

**Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies
School of International Studies, JNU**

Course :	Ph.D.
Course Title:	Russian Society and Culture
Course Type:	Optional
Course Teacher:	Prof. Preeti D. Das
Credits:	Four
Course code:	SE:627
Semester:	Winter Semester
Contact Hours:	Two per week

Course Objectives

The purpose of the course is to introduce Ph. D. students of the centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies, SIS with the basic understanding of the concept of culture in general and development of Russian culture in particular. The course traces the evolution of Russian culture since tenth century till contemporary times. Focus will be on the major events of Russian history that serve as the basis for the study of fundamental and radical transformation occurring in the sphere of culture in Russia-

1. Baptism of Rus,
2. The Petrovian Rupture,
3. Soviet proletarian internationalism
4. Modern Russia

The course provides essential information on the main aspects of understanding of culture and cultural movements shaping the Russian identity. This course shall mainly limit its focus on literature and literary criticism and will explore the works of specific authors and literary critics.

Learning Outcomes

- The main objective of the course is to introduce students with specific features of development of Russian Society and Culture.
- To understand the nature & dynamics of culture
- To develop an understanding of Russian traditions, customs, and lifestyle.
- To develop an understanding of culture of modern Russian society, its contribution, and critically evaluate it in the context of world culture.

Evaluation Methods

Class performance, Assignments, Seminars, Mid-session examination (50%) End Semester Exam (50%)

Course Content

Theme 1 - The Idea of Culture

It will be a short introductory investigation into the roots, various meanings and evolution of the idea of culture through the modern age. As an idea culture began to gain prominence in the post Renaissance period. The shift in culture in its pre enlightenment to post-modern understanding includes various conceptions of culture as the artistic and the folk, the high and the mass, the aesthetic and the commodity, the universal and the particular.

- Chapter 1, 'Forms and Problems of Culture, Integration and Method of their Study', Sorokin P, *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, published by George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1937
- Eliot T.S, *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*, Published by Faber, UK, 1973
- Fedotov, *The Russian Religious Mind*, Chapter 1 (Pre-Christian Paganism) published in the _Supplement to the Modern Encyclopaedia of Russian, Soviet, and Eurasian History_ (ed. Bruce Adams), Gulf Breeze: Academic International Press, vol. 10, 2011
- Said Edward, *Culture and Imperialism*, Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1994

Theme 2 - Culture and Identity

Culture increasingly begins to assume its modern meaning as a distinct way of life with the German Idealists. Culture now confronts origins, nationality, ethnicity, gender, region. In the middle ages religion was culture. Culture (as in cult) was shaped defined and controlled by religion. It existed within religion.

- i. Culture and Religion
 - ii. Culture and identity
 - iii. Culture, Civilisation and Violence - Marx, Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud
- Rzhnevsky Nicholas (Ed.), *Modern Russian Culture*, Published by Cambridge University Press, United Kingdom, 2002.
 - Williams Raymond, *Culture and Society 1780-1950*, Columbia University Press, 1963
 - Williams Raymond, *The Idea of Culture*, in John McIlroy and Sallie Westwoods (ed), *Border Country: Raymond Williams in Adult Education*, published by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (England and Wales), Leicester, 1993
 - Franklin Simon & Aiddis Emma (Eds.), *National Identity in Russian Culture: an Introduction*, Published by Cambridge University Press, New York, 2004

Theme 3 - Russian Society and Culture in Medieval Russia

This part deals with the roots and origins of Russian culture beginning from Kievan Rus. The section touches upon Paganism, baptism of Rus under the influence of Byzantine of Russian Orthodox Church, Old Believers till the end of the Muscovite period continues to shape the culture and identity of Russians/ Orthodox Christians in most fundamental ways. The Church was the main centre of Russian culture.

- Chapters 1 & 2, 'Physical Characteristics and Climate' & 'What Russia look like' from Baring Maurice, *The Russian People*, Published by Methuen & Co. Ltd., London, 1911
- Chapter 1, 2 & 12 'Pre-Christian Paganism', 'Religious Byzantinism' 'Paganism and Christianity' Fedotov, *The Russian Religious Mind*, Chapter 1 (Pre-Christian Paganism) published in the _Supplement to the Modern Encyclopaedia of Russian, Soviet, and Eurasian History_ (ed. Bruce Adams), Gulf Breeze: Academic International Press, vol. 10, 2011
- Chapter 2 'Currents of Ancient Russian Life', Wiener Leo, *An Interpretation of the Russian People*, Published by McBRIDE, Nast & Co., New York, 1915
- Zenkovsky S. A., *Medieval Russia's Epics, Chronicles and Tales*, 1-17, published by Plume, 1 May 1974.

Theme 4 - A. Rublyov & The Testimony of the Icons

The works of A. Rublyov will be dwelt in detail as he is one of the prime religious representative of the period his ideas played crucial role in framing the Russian cultural identity that finds its ideal expression in the Orthodox iconography of this period. Focus will be on the works of Ilya Repin and other forms of art & culture expressing Peasants', common Russian people's mind, including popular music & folklore. Primarily development of writings of Old-Believers and Orthodox traditions.

- Taktashova L.E., *Russian Icons, Image, Plots and Iconography*, Textbook published by Ministry of Education & Science of Russian Federation, Vladimir, 2014
- Chapter 14, 'Conclusion – The Problem of Chronological Development'. Fedotov, *The Russian Religious Mind*, Chapter 1 (Pre-Christian Paganism) published in the _Supplement to the Modern Encyclopaedia of Russian, Soviet, and Eurasian History_ (ed. Bruce Adams), Gulf Breeze: Academic International Press, vol. 10, 2011
- Chapter 4, 5 & 6, 'Art for Life's sake in Russia', 'Russian Music', & ' The Essence of Russian Religion', Wiener Leo, *An Interpretation of the Russian People*, Published by McBRIDE, Nast & Co., New York, 1915

Theme 5 - Culture in Post-Petrovina Period - 18 - 19th Century Russian Society

The focus of the themes will be on the radical changes initiated by Peter I of 18th century Russia which was a turning point. This was an event that violently ruptured the consciousness of Russian selfhood to its very foundation and opened up a chasm which still is not completely bridged. This section will be based on the works of Pushkin, Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, Dostoevsky and Tyutchev. Some references would also be made to Herten and Bakunin. These discussions will provide a description of the engagements of diametrically opposite cultural trends in Russia of this period.

- Kelly A. & Hardy H., *Isaiah Berlin, Russian Thinkers*, Penguin Books, 1994
- Chapters 6, 7, & Part 2, 'Ideological Structures', 'Popular Culture', & 'Literature & Art' in Rzhnevsky Nicholas (Ed.), *Modern Russian Culture*, Published by Cambridge University Press, United Kingdom, 2002.
- Franklin Simon & Aiddis Emma (Eds.), *National Identity in Russian Culture: an Introduction*, Published by Cambridge University Press, New York, 2004

Theme 6 - 20th Century and Contemporary period

The proletarian revolution in Russia is the third event of its existential significance. With its un-compromising ideological emphasis on internationalism it tried to bridge the chasm of the Petrovian period. The contemporary period deals with the exploration of new ideas and avenues that emerged in the Post-Soviet Russian society. The section also discusses the culture of dissent and its impact on Russian fiction and philosophy.

- *Chapter 4, 'Russian ethnic nationalism and religion today' by Mitrofanova Anastasia*, in the edited book *The New Russian Nationalism: Imperialism, Ethnicity & Authoritarianism 2000-2015*, Pal Kolsto & Helge Blakkisrud (Eds.), 2016
- Hardy H. (Ed.), *Isaiah Berlin, The Soviet Mind, Russian Culture Under Communism*, Published by Brookings Institute Press, Washington DC, 2004.
- Rzhnevsky Nicholas (Ed.), *Modern Russian Culture*, Published by Cambridge University Press, United Kingdom, 2002.
- Glazov Yuri, *The Russian Mind Since Stalin's Death*, D. Reidel Publishing company, Dordrecht, Boston, Lancaster, 1985
- Kelly A. & Hardy H., *Isaiah Berlin, Russian Thinkers*, Penguin Books, 1994

Essential Literature readings

- Pushkin A. – Bronze Horseman
- Karamzin N. - "Poor Liza"
- Gogol N. – Dead Souls
- Belinskii V. G. – (1811 -1848) – "Letters to Nikolai Gogol" (1847) Criticism
- Herzen Alexander- "Who is to be blamed?"
- Bulgakov M. – "Heart of a Dog" (Film – directed by V. Bortko)
- Bakunin M. - "God and the State", "On Anarchism", "Marxism, Freedom and the State"
- Chernyshevsky N. - "What is to be done?"
- Solzhenitsyn A. – "Cancer Ward". "Gulag Archipelago"
- Pasternak B. - "Doctor Zhivago"
- Sholokhov M. – "Fate of a Man"
- Zamyatin Y. - "We"

Additional Reading

- Baring M., *What I Saw in Russia*, Published by Thomas Nelson & Sons, London. 1913
- Khrushchev Sergei, *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev: Volume 1: Commissar, 1918–1945*, Penn State University Press, 2013
- Kozlov V., Fitzpatrick S., & Mironenko S. (Authors), *Sedition: Everyday's Resistance in the Soviet under Khrushchev and Brezhnev*, Yale University Press, 2011
- Hogarth C. J, Translation of “The Gambler” by Fyodor Dostoyevsky
- Uspenskii, B. Semiotics of Russian and Serbian Orthodox icons, <http://www.nesusvet.narod.ru/ico/books/mlvjvch/>
- Hannerz, Ulf. *Cosmopolitans and Locals in World Culture*, Global Culture: Nationalism, Globalization and Modernity Featherstone, M, (Ed) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994. 248