RUSSIAN 330: Christ and Antichrist: Visions of the Apocalypse in Russian Literature and Culture (Cross-list: REE 325, RUSS 391, REE 385, CL 323, CL 382)

Meets T/Th 3:30-4:45 in Parlin 201
Office Hours: T/Th 10:30-12 and by appointment
Office: Calhoun 404
Professor Michael Pesenson

The Russians have been famously termed "wanderers in search of God's truth". In much of their literature there is a discernable thirst for another life, another world, a clear displeasure at what is. There is an eschatological directedness, an expectation that there will be an end to all that is finite,
that a final truth will ultimately be revealed, that in the future an extraordinary event will take place. This new course will explore and analyze apocalyptic consciousness in Russian literature and culture from the Middle Ages to the present. Emphasis will be on such themes as the expectation of the end of the world, identification of the Antichrist, messianic prophecy and visions of an afterlife. Readings will include works of Gogol, Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Bely, Merezhkovsky, Soloviev, Bulgakov, Makanin, and Tolstaya.

The graduate component of this class will involve an additional moderate amount of reading in Russian (for Slavic graduate students) or other apocalyptic traditions (for Comparative Literature graduate students). Slavic graduate students will also be expected to write their response papers in Russian. All graduate students will make brief presentations in class on an agreed upon topic of their choice depending on their individual interests.

Reading List: (These works are all available in the bookstore, on Blackboard or on Google Books)
D. Merezhkovsky, *Peter and Alexei*
A. Pushkin, *Bronze Horseman*
F. Dostoevsky, *Demons*
N. Gogol, *Dead Souls*
M. Bulgakov, *Master and Margarita*
V. Soloviev, *Third Conversation and Short Story on the Antichrist*
A. Bely, *Petersburg*
M. Bulgakov, *Master and Margarita*
T. Tolstaya, *Slynx*
V. Makanin, *Escape Hatch*

Syllabus:

Thu, 8/25  
Introduction: Apocalyptic Consciousness in Medieval Rus’

Tue, 8/30  
*Peter and Alexei*, books 1 and 2 (Google Books); D. Bethea, “Introduction: Myth, History, Plot, Steed” in *The Shape of Apocalypse in Modern Russian Fiction* (Blackboard)
Thu, 9/1  
*Peter and Alexei*, books 4 and 5

Tue, 9/6  
*Peter and Alexei*, books 7-10

Thu, 9/8  
*Peter and Alexei*, books 11 and Epilogue; *Bronze Horseman*

Tue, 9/13  
Gogol, *Dead Souls* (Vol. 1, Chs. 1-6)  
V. Golstein, "Landowners in *Dead Souls*: Or the Tale of How Gogol Blessed What He Wanted to Curse." *SEEJ*, vol. 41, no. 2. (JSTOR)

Thu, 9/15  
*Dead Souls* (Vol. 1, Chs. 7-11)  
S. Fusso, "*Mertvye Dushi*: Fragment, Parable, Promise." *Slavic Review*, vol. 49, no. 1. (JSTOR)

Tue, 9/20  
*Dead Souls* (Vol. 2)  
D. Fanger, "*Dead Souls*: The Mirror and the Road." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, vol. 33, no. 1 (JSTOR)

Thu, 9/22  
*Dead Souls*, Inspector General  
Merezhkovsky, "Gogol and the Devil" (Blackboard)

Tue, 9/27  
*Demons* (part 1)  
Leatherbarrow, "*The Devils* in the Context of Dostoevsky's Life and Works" (Blackboard)

Thu, 9/29  
*Demons* (part 2, chs. 1-4)  
D. Offord, "*The Devils* in the Context of Contemporary Russian Thought and Politics" (Blackboard)

Tue, 10/4  
*Demons* (part 2, chs. 5-10)  
Jones, "The Narrator and Narrative Technique in Dostoevsky's *The Devils*" (Blackboard)

Thu, 10/6  
*Demons* (part 3, chs. 1-3)
Davison, “Dostoevsky’s The Devils: The Role of Stepan Trofimovich Verkhovensky” (Blackboard)

Tue, 10/11  
**Demons (part 3, chs. 1-3)**  
*L. Ivanits, “Dostoevskij’s Marja Lebjadkina” (JSTOR)*

Thu, 10/13  
**Demons**

Tue, 10/18  
**Soloviev, “Third Conversation and Short Narrative on the Antichrist”, in War and Christianity form the Russian Point of View, New York, 1915 (Google Books), pp. 93-144**

Thu, 10/20  
**Short Narrative on the Antichrist, 144-End**

Tue, 10/25  
**Petersburg (Prologue through ch. 3)**

Thu, 10/27  
**Petersburg (chs. 4-6)**

Tue, 11/1  
**Petersburg (chs. 7-Epilogue)**

Thu, 11/3  
**Petersburg, Blok “The Twelve”**

Tue, 11/8  
**Master and Margarita (chs. 1-10)**  

Thu, 11/10  
**Master and Margarita (chs. 11-16)**  
R. Pope, "Ambiguity and Meaning in the Master and Margarita." (JSTOR)

Tue, 11/15  
**Master and Margarita (chs. 17-23)**  
E. Curtis, “The Master and Margarita - 'Manuscripts Don't Burn',' in Bulgakov’s Last Decade. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987 (Blackboard)

Thu, 11/17  
**Master and Margarita (chs. 24-Epilogue)**

Tue, 11/22

Escape Hatch
S. Dalton-Brown, Signposting the Way to the City of Night: Recent Russian Dystopian Fiction (JSTOR)

Thu, 11/24

Thanksgiving Break

Tue, 11/29

Slynx (Chs. A-O)

Thu, 12/1

Slynx (Chs. P to End)

**Course Requirements:**

1. Attend the class regularly. Three unexcused absences permitted; additional unexcused absences will result in lowered attendance grade.
2. Read the required pages and be prepared for class discussion.
3. Write position papers (1-2 pages) in response to questions handed out by the instructor (3-4 over the course of the semester).
4. Write two critical papers (6-8 pages) on a topic of your choice. You must use at least two secondary sources in writing your Final Paper.

**Grading**

1. Attendance and Class Participation 10%
2. Position Papers 30%
3. Midterm Paper 30%
4. Final Paper 30%