Proposal for Field-of-Study Course  
Fall 2006  
Submitted by Joe Troncale, MLC

1. FSHT (Historical Studies)

2. Russian 332; MLC 332

3. Title: Conscience and Consciousness: 19th Century Russian Painting

4. **2006-2008 catalogue description:** An interdisciplinary study of 19th century Russian painting as an organic part and expression of the cultural and intellectual development of 19th century Russia. The cultural significance of Russian paintings is traced through a critical analysis of primary historical, philosophical, literary, artistic and other sources of the period. Taught in English.

5. No prerequisites

6. 4 credits

7. Estimated enrollment: 15

8. Offered every third semester by Joe Troncale

9. Staffing implications: none

10. Library and other resources: adequate

11. This course is an elective for the Russian Studies major and minor as well as for the International Studies major in Modern Europe and World Politics and Diplomacy. This course would also be very useful for students of art history, history, philosophy, and cultural studies, in general.

12. Contact: Joe Troncale, Department of Modern Literatures and Cultures, ex. 8118, jtroncal@richmond.edu

Note: This course was originally approved as a general history of Russian painting in November 2005 as part of the new Russian Studies major. It was created to also address the absence of Russian painting in art history courses. It serves a broad range of students as an introduction to the methods of cultural, historical, and social analysis.
**Method and Purpose as a FSHT:**

The 19th century was Russia’s golden age and an understanding of the development of her values and institutions during that period is crucial to understanding Russia today. In this course students will examine the cultural and intellectual development of Russia in the 19th century through the lens of Russian painting. They will analyze the paintings through a critical study of the leading ideas and events of 19th century Russia through primary and secondary sources in history, literature, philosophy, political and social theory and through other artistic and cultural artifacts produced during the pivotal periods of the 1830-40’s, 1860’s and 1880-90’s. This interdisciplinary study of 19th century Russia is based in both visual and written texts to draw the students beyond the usual one-sided logocentric approach that dominates historical and cultural studies in universities today.

**Full Course Description:**

The students will investigate the multilayered, formative dialogue between painting and other significant cultural forces during the particularly critical and diverse periods of the 1830’s-1840’s, the 1860’s, and the 1880’s-1890’s as the context for Russia’s cultural development in the 19th century. The focus is chiefly on the masterpieces of Vasily Tropinin, Orest Kiprensky, Pavel Fedotov, Karl Briullov, Alexander Ivanov, the Peredvizhniki, Ilya Repin, Vasily Surikov, Valentin Serov and many other Russian masters and on the rise to dominance of realism as the official Russian School of Painting. Among the topics to be studied as articulated in these visual texts are: the development of the Russian intelligentsia; rivalry and cooperation between Petersburg and Moscow; Europeanization and Russian/Slavic self-consciousness as evidenced in the endless Slavophile/Westernizer debate; Petersburg and the formation of a “new” Russian; the rise of socialism and historical materialism as determinants of Russian historical development; Hegel vs. Marx in Russia; ideology and historical, social, political “imaginaries”; the development of the notions of “progress”; the myth of the peasant; the generation gaps; women in society and the arts; and the subordination of painting to literature.

**Rationale:**

To offer students the rare opportunity of equal access to Russian culture beyond that provided by other Russian studies or history courses whose focus is chiefly on filmic and musical texts or solely on written texts of history and literature. This course is intended to help students move beyond a largely logocentric way of learning about Russia. Focusing on painting as a visual primary historical text itself, the students will discover that it possesses a power equal to that of cinema, film, literature and history to capture the imagination in its portrayal of Russia’s richly diverse cultural life. Through a systematic, analytical study of paintings as visual texts in conjunction with other primary cultural artifacts, written and artistic, students will have the opportunity to see the grand panorama of Russian culture played out within a broad historical context. The course employs an interdisciplinary approach to capture the interrelatedness of the various facets of the Russian creative genius.
Syllabus for Russian 332
Conscience and Consciousness in 19th Century Russian Painting

**Premises and Pretexts:**

“It (culture) aims to ‘liberate by unifying’: it does not so much rule over its constituent parts as it frees them from their innate restrictions by unifying them into a more truly complete entity. Culture liberates us from the dictates of each specific sphere of consciousness, from the restrictive fate of being only a ‘political,’ or a ‘technical,’ or a ‘moral’ human being.”

Mikhail N. Epstein, *After the Future*

“When confining himself to the reproduction of the phenomena of life, the artist satisfies our curiosity or stimulates our recollections of life. But if at the same time he explains and pronounces judgment on the phenomena reproduced, he becomes a thinker and, in addition to its artistic merit, his work acquires a still higher significance, viz., scientific significance.”


“The author-artist, although not troubling to draw any general conclusions about the state of public thought and morality, is always able to grasp their most essential features, throw a vivid light upon them, and place them before the eyes of thinking people.”

Nikolai A. Drobrolyubov (1836-1861) “When Will the Day Come?”

“(Art) is a means of union among men joining them together in the same feelings, and indispensable for the life and progress towards well-being of individuals and of humanity.” Leo N. Tolstoy (1828-1910) *What is Art?*

**Foreword:**

The nineteenth century is known as the “Golden Age” of Russian cultural and intellectual development. Russia exploded on the stage of Europe as a cultural, historical, political and social force to be reckoned with. Once Peter the Great had opened the floodgates to the influx of European at the outset of the eighteenth century, Russia was forced by him in response to begin examining its “self” to determine exactly what that was and where and how it would fit into the world outside its borders, particularly in the “European” world. That process deepened in earnest in the nineteenth century. Determining what that “self” had to “become” to fit in and what the cost of that “becoming” might mean preoccupied the Russians then and continues to do so today. The way in which the Russians conducted that process is as much an indication of their character as is the process itself. A study of this process reveals that fundamental to it is the awakening of a “consciousness” of the Russian “self” and the necessity to determine by choices of “conscience” how that “self” is to be addressed and developed. This is an unending process that all humankind undergoes. However, the particular quality and degrees of intensity of the process as it is undergone in Russia is telling. One can almost grasp this as the Russian “character”.

In this course, through a study of Russian painting, we will painstakingly examine the patterns of that “consciousness” and observe how “conscience” makes its determinations of
Truth, Beauty, and Happiness. This cultural process that we will follow is a dialogue between institutions, between ideas and ideologies, between classes and ideologues, and between social, historical and political theories. Russian painters were very much in the heat of this dialogue that eventually found subtle and significant expression in the marvelous, yet little known, images of their canvases.

This course is intended to help you move beyond a largely logocentric way of learning about Russia. Focusing on painting as a visual primary text itself, you will discover that it possesses a power equal to that of cinema, film, literature and history to capture the imagination in its portrayal of 19th century Russia’s richly diverse cultural life. Through a systematic, analytical study of paintings as visual texts in conjunction with other primary cultural artifacts, written and artistic, you will have the opportunity to see the grand panorama of Russian culture played out within a broad historical context. The course employs an interdisciplinary approach to capture the interrelatedness of the various facets of the Russian creative genius.

**I. Required texts:**

Henry Sayre, *Writing About Art (3rd edition)*

**II. Readings from the following list:**

**A. Primary Texts:**

Paintings (as indicated in syllabus by names of painters)

**Literature:**

Alexander Pushkin, *The Bronze Horseman*  
Nicholai Gogol, *Nevsky Prospect and The Overcoat*  
Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Poor Folk*  
A. F. Pisemsky, *A Thousand Souls*  
A. F. Pisemsky, *A Bitter Fate*

**Other:**

Pyotr Chaadaev, *Philosophical Letters* (1820’s – 1830’s) (excerpts)  
Nikolai Berdiaev, *The Russian Idea* (1947) (excerpts)  
P. Lavrov, *Historical Letters* (1860’s) (excerpts) (1868)  
N.N. Mikhailovsky, *What is Progress?* (1869)  
Karl Marx, *On Historical Materialism* (1840’s) (excerpts)  
Georg Hegel, *Reason in History* (excerpts) (1830’s)  
Ivan Kireevski, “The Nineteenth Century: the National Identity of Russia”  
V.V. Stasov, *Twenty-Five Years of Russian Art: Our Painting*  
Alexander Herzen, *The Past and Thoughts* (excerpts)

**B. Secondary sources (classics and new mostly in excerpts):**


James Billington, *Mikhailovsky and Russian Populism* (1958)


Martin Malia, “What is the Intelligentsia?”, *Daedalus*, Summer 1960

Edward J. Brown, *Stankevich and His Moscow Circle*


A. Vucinich, *Science in Russian Culture* (1963)


Hans Kohn (ed), *The Mind of Modern Russia* (1955)

Isaiah Berlin, “A Marvellous Decade, 1838-1848” (1956)

Edie, Scanlon, Zeldon (ed.), *Russian Philosophy. vol. II*

Rene Wellek, “Social and Aesthetic Values in 19th Century Literary Criticism”


Ernst Simmons (ed.), *Continuity and Change in Russian and Soviet Political Thought* (1955)

V.V. Zenkowskii, *Russian Thinkers and Europe* (1953)

Abbott Gleason, *European and Moscovite*

S. Utechin, *Russian Political Thought: A Concise History* (1963-4)


M.M. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (1986)


Elizabeth Ingles, *Russia’s Four Seasons: Landscapes and Images of Mother Russia* (1999)

**Attendance:**

Attendance at all sessions is mandatory. Any exceptions must be arbitrated by the student and the instructor together. Arbitrary absences will be reflected in the student’s grade. Communication with the instructor will prevent difficulties and misunderstanding.

**Requirements:**

There will be a take-home midterm exam and one 10 page (minimum) analytical paper on a topic of the student’s choice. In addition, each student will prepare a portfolio on at least five Russian
painters to be submitted by the last day of class. The details of the paper and the student presentation will be discussed in class and in conference with the instructor. This course also contains a component for LAC study in Russian.

**Grade:**

- Class participation: 20%
- Midterm exam: 25%
- Final Paper: 35%
- Presentation: 20%

******Weekly Syllabus******

**Weeks 1 and 2: Conscience and Consciousness, a general introduction to fundamentals of the Russian worldview**

Iconography and the politics of Russian Christianization
18th century Russian painting in a classical age

**Painters to include:**
Matveev  Borovikovsky Shibanov
Nikitin Levitsky
Rokotov   Argunov
Introductory Reading: Sarabianov, Sayre

1. Russian Intelligentsia
   Readings: Confino, Raeff, Berlin

2. Russian painters as members of the intelligentsia
   Iconographers as precursors to all Russian painters
   Peter the Great and the new principle of “meritorious service”

3. European and Russian painting, the Academy of Fine Arts, and the monarchy
   The collections of Peter the Great and his successors
   The Pushkin
   The Tretyakov
   The Hermitage
   The Russian Museum
   Nationalized Collections in regional museums

4. The Enlightenment in Russia – Catherine the Great in portraiture
   Benign despotism

**Weeks 3, 4 and 5: Petersburg as a modern European city: a crisis in cultural identity and the development of a new identity**

Historical painting, land/seascape, portraiture in the Romantic ideal
Painters to include:

Shchedrin Brothers  Tropinin  Brillov
Fyodor Alekseev  Kiprensky  Aivazovsky
Maksim Vorobyov  Venetsianov  Rylov
Fyodor Tolstoy  Slavyansky  Flavitsky
Chernetsov Brothers  Soroka

1. The new state of Russia and Peter the Great and as a collector of fine art
   Iconography yields to “painting”; iconographers become painters
   Education of painters in Europe: Holland, Italy, Germany
   Monumentalism and autocracy: Peter’s new “state”

2. Reason and the Slavic Demon
   Readings: Berdyaev, Belinsky

3. Moscow vs. Petersburg: two myths collide
   Readings: Pushkin, Gogol, Gleason,

4. Russia as Gendarme of Europe: the defeat of Napoleon and Russian Zeitgeist and Messianism
   Readings: Berdyaev, Talmon

5. The other side: Chaadaev’s “Philosophical Letters”
   Readings: Chaadaev, Cook

6. Nationality, Autocracy, Orthodoxy and the Decembrist Revolt
   A national school of sculpture and music
   Readings: Taruskin

Weeks 6 and 7: Russian Painting and Russian Literature as arenas of philosophical, political, and social dialogue

Naturalism, Civic Realism and Russian Realism; portraiture and genre painting
   Reading: Sarabianov, Gray, Sayre, Wellek

Painters to include:

Fedotov  A. Ivanov  Pryanishnikov  Yakobi
Perov  A. Bogolyubov  I. Khrutsky
Kramskoy  Repin

1. Hegel and Marx in the context of Russian Orthodoxy

2. Slavophile vs. Westernizer: Russian thinkers and Europe
The search for a non-European identity: 1830s - 1870s. The problem of a national identity. How were Russians to relate to the rest of the world and especially to western Europe? What is their historical and religious mission?

Readings: Hegel, Marx, Walicki, Siljak

3. Russia was the first non-Western nation to challenge Eurocentric historical models and cultural canons, such as rationalism, legalism, individualism, and offer an alternative model of civilization

4. The reforms of Alexander II
   The end of serfdom and assassination of the czar
   Reaction

5. Midterm exam

**Weeks 8 and 9: Populism, Socialism, Revolution**
Readings: Sarabianov, Sayre

**Painters to include:**
Myasoedov    Savitsky    V. Maksimov    Repin Yaroshenko
V. Makovsky    Surikov    Arkhipov    Ryabushkin Bashkirtseva
Firs Zhuravlev

1. The “Narod”: peasants and “progress”, the raznochintsy, women
   Readings: Lavrov and Mikhailovsky, Malia, Carr
   Dostoevsky, Herzen, Berdiaev, Chernyshevsky

2. Challenges to the classical canon of the Academy; skirmishes with dissent

3. The Wandering Exhibitions/ the Wanderers and Russian populism
   Readings: Valkenier, Pisemsky

4. 1880s - 1890s. The religious problem: how to overcome evil and deify man and the world?
   Godmanhood
   Readings: Berdiaev, Solovyov, Zeldon

5. Women in Society
   Readings: Englestein, Stites, Marsh

6. Discussion of student presentations and analytical papers

**Weeks 10 and 11: Nature and the philosophy of authenticity**

Readings: Sarabianov, Sayre, Ely, Ingles Schiller/Shelling

**Painters to include:**
Weeks 11 and 12: Mystical idealism and fin-de-siecle pandemonium

Readings: Sarabianov, Sayre

Painters to include:
N. Ge       Vereshchagin  V. Vasnetsov  Kuindzhi
Semiradsky  Bronnikov     Bakalovich    Nesterov
Serov       Korovin        Vrubel

1. Religious revival and turn of the century crises
   Readings: Berdyaev, Carr,

2. Anarchy and terrorism confront a reactionary monarchy

3. Russian Music
   Readings: Taruskin

4. Student presentations

Week 13: Visit to Hillwood Museum in D.C.

Week 14: Tying the ends together

Surikov, Repin,

1. Summary 19th century Russian thought
   Readings: Berdyaev, Soloviev
   Russian painting and Russian history
   Russian painting and Russian social movements
   Russian painting and Russian philosophy
   Russian painting and Russian spirituality
   Russian painting and the Russian national imaginary

2. Culture as transcendence: not “political”, “historical”, “philosophical”, et alii
   Reading: Epstein, Bakhtin

3. Student Presentations

4. Final Paper due day of final exam