert P. *Window on the East: National and Imperial Identities in Late Tsarist Russia*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001.
- Geraci, Robert P. and Michael Khodarkovsky, eds. *Of Religion and Empire. Missions, Conversion, and Tolerance in Tsarist Russia*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001.
- Gorshenina, Svetlana, Abashin, Sergei, Cordier, Bruno De and Saburova, Tatiana. *Photographing Central Asia: From the Periphery of the Russian Empire to Global Presence*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2022.
<https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110754469>
- Hirsch, Francine. *Empire of Nations. Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005.
- Jersild, Austin. *Orientalism and Empire: North Caucasus Mountain Peoples and the Georgian Frontier, 1845–1917*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002.
- Kappeler, Andreas. *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History*. Translated by Alfred Clayton. Harlow: Longman, 2001.
- Kivelson, Valerie A. and Ronald Grigor Suny. *Russia's Empires*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage: 1979.
- Knight, Nathaniel. "The Empire on Display: Science, Nationalism, and the Challenge of Human Diversity in the All-Russian Ethnographic Exhibition of 1867." Paper presented at the National Council for European and East European Research, August 20, 2001.
- Layton, Susan. *Russian Literature and Empire: The Conquest of the Caucasus from Pushkin to Tolstoy*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Marlène Laruelle, *Russian Eurasianism: An Ideology of Empire* (Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Press/Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).
- Maierova, Olga. *From the Shadow of Empire: Defining the Russian Nation through Cultural Mythology, 1855–1870*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010.
- Morrison, Alexander. "'Applied Orientalism' in British India and Tsarist Turkestan." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, no. 3 (2009): 619–47.
- Norris, Stephen M. and Willard Sunderland, eds. *Russia's People of Empire: Life Stories from Eurasia, 1500 to the Present*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012.
- Ram, Harsha. *The Imperial Sublime: A Russian Poetics of Empire*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003.

Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, David. *Russian Orientalism: Asia in the Russian Mind from Peter the Great to the Emigration*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010.

Shlapentokh, Dmitry, ed. *Russia Between East and West: Scholarly Debates on Eurasianism*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2007.

Slezkine, Yuri. *Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1994.

Slezkine, Yuri. "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism." *Slavic Review* 53/2 (1994): 414–52.

Slocum, John W. "Who, and When, Were the *Inorodtsy*? The Evolution of the Category of Category of "Aliens" in Imperial Russia." *The Russian Review* 57, No. 2 (Apr., 1998), pp. 173–190.

Sunderland, Willard. *Taming the Wild Field: Colonization and Empire on the Russian Steppe*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004.

McGill policy statements

Language of submission

"In accord with McGill University's [Charter of Students' Rights](#), students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French 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)

« 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. » (Énoncé approuvé par le Sénat le 21 janvier 2009)

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](#)" (Approved by Senate on 29 January 2003) (See [McGill's guide to academic honesty](#) for more information).

« 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 procédures disciplinaires](#) » (Énoncé approuvé par le Sénat le 29 janvier 2003) (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le [guide pour l'honnêteté académique de McGill](#).)

Other Statements

Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of [copyright](#) can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

As the instructor of this course I endeavour 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 Student Accessibility and Achievement, 514-398-6009.