CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN CULTURE

“Russian Youth Culture from the ‘80s to Present”
RUS 330 / REE 325

Instructor: Thomas J. Garza
Offices: CAL 411 and HRH 4.190
Phone: 471-3607 and 475-9649
E-mail: tjgarza@mail.utexas.edu
Class time: TTh 3:30-5:00 pm in MEZ 2.124
Office hours: M 2:00-3:30 in HRH 4.190; T 1:00-2:30 in CAL 406;
and any other time by appointment
Teaching Assistant: Julianna Leachman [juliannaleachman@gmail.com]
Office Hours: TBA

Required Texts:
• Soviet Youth Culture, Jim Riordan, ed. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989 [copies available at Speedway Printers in Dobie Mall].

• Course packet (CP), also available at Speedway Printers

I. GENERAL

Course Content: The social and political upheaval that shook the Soviet Union in the late 1980s has fascinated and puzzled the Western media to the present day. But how well do we understand the causes and effects of the dramatic cultural changes that mark the new Russia of the 1990s and the 21st century? Do UT’s “Millennials” have anything to learn from the Soviet experience of a disenfranchised generation of Young Marxists choosing to embrace Capitalism and Coldplay instead of Communism and Cold War?

This course will provide participants with the materials to construct an ethnographic portrait of Russia’s contemporary youth and their culture, drawing from a variety of print, audio and video sources. In addition to reading extensively from diverse genres, including the Russian press, editorials, contemporary prose and non-fiction, students in the course should be prepared to immerse themselves in the non-print media coming directly out of Moscow and Saint-PETERSburg in the wake of post-Soviet reforms.
Using popular depictions of Russia’s own “twentysomethings” from recent films, documentaries, rock music lyrics, and art, students will try to come to understand how the youth movement effected and continues to affect the changing course of one of the world’s superpowers of the twentieth century.

Readings and media presentations will focus on the current attitudes of Russian youth toward politics, music, drugs, sex, money and the military from the period of Gorbachev’s perestroika to 2011. This course will be conducted -- as much as possible -- seminar style, with student interaction constituting a significant part of the usual "lecture" quotient of the course. Though all required readings for the course are in English, additional readings in Russian for majors and graduate students in Slavic studies will be made available by topic.

Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation: You are required to attend class meetings regularly, participate actively in discussions, do all assigned readings and film viewings, and prepare assigned written and oral presentations. Students will be penalized for excessive absences and/or chronic tardiness.

Special Accommodations: Any student with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259. Any necessary accommodations should be presented to the instructor in written form.

Short Essay: A brief (3-4 pages) reaction paper to one of the readings or media presentations covered in class is due by Tuesday, February 8. While these essays are not research based, they may contain references or support from external sources. NO LATE PAPERS!

Midterm exam: A comprehensive exam over all material covered (readings, films, slides, and lectures) in the first half of the course will be given on Tuesday, February 22. The specific format of the midterm will be announced well before the exam date.

Longer Essay: Each participant is required to hand in on Tuesday, April 12, a paper, 8-10 pages in length, treating one of the topics covered during the semester. Sample paper topics and treatments will be given out well in advance of the due date. Participants are strongly encouraged to talk with the instructor about the paper topics well in advance of the due date. NO LATE PAPERS!

Final Exam: A comprehensive exam over all material covered (readings, films, slides, and lectures) throughout the course will be given on Tuesday, May 17, during the University Exam Week. The specific format of the midterm will be announced well before the exam date.

II. Grading
There are five components of the final course grade. These components and their weights are:

- Participation 15%
- Short essay (3-4 pp.) 15%
- Longer essay (8-10 pp.) 30%
- Midterm Exam 20%
- Final Exam 20%
COURSE TOPIC OUTLINE

JANUARY-FEBRUARY
1970-1985
• Setting the Stage: Soviet Youth in the Period of Stagnation ("Застой")
• Social Structures for the Youth: Pioneers, Komsomol and Armed Service
• Empty Promises: Soviets Move toward "Perestroika"
• The Emergence of Gorbachev

FEBRUARY-MARCH
1985-1991
• “Glasnost” ≠ “Openness”: Early Attempts at Defining Soviet Youth
• New Social Structures for Youth: Gangs, Groups and Groupies
• The War in Afghanistan: Russia’s Vietnam?
• The Fall of The Wall: Young Russians Meet the West
• The Rise of Nationalism: The USSR Collapses ("Распад")

MARCH-APRIL
1991-2000
• Sex, Drugs and Rock-n-Roll Soviet-Style: The “Tusovka” (Тусовка)
• The August Coup and a Youth Disenfranchised
• The Rise of Yel’tsyn and a New Hero for Russia’s Youth ($$$)
• The Chechen Wars and Russia’s Youth
• Organized Crime and Threats to Progress

APRIL-MAY
2000-2011
• New Youth Groups under Putin
• The Chechen War – Continues
• The Rise of “Nashi”
• Medvedev and the Youth Vote

Дон’t Touch the Youth!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, Jan 18</td>
<td>Introduction to RUS 330/ REE 325</td>
<td>Overview of syllabus, texts and course design</td>
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<td>Thursday, Jan 20</td>
<td>Setting the Stage I: The Great Patriotic War and Youth</td>
<td>How was Russian youth defined in terms of the World War II?</td>
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<td>How did the Soviet system “codify” its youth?</td>
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<td>View scenes from Ballad of a Soldier [“Баллада о солдате”]</td>
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<td>For next meeting, read Pilkington overview “The Future is Ours,” in CP.</td>
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<td>Tuesday, Jan 25</td>
<td>Setting the Stage II: Youth in the Period of Stagnation</td>
<td>The role of youth in the Brezhnev years</td>
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<td>Portrayals of youth in approved films and music</td>
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<td>View scenes from Vysotsky’s films and</td>
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<td>Listen to “Restive Horses” by Vysotsky</td>
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<td>For next meeting, read Riordan, ch. 2 pp. 16-44 “The Komsomol”, and “The Art and Science of Portraiture” in the CP.</td>
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<td>Thursday, Jan 27</td>
<td>Pioneers, Komsomol and Armed Service</td>
<td>Are these structures facilitating or confining the development of youth?</td>
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<td>How to construct ethnographic portraits</td>
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<td>Listen to Komsomol and Pioneer songs</td>
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<td>For next meeting, read Riordan, ch. 1 pp. 16-44 “Soviet Youth Culture”, and “The Brezhnev Culture Wars 1964-1984” in CP.</td>
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<td>Thursday, Jan 14</td>
<td>Portrait of Soviet Youth ca. 1980</td>
<td>The Brezhnev Culture Wars: 1964-1984</td>
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<td>Listen to songs of “Melodiya” records</td>
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<td>View scenes from Moscow Doesn’t Believe in Tears [“Москва слезам не верит”]</td>
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<td>For next meeting, read “The Rituals and Paradoxes of Perestroika” in the CP, and watch Moscow Doesn’t Believe in Tears in PAR 301.</td>
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Tuesday, February 1  

**Empty Promises: Soviets Move toward Perestroika**

- Filmic portrait vs. reality
- Was Soviet youth ready for *perestroika*?

For next meeting, read in Riordan, ch. 5 pp. 103-121 “The Political Socialisation of Schoolchildren.”

Thursday, February 3  

**Soviets Move toward Perestroika [cont.]**

- Soviet Schools and Their Influence on Youth
- Representation of Russian youth in film

ℱ View scenes from *The Scarecrow* [“Чучело”]

For next meeting, read “Perestroika in the Film Factory” in Lawton’s *Kinoglasnost* and “Youth in Turmoil” (in *CP*).  

ℱ Don't forget: Short Essays due!

Tuesday, February 8  

**The Emergence of Gorbachev**

- Did Gorbachev have a mandate from Soviet youth?
- **Short Essays are due today!**

ℱ View scenes from *The Burglar* [“Взломщик”]

For next meeting, read Riordan, ch. 4 (pp. 83-102) “Rural Youth.”

Thursday, February 10  

**The Emergence of Gorbachev (cont.)**

- Interim portrait of Soviet youth ca. 1986

ℱ View scenes from 1986 “Live Aid” and group “Autograph”

♫ Listen to “new” Russian rock

For next meeting, read Pilkington, ch. 3 (in *CP*).

Tuesday, February 15  

“*Glasnost’ ≠ Openness: Early Attempts to Define Youth*

ℱ Brief portrait from *Tragedy in Rock Style* [“Трагедия в стиле рок”]

For next meeting, read Pilkington ch. 4 (in *CP*).

Thursday, February 17  

“*Glasnost’” ≠ Openness [cont.]”

- 1987 and a Youth "Revolution" in film

ℱ For next meeting, watch film *Is It Easy to Be Young?* [“Легко ли быть молодым?”]

♫ Also, MIDTERM exam on Tuesday.
Tuesday, February 22  **War in Afghanistan: Russia’s Vietnam?**

- Russia’s youth in war or peace?
- **MIDTERM EXAM** (50 mins.)

For next meeting, read Riordan, ch. 6 pp. 122-143 “Teenage Gangs, Afgantsy and Neofascists.”

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Thursday, February 24  **The War in Afghanistan [cont.]**

- Where did the new gangs come from?
  - Listen to songs of “Lyube” and “DDT”

  📽️ For next meeting, watch the film *My Name is Harlequin* [“Меня зовут Арлекино”] in PAR.

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Tuesday, March 1  **Gangs, Groups and Groupies**

- Can the new gangs replace the old “clubs”?
- What are the choices for Russian youth during “Perestroika”?
  - View scenes from *Sideburns* ["Бакенбарды"]

For next meeting, read Pilkington ch. 5 (in *CP*).

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Thursday, March 3  **Gangs, Groups and Groupies [cont.]**

- Relationship between rock music and gangs
  - View scenes from *ASSA* ["ACCA"]

For next meeting, read “Sex, Courtship and Marriage,” “Sexuality,” and “Sex and Young People,” in *CP*.

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Tuesday, March 8  **Sex, Drugs, and Rock-n-Roll:**

**The “Tusovka”**

- How is the Russian *tusovka* defined?
  - Listen to the songs of Russian “New Wave”

For next meeting, read “Beliefs about Reproductive Health,” “From Russia with Sex,” and “AIDS of the Russian Soul” in the *CP*.

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Viktor Tsoy ca. 1988
Thursday, March 10  “We Don’t Have Sex in Russia”

- What is the role of sex in the definition of youth culture?
  View scenes from Little Vera [“Маленькая Вера”]

For next meeting, read “The Soviet Rock Scene” and “Dmitri Pokrovsky and the Russian Folk Music Revival Movement” (in CP) and watch the film Little Vera [“Маленькая Вера”] in PAR.

SPRING BREAK!!

Tuesday, March 22  The Fall of The Wall: Russians Meet the West

- Can Russian youth avoid the problems (drugs) of the West?
  View scenes from The Needle [“Игла”]

For next meeting, read Russian MTV article and rock music song lyrics (in CP).

Thursday, March 24  The Fall of The Wall [cont.]

- Survey of Russian rock
  Listen to survey of Russian rock music

For next class, read Pilkington, ch. 8, part 1 (in CP).

Tuesday, March 29  The Rise of Nationalism: USSR Collapses

- Was the youth community the cause in the collapse of the USSR?
  View scenes from Luna Park

For next meeting, read Pilkington, ch. 8 part 2 (in CP).

Thursday, March 31  The Rise of Nationalism [cont.]

- Examination of the August Coup of 1991
  View scenes from “Nightline” report on the coup

For next meeting, read “Televorot” (in CP).
Tuesday, April 5  
**The August Coup and a Youth Disenfranchised**
- Where was the Soviet youth during the coup?

For next meeting, read Pilkington, Conclusion (in *CP*).

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Thursday, April 7  
**The August Coup [cont.]**
- Did the coup change anything for Russia’s youth?

☞ Longer paper is due on Tuesday!

For next meeting, read “Dreams of Capitalism” and “Capitalism Russian-Style: 2010 and Beyond” (in *CP*).

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Tuesday, April 12  
**Yel’tsyn and a New Russian Youth**
- Is the dollar the new opium of the people?

☞ View scenes from *Land of the Deaf* [“Страна глухих”],

☞ **Hand in longer papers today!**

For next meeting, read Cushman’s “Capitalism, Cultural Freedom, and Democracy in Post-Soviet Russia,” and MacFadyen’s “Russian Pop Music Today” (in *CP*).

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Thursday, April 14  
**Yel’tsyn [cont.]**
- Rediscovery of a Political Voice in Music

☞ Listen to survey of Russian music of the ‘90s

☞ For next meeting, read “The Emerging Criminal State,” “Major Mafia Gangs in Russia,” and “Reflections on Youth” in *CP* and watch the film *The Tycoon* [“Олигарх”] in PAR.

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Tuesday, April 19  
**Russian Youth in the ‘90s**
- What is facing Russian youth today?

☞ View scenes from *The Brother* [“Brat”], and *Prisoner of the Mountains* [“Кавказский пленник”].

☞ For next meeting, read “Cultural Globalization” in *CP* and watch *House of Fools* [“Дом дураков”] in PAR.
Thursday, April 21  
**Putin’s Russia and Youth**
- Will youth end the Chechen war?
- View scenes from *Piter FM.*
- Course-Instructor Survey

For next meeting, read *Newsweek* article on “Nashi” (in *CP*).

Tuesday, April 26  
**The Rise of “Nashi”**
- The role of youth in contemporary politics
- View scenes from *Stilyagi* [“Стиляги”]

For next meeting, read review of “School” [“Школа”] (in *CP*).

Thursday, April 28  
**Back to the Future: Youth Rediscover Their Past**
- View scenes from “School” [“Школа”] and “Students” [“Студенты”]
- Value of television portraits in constructing youth

For next meeting, read Williams, et al., “Conclusion: Reflections on Youth at the Start of the Twenty-first Century” (in *CP*).

Tuesday, May 2  
**Popular Culture and the Depiction of Youth**
- View scenes from “You’re Kidding, Youth!” [“Даёшь, молодёжь!”].
- Course Instructor Surveys

For next meeting, prepare any questions for have for the final exam.

Thursday, May 5  
**Conclusions and Final Thoughts**
- Review for Final exam
- Closing Comments

Желаем Вам Хорошего Лета!  
Have a great summer!