Course Title: A Journey Through Russian Cultural History
Course Code: HIS 30
Instructor: Kristen Edwards, Ph.D.

Course Summary:
This course provides an introductory overview of 19\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th} century Russian popular culture, structured around Orlando Figes’ masterful Natasha’s Dance: A Cultural History of Russia (2002). A central focus of this course will be the development of a distinctive national culture that is celebrated throughout the world.

We will study the finest examples of Russian musical cultural expression, including Modest Mussorgsky’s opera Boris Godunov (1873); Igor Stravinsky’s ballet The Firebird (performed by the Ballets Russes in 1910); and several selections from the repertory of Dmitri Shostakovich. Each week, we will also read selections from some of Russia’s most accomplished authors.

We will enjoy a sampling of Russian art from Ilia Repin to Kazimir Malevich to Vladimir Tatlin, and we will also analyze traditional art such as the icon, the matrioshka, and lacquer boxes. I will select some virtual Russian dance and musical performances for us to enjoy together and I will arrange for a delicious take-out dinner at Bevri in Palo Alto or another Russian restaurant in the area.

With Russia continually in the news these days, we will allot some class time each week for a discussion of current political, military, ethnic and cultural affairs.

Note About Live Attendance and Recording:
Each class will be recorded and will be available for students for one week after the scheduled class. It is important to participate live to benefit fully from this course because time is scheduled during every class for questions about the lectures and discussions about our readings. Live attendance is required for credit/grade, but I am flexible and if students have a conflict one week, they may watch the recording instead.

Grade Options and Requirements:
- No Grade Requested (NGR)
  - This is the default option. No work will be required; no credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided.
- Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)
  - Students must attend at least 6 class sessions.
- Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)
  - Students must attend at least 6 class sessions and write a 6-8-page research paper on a topic of Russian history that has been approved by the instructor.

*Please Note: If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose either the Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.*
Course Texts:

Required:
We will be reading the entire Figes book, but just selections of the two Russian readers. You could purchase the Figes book, and check out the others from your local library, or you could purchase all three.


Recommended:


Tentative Weekly Outline:

Week 1
St. Petersburg: Peter the Great’s “Window to the West”
Cultural spotlight: Pushkin
Read:
Figes, Introduction and Ch. 1 European Russia
Pushkin, Bronze Horseman (1833) in the Brown reader

Film recommendation: Russian Ark (Sokurov, 2002), Russia: Land of the Tsars (2003)

Week 2
Napoleonic Wars and Russian national identity
Cultural spotlight: Tolstoy and the Russian novel
Read:
Figes, Ch. 2 Children of 1812!
Tolstoy, War and Peace (1869) Part I, first 5-10 chapters, just to get a feel for Tolstoy’s Russia during the Napoleonic Wars.

Film recommendations: War and Peace (S. Bondarchuk, 1967) and The Captivating Star of Happiness (Motyl, 1975)

Music:
Glinka’s opera, A Life for the Tsar (1838) was inspired by the sviatochnaya, a folk song. Here is his Glory chorus: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EBrJpHHYAzw

Tchaikovsky’s Overture of 1812: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N0cpKzDoOdA

Week 3

Please contact the Stanford Continuing Studies office with any questions
365 Lasuen St., Stanford, CA 94305
continuingstudies@stanford.edu
650-725-2650
Moscow: the heart of Russia and “the place to be in 1900”
Cultural spotlight: Modest Mussorgsky’s opera Boris Godunov (1872)
Read:
Figes, Ch. 3 Moscow! Moscow!

Music by Mussorgsky:
Pictures at an Exhibition
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2IB_TbGVOLE
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=49gqFgMsGAs
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uXcD8qOw5xc

Boris Godunov (2011)
http://www.amazon.com/Boris-Godunov-Mussorgsky/dp/B0054QZ8PM/ref=sr_1_5?ie=UTF8&qid=1398441253&sr=8-5&keywords=boris+godunov+dvd

Week 4
Peasant culture and rituals of the collective
Cultural spotlight: Ballets Russes and Igor Stravinsky’s The Firebird (1910)
Read:
Figes, Ch. 4 The Peasant Marriage

Film recommendations: Chekhov’s Three Sisters (Olivier, 1970) and The Cherry Orchard (Cacoyannis, 1999)

Three Sisters available on Amazon with BroadwayHD:
https://www.amazon.com/Three-Sisters-Jeanne-Watts/dp/B075MS8P5X/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=three+sisters+olivier&qid=1626977689&s=instant-video&sr=1-1

Cherry Orchard is harder to find, but is available at Kino Lorber for educators:
https://www.kinolorberedu.com/film/thecerryorchard

Ballet:
Stravinsky/Diaghilev/Nijinsky: The Firebird and Rite of Spring (2009)
http://www.amazon.com/Stravinsky-Ballets-Russes-Firebird-Printemps/dp/B0023T9ZRK/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1398441075&s=8-1&keywords=stravinsky+et+les+ballet+russes

Week 5
Christianity and spirituality in 19th century Russia
Cultural spotlight: Orthodox icons and churches
Read:
Figes, Ch. 5 In Search of the Russian Soul
Tolstoy, The Death of Ivan Ilych (1886) in the Gibian reader
Gorky, Recollections of Leo Tolstoy (1920) in the Brown reader

Film recommendation: The Last Station (Hoffman, 2010)
Tolstoyan movement:
http://www.historytoday.com/charlotte-alston/tolstoys-guiding-light

Photos of Tolstoy and his family: used to be at University of Toronto

Week 6
Nomadic horsemen, Cossacks, and Asiatic legacies
Cultural spotlight: Asiatic steppe in Russian art
Read:
Figes, Ch. 6 Descendants of Genghiz Khan
Lermontov, My Native Land and Hero of Our Time in the Gibian reader

Film recommendation: Mongol (Bodrov, 2007)

Music:
Borodin, In the Steppes of Central Asia, 1880
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dq4b0mxKVQQ

Week 7
Socialist art in socialist Russia
Cultural spotlight: Dmitri Shostakovich, Seventh Symphony
Read:
Figes, Ch. 7 Russia Through Soviet Lens

Audio recommendation: Shostakovich, Seventh Symphony at TBA

Seventeen Moments in Soviet History - with links to Soviet era films, art, music at
http://soviethistory.macalester.edu/

Week 8
Russian culture outside of Russia
Cultural spotlight: Georgian cuisine at Bevri in Palo Alto!
Read:
Figes, Ch. 8 Russia Abroad

Film recommendation: Ballets Russe (Geller, 2005)

Gaîté Parisienne (1954)
(Choreography by Leonid Massine, music by Jacques Offenbach, Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pH_H--J888M

Nativity of the Holy Virgin Church, Menlo Park http://www.tserkov.org/

*Please Note: Website URLs often change, so I will continually update the links in this syllabus. Films also move around the Internet from provider to provider. I primarily use Netflix, Amazon, Hulu, Criterion Collection, and the Santa Clara County Libraries for the films I show in class.*