1. FSHT  (Historical Studies)

2. RUSN 312

3. Bosheviks, Bombs, and Ballet: Russian Culture from Revolution to Present

4. 2002-2004 catalog description: An introduction to contemporary issues in Russia and the territory of the former Soviet Union from an interdisciplinary perspective. The development of Russian culture is traced through the arts, history, religion, philosophy, women's issues, environmental and social challenges. Taught in English.

5. No prerequisites

6. 4 credits

7. Estimated enrollment: 15  (larger enrollment welcome)

8. Offered every third semester, by Yvonne Howell

9. Staffing implications: none

10. Library and other resources adequate

11. This course is a prerequisite for the Russian minor (MLL), and it serves as an elective course for the International Studies major in Modern Europe and World Politics and Diplomacy.

12. Contact Yvonne Howell, Dept. of MLL, ext. 8101  yhowell@richmond.edu

Note 1: This course is already on the books and has been taught many times. It has always been primarily a course in cultural and intellectual history. It is an interdisciplinary course that can serve a broad range of students, both as a general introduction to the 20th century's "other superpower," the Soviet Union, and as a primer in the methods and materials of cultural analysis.

Note 2: The accompanying syllabus is a draft of a more functional and user-friendly version that will be web-based and function on Blackboard.

Note 3: I have consulted with my colleagues in History, Hugh West and David Brandenberger, about this proposal. My hope is that it will be approved in time for spring term registration (late October) for students looking for a FSHT course.
General:
The aim of this introductory course is to develop interpretive skills that allow us to better understand Russian culture, and in so doing to better understand our own culture. Carl Jung defined the West's relationship to Russia as 'staring into the mirror and seeing our alter ego.’ Whether or not we agree with this assessment, it is certainly true that in the twentieth century, the Soviet Union dominated Western imagination (and Western political agendas) as one of the world's two great superpowers. The radical experiment that came to be known as Soviet socialism lasted for 70 years. It aroused and confirmed our worst fears about the nature of totalitarianism. It aroused and betrayed dreams of social progress without the downsides of capitalism. The Soviet Union may be gone, but its effects remain. This course applies methods of historical and cultural analysis to examine the ideas, institutions, and cultural practices that shaped people's lives in the Soviet Union.

This course is designed to fulfill the Field-of-Studies requirement in history. Our primary textbook provides a chronological and interpretive overview of Russia, the USSR, and its successor states, written by an eminent historian of the Soviet period. However, the focus of our discussions and written work will be the critical analysis of primary sources – mostly in the form of artwork, films, literary works, music, KGB documents, and artifacts of everyday life. By examining the dynamic between historical events and their representation in both "high" and "common" culture, we will develop interpretive skills that are valuable in the cross-cultural analysis of any historical period.

Required texts:
purchase in bookstore:


Mikhail Bulgakov. *Heart of a Dog.* (Grove Press, 1968)

available on reserve, over the internet, in the form of course handouts:

Alexander Pushkin. *The Bronze Horseman*
Andrei Bely. *Petersburg* (excerpts)
Evgeny Zamiatin. *On Literature, Entropy, and Revolution*
Constructing Russian Culture. ed. Kelly and Shepherd. "Programs for Identity: 'New Man' and 'New Woman'"
Victor Pelevin. *Oman Ra*
Victor Erofeev, "Dirty Words" in *The New Yorker* (September 15, 2003)

**Films**

Battleship Potemkin
East Side Story (a documentary on Soviet era musicals, including extensive clips from Volga, Volga, etc.)

**Recordings**

Bardy: Okudzhava, Vysotsky, Aleshkovsky (prison camp tape) and others.

**Course assignments and examinations**

You will write two papers of about 1200 words each on topics to be assigned in class.
You will have an in-class midterm exam and a comprehensive final exam. Both will include short-answer explications of passages from original texts, as well as longer interpretive essays.
Part I. Revolution and the Creation of a Soviet State

WEEK ONE: Introduction (St. Petersburg)
- The Bronze Horseman (Pushkin), excerpt from Petersburg (Andrei Bely)
M. Introduction to course, historical and cultural analysis
W. Peter I and the "window on the West"

discussion board: interpreting "The Bronze Horseman"
written assignment: annotated bibliography of sources pertaining to St. Petersburg

WEEK TWO-THREE: Modernism and Revolution
- Suny, chapters 1-2, Zamiatin, "On literature, entropy, and revolution", Blok, "The Twelve"
- film: Battleship Potemkin

M. Modernism in Russian culture: Les Ballets Russes
W. Modernism, and Revolution
M. Slides: The Itinerants to Malevich
W. Modernism and Revolution

interpretive essay #1: Revolution and Utopian ideals: topic on Zamiatin, Blok, Eisenstein

WEEK FOUR-FIVE: The New Soviet Man and Woman
- Suny, chapters 3-4, Heart of a Dog, "My First Goose" (Babel), "Programs for Identity: 'New Man' and 'New Woman"
- Archival materials: From the KGB file of prisoner V.P. Efroimson

M. Eugenics or social engineering? Constructing the New Soviet Man
W. The KGB files
M. Constructing the New Soviet Man
W. Constructing the New Soviet Woman

MIDTERM EXAM

Part II. Stalinism

WEEK SIX-SEVEN: Stalinism
- Suny, chapters 9-11, Magnetic Mountain, chapters, Sofia Petrovna, "Volga, Volga" and other films
- letters from the gulag (archival materials)

M. The Gulag system
W. The new middle class
M. Socialist Realism
W. Stalinism, cont.
WEEK EIGHT: The Great Patriotic War
• 900 Days (excerpts), Requiem (Akhmatova)
M. Wartime changes
W. discussion, cont.

interpretive essay #2: topic on the non-Russian nationalities (plus map assignment)

Part III. Reform, Collapse, and the new, post-Soviet Russia

WEEK NINE-TEN: Reform and Stagnation
• Suny, chapters 17-19. Bardy, Thaw literature and samizdat
M. Krushchev's reforms
W. The Beatles in Russia: music and the "thaw"
M. Prague Spring and retrenchment
W. Living under Brezhnev

WEEK ELEVEN-TWELVE: Collapse of the Soviet Union and the New Russia
• Suny, chapters 20-21, Oman RA, article on mat (Erofeyev), current sources
M. Glasnost and perestroika
W. The disintegration of an empire
M. Building a new Russian identity
W. Language in the New Russia

FINAL EXAM