PRELIMINARY SYLLABUS

St. Petersburg: A Cultural Biography
Stanford Continuing Studies, Spring Quarter 2015
Thursdays, 7:00 pm - 8:50 pm

Continuing Studies Program, HIS 199
2 units

Instructor: Jack Kollmann, Ph.D.
email: kolljack@stanford.edu
Office Hours: to be arranged, and I can meet you by appointment on campus

Course Subject
In this lecture course we will explore the rich cultural history of St. Petersburg, Russia, through the works of its architects, planners, artists, writers, and composers. Lectures will be slide-illustrated. No prior knowledge of Russian history, architecture, urban design, or art is assumed, although any of those backgrounds will be useful, and your contributions will be welcome.

Few cities in the world lend themselves so readily to a study of their cultural "biography" as St. Petersburg. Founded just over 300 years ago (1703) by Peter I the Great, St. Petersburg was "premeditated" (umyshlennyi, Dostoevsky’s term) as the planned, rational, West-European-styled capital city of the Russian Empire, a deliberate counterpoise to Moscow and its tradition-bound Muscovite culture.

From its inception until the present, St. Petersburg has raised more questions than answers in the Russian mind: Is it Russian or West European? And what of Russia itself: Is it European, or something else?

Through the architecture, city planning, art, and literature of St. Petersburg, we will follow the cultural evolution and mythology of the city, from Peter to Putin.

Lectures will be slide-illustrated, drawing on my collection of some 150,000 photographs I have made in Russia over the last 56 years. We will also watch occasional videos of relevant Russian ballet, opera, and documentaries.

Each lecture will be accompanied by an outline handout and suggestions for further reading.

Readings
Two books have been ordered for this course to be stocked at the Bookstore:
George Heard Hamilton. *The Art and Architecture of Russia*, 3rd (integrated) ed., paperback. Yale University Press, Pelican History of Art, 1992. In trying to put something into your hands that covers Petersburg art and architecture, Hamilton's book is useful and inexpensive. Admittedly, his text is a bit dry and detailed, and the b&w illustrations are disappointing; I'll suggest additional readings and albums on art and architecture in this Syllabus and in weekly lecture handouts.


All students are encouraged to read the weekly "Core Readings" listed below in the Course Schedule, and consult the "Recommended Readings" according to your interests and time available.

Readings marked "Canvas" will be posted online in Continuing Studies' Canvas system for this course.

Feel free to ask the instructor for additional reading suggestions on any topic that interests you.

**Color Photographs and Reproductions**

Some of our readings, beginning with Hamilton, are poorly illustrated in black and white, but these days one can find color reproductions of most works of art and architecture online. In addition, I'll post all my weekly Power Point presentations online in Coursework.

**Bonus Visit to Hoover Institution to View Its Special Collection of Russian Art and Art Books**

(ordinarily kept in locked storage)

To be arranged towards the end of our course, probably on a Friday afternoon (Hoover is closed evenings and on weekends).

**REQUIREMENTS**

**Continuing Studies His. 199** (2 units)

Continuing Studies students may take this course for a Letter Grade, on a Credit/No Credit basis, or for No Grade Requested (NGR). Satisfactory credit for 2 units will be earned by attendance (80%); class participation is encouraged but not mandatory. If you want to earn a letter grade, let the instructor know, and we'll arrange for you to submit a 10-page paper on a topic that interests you.

Readings: you'll get the most out of the course if you do the "Core" readings; the "recommended" readings are suggestions for further reading as may interest you.
COURSE SCHEDULE

Weeks I & II, April 2 & 9, 2015, Lecture: "Peter the Great and the Founding of 'Sankt-Piterburkh"

Core Readings:
  Lincoln, W. Bruce, Sunlight at Midnight: St. Petersburg and the Rise of Modern Russia, paperback, Basic Books, 2002; pp. 1-31 & 53-60 (Bookstore)

Recommended Readings:
  Cracraft, James, The Revolution of Peter the Great, paperback, Harvard University Press, 2006, 240 pp.; for more detailed studies, see Cracraft's The Petrine Revolution in Architecture; The Petrine Revolution in Imagery; and The Petrine Revolution in Russian Culture

Week III, April 16, 2015, Lecture: "From Elizabeth's Rococo to Catherine the Great's Classicism: Architecture and Urban Planning"

Core Readings:
  Lincoln, Sunlight at Midnight, pp. 31-52 (Bookstore)

Recommended Readings:

Egorov, *Architectural Planning of St. Petersburg*, Chapters 3 & 4, pp. 41-81

Kaganov, Grigory, *Images of Space*, Chapters 2 & 3, pp. 19-56


**Week IV, April 23, 2015, Lecture: "The Triumph of Minerva (Catherine the Great)"

**Core Readings:**

  
- Lincoln, *Sunlight at Midnight*, pp. 60-102 (Bookstore)
  

**Recommended Readings:**

  
  
  
- de Madariaga, Isabel, *Catherine the Great: A Short History*, Yale University Press, paperback, 2002 (or see her longer *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*, 1981)
  
  

Wortman, Richard S., *Scenarios of Power*, vol. 1, Chapter 4, "Minerva Triumphant," pp. 110-146

**Week V, April 30, 2015, Lecture: "The Age of Alexander I, Nicholas I, Pushkin, and Gogol"**

**Core Readings:**
- Lincoln, *Sunlight at Midnight*, Chapters 4 & 5, pp. 105-146

**Recommended Readings:**
- Egorov, *Architectural Planning of St. Petersburg,* Part II, Chapters 5-9, pp. 85-211
- Tchaikovsky (Chaikovskii), Peter Ilich, "Eugene Onegin [Evgenii Onegin]," opera. Good video recordings true to the spirit of the original and in good quality video are hard to find. One performance I like is by the Kirov Opera (Leningrad), 1984, reissued in 2005. I'm still looking for the best recording and will keep you posted.
- Gray, Rosalind, *Russian Genre Painting in the Nineteenth Century*, Chapter 4, pp. 99-124, and part of Chapter 5, pp. 133-151 (and search color reproductions online)
- Kaganov, *Images of Space*, Chapters IV-VI, pp. 57-121

**Week VI, May 7, 2015, Lecture: "The Search for 'Russianness' in Art and Architecture: 2nd Half of the 19th Century"**
Core Readings:


Lincoln, *Sunlight at Midnight*, Chapters 6 & 7, pp. 149-195 (Bookstore)

Recommended Readings:


Brumfield, *History of Russian Architecture*, pp. 393-411


Kaganov, *Images of Space*, pp. 122-139


Valkenier, Elizabeth, *Russian Realist Art: The State and Society; The Peredvizhniki and Their Tradition*, Ardis, 1977; 251 pp. (and search color reproductions online)

Week VII, May 14, 2015, Lecture: "The 'World of Art' (Mir Iskusstva): Fin de Siecle, and Early 20th Century Avant-Garde"

Core Readings:


Dobuzhinskii, Mstislav, selected illustrations in *Mstislav Dobuzhinskii: Painting, Graphic Art, Stage Design*, Moscow, 1982 (Canvas)


Recommended Readings:

Bird, *History of Russian Painting*, Chapters 7-8, pp. 165-194 (and search color reproductions online)
Week VIII, May 21, 2015, Lecture: "Revolutionary Art Meets Revolutionary Politics"

Core Readings:

- Annnenkov, Yuri, selected illustrations for Aleksandr Blok's poem, "The Twelve," in Aleksandr Blok, Dvenadtsat' (The Twelve), Peterburg, 1918 (Canvas)
- Blok, Aleksandr, two poems, "The Twelve" and "The Scythians," in Yevtushenko and Todd, eds., Twentieth Century Russian Poetry, pp. 44-45 & 71-83 (Canvas)
- Lincoln, Sunlight at Midnight, Chapter 9, "Comrades," pp. 228-265

Recommended Readings:

- Bird, History of Russian Painting, Chapters 9-13, pp. 195-256 (and search color reproductions online)
- Brumfield, History of Russian Architecture, pp. 467-473
- Gray, Camilla, Russian Experiment in Art, Chapters 6-8, pp. 185-276 (and search color reproductions online)
- Milner, John, Vladimir Tatlin and the Russian Avant-Garde, Chapter 8, "The Monument to the Third International," pp. 150-180
- Zhadova, Larissa A., Malevich: Suprematism and Revolution in Russian Art, 1910-1930, Chapter 2, pp. 41-68

Week IX, May 28, 2015, Lecture: "St. Petersburg / Petrograd / Leningrad / St. Petersburg: 'Piter' in the 20th Century"

Core Readings:

Lincoln, *Sunlight at Midnight*, Part Four, "Hero City" (1941-1991), Chapters 10-12, pp. 268-365 (Bookstore)

**Recommended Readings:**
- Kaganov, *Images of Space*, pp. 156-189
- Selected poems of Anna Akhmatova and Osip Mandelstam (Canvas)
- Mandelstam, Nadezhda, excerpts from her memoir, *Hope Against Hope*, transl. Max Hayward, Harper Collins, 1971 (also issued in paperback later), comments on literary organizations controlled by the Party; pp. 415-416 and 419-420 (Canvas)
- Reactions in Petersburg literature to Socialist Realism:

**Week X, June 4, 2015: "Reflections on the Cultural Biography of St. Petersburg"**

Note: I realize this class meeting is one day after the formal last day of classes, but I invite you to attend this meeting for your enjoyment and pleasure. We'll have a "Russian Pot Luck" party, and we'll watch a documentary video, "Fear and the Muse," about the extraordinary life of Anna Akhmatova, the poetess of St. Petersburg/Petrograd/Leningrad in the 20th century.

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