

LITERATURE, POLITICS, AND TRADITION AFTER STALIN

Spring 2008
TR 4:10-6PM
227 Milbank

Prof. Rebecca Stanton
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Office hours: Thurs. 3-5 and by appt.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

50% Paper (on a topic of the student's choosing, due anytime before the last day of class)
25% Final Exam (take-home, due May 9)
25% Class Participation

Readings: The reading load for this course is quite heavy, about 250pp./week. Please plan accordingly! Students who do the reading in English are requested to use the editions below and to bring books with them to class (unless this represents a financial hardship. Note also that many of the books are available quite cheaply from second-hand dealers on Amazon.com and similar sites). Students who know Russian should try to do as much of the reading as possible in the original; Russian editions are generally available in Butler library and/or online at <http://www.lib.ru/PROZA/>.

The following books are available for purchase at Book Culture (formerly Labyrinth Books), on 112th St. between Broadway and Amsterdam:

- Boris Pasternak, *Doctor Zhivago* (Pantheon Books, 1997)
- Chingiz Aitmatov, "Jamilia" (Telegraph, 2008)
- Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)
- Valentin Rasputin, *Farewell to Matyora* (Northwestern UP, 1995)
- Yuri Trifonov, *Another Life and The House on the Embankment* (Northwestern UP, 1999)
- Venedikt Erofeev, *Moscow to the End of the Line* (Northwestern UP, 1994)
- Sasha Sokolov, *A School For Fools* (Four Walls Eight Windows, 1988)
- Vladimir Voinovich, *The Fur Hat* (1989; Harvest Books, 1991)

Other readings (marked with an asterisk in the schedule) will be supplied in electronic format, either in a course reader to be distributed the second week of class, or over Courseworks.

SCHEDULE

January 22 **Revisions and Reversions: Approaches to teaching post-Stalin literature**

January 29 **Thaws and Freezes, I (1953-1956)**

(a) The First Thaw:

* Pomerantsev, "On Sincerity In Literature" (Novyi Mir, 1953, t.12)

[Optional: Erenburg, *The Thaw* (available on Courseworks)]

(b) The Second Thaw:

* Khrushchev, "On the Personality Cult and its Consequences" aka "Secret Speech"

* Works from second "Literaturnaya Moskva" volume (1956):

- Yashin, "Levers"

- Nagibin, "A Light in the Window"

- Zhdanov, "Trip Home"

February 5 **Pasternak**

Boris Pasternak, *Doctor Zhivago* (1957), Chapters 1-7.

- February 12 Pasternak, cont.**
Doctor Zhivago, Chapter 8 to end (pay particular attention to “The Poems of Yuri Zhivago,” which constitute the final chapter of the novel)
- February 19 Thaws and Freezes, II (1959-1962)**
 The Third Thaw: New Voices.
 Chingiz Aitmatov, "Jamilia" (1959)
 *Vassily Aksyonov, “A Starry Ticket” (*Zvezdnyi bilet*, 1961)
- February 26 The 1960s, I: Solzhenitsyn**
One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich (1962)
 **Matryona’s House* (1963)
- March 4 The 1960s, II: The Sinyavsky/Daniel Trial (1966)**
 *Andrei Sinyavsky ("Abram Tertz"), "On Socialist Realism" and "Pkhentz"
 *Yuly Daniel ("Nikolai Arzhak"), "This is Moscow Calling"
 *Additional readings TBA
- March 11 The 1970s, I: Village Prose**
 Valentin Rasputin, *Farewell to Matyora* (1976)
- March 25 The 1970s, II: Urban Prose**
 Yuri Trifonov, *The House on the Embankment* (1976)
 *Andrei Bitov, “Pushkin’s Photograph”(1985)
- April 1 The 1970s, III: "Other" Voices**
 *I. Grekova, works TBA
 *Fazil Iskander, "Belshazzar's Feasts" (from *Sandro iz Chegema*, 1973)
- April 8 The 1970s, IV: Displacement (Delirium—Tamizdat)**
 Venedikt Erofeev, *Moscow to the End of the Line* (1969, published Paris 1977)
 (*)Sasha Sokolov, *A School For Fools* (1975)
- April 15 The Metropol affair, 1979** (Aksyonov, Bitov, Erofeev, Iskander, Popov)
 *Readings TBA
- April 22 The 1980s: Soviet Writers in Emigration**
 *Sergei Dovlatov, *A Foreign Woman* (1986)
 Vladimir Voinovich, *The Fur Hat* (1989)
- April 29 1980s-90s: Revolution in Reverse**
 *Victor Erofeyev, "Soviet Literature: In Memoriam"
 *Stories (TBA) by:
 - Tatyana Tolstaya
 - Lyudmila Petrushevskaya
 - Vladimir Sorokin
 - Vladimir Makanin
 - Victor Erofeyev
 - Victor Pelevin
- ➔ **Last day to turn in papers (approx. 4000 words/15 double-spaced pages)**
- ➔ **Distribution of final exam questions (due by email no later than Friday, May 9 at 5pm)**