

**Queens College CUNY**  
**Department European Languages and Literatures**  
**Russian 245 Russian Short Story**

Section 01: Class Meetings: M/W, 1:40 PM-2:55 PM  
3 hours, 3 credits  
Queens Hall 245G

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Office hours: MW, 12:00PM-1:00PM  
or by appointment

**The course satisfies the LIT requirement of the QC option for the PATHWAYS**

### **Course Description**

#### *Catalogue description:*

The Russian short story in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Lectures and readings in English.

This course will study the masterpieces of short prose by the famous Russian 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>- and 21<sup>st</sup>-century authors. The goal is to familiarize students with a broad range of short prosaic writings and with the *oeuvres* of their authors, as well as to reveal the general tendencies in the development of this genre and its influence on the literature of these time periods. The stories under discussion will be placed within the historical, socio-political and cultural contexts, which will allow the students to comprehend in full the events and characters described by the authors, to expand their knowledge of Russian culture and history, and to relate this knowledge to other world literatures and cultures.

### **Required Textbooks**

*The Portable 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Russian Reader*, Ed. By George Gibian. Penguin. ISBN 0 14 015.103 6  
*The Portable 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Russian Reader*, Ed. By Clarence Brown. Penguin. ISBN 0 14 24.3757 3.

### **Additional Recommended Readings**

Note: page numbers of the abstracts – TBA

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Ed. by Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1971,  
Bayley, John. *Pushkin: A Comparative Commentary*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1971  
\_\_\_\_\_. *Tolstoy and the Novel*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1966  
Dillington, James. *The Icon and the Axe*. New York: Knopf, 1966  
Christian, R.F. *Tolstoy: A Critical Introduction*. London: Cambridge University Press  
Fanger, Donald. *The Creation of Nikolai Gogol*. Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press, 1979  
Frank, Joseph. *Through the Russian Prism: Essays on Literature and Culture*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990  
Karlinsky, Simon. *Anton Chekhov's Life and Thought: Selected Letters and Commentary*. Transl. by Michael Henry Heim. Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975.  
Kharms, Daniil. *Today I Wrote Nothing: The Selected Writings of Daniil Kharms*. Ed. and trans.by Matvei Yankelevich. New York: Ardis Books. ISBN 978-1-59020-042-1.  
*Life Stories: Original Works by Russian Writers*. Russian Information Services, ISBN-10: 1880100584.

*Russian Short Stories from Pushkin to Buida*. Transl. By Robert Chandler. Penguin Classics, 2006. ISBN-10: 0140448462

Terras, Victor, ed. *Handbook of Russian Literature*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985.

\_\_\_\_\_. *A History of Russian Literature*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991.

Thompson, Ewa, ed. *The Search for Self-Definition in Russian Literature*. Houston: Rice University Press, 1991

Zenkovskii, Vasilii. *A History of Russian Philosophy*. 2 vols. New York: Columbia University Press, 1953.

## **Learning Outcomes**

### **Specific to this course:**

Our course will concentrate on the critical reading, textual analysis, critical writing, discussion, and debate. Upon a successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

LO 1. Analyze selected literary texts from the literary critical and cultural perspectives;

LO 2. Comprehend the events described by the authors from the historical and socio-political standpoints;

LO 3. Appreciate cultural, historical, class, and gender differences, described in these texts;

LO 4. Identify the characteristics of several literary genres (epics, fairy tale, novella, novel, short story, drama), literary movements (sentimentalism, 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century realism, decadence, Socialist realism, modernism, postmodernism) and literary periods (the Golden Age, the Silver Age);

LO 5. Formulate informed questions and hypotheses about literary texts;

LO 6. Use your knowledge to make your own conclusions about these stories, characters, and the events described in them;

LO 7. Expand your understanding of different world cultures, and to understand better Russian literature as a discipline, in particular, and Russian studies, in general.

### ***This course satisfies the following two Queens College General Education criteria:***

QC 1: Address how, in the discipline (or disciplines) of the course, data and evidence are construed and knowledge is acquired; that is, how questions are asked and answered.

QC 2: Position the discipline(s) in the liberal arts curriculum and the larger society.

### ***In Addition, this QC College Option LIT course satisfies the following four learning outcomes:***

LIT 1: Understand and be able to express the advantages of reading literature.

LIT 2: Engage in the practice of reading.

LIT 3: Appreciate different genres, including narratives, poetry, essays, or drama in their original language or in English translation.

LIT 4: Through discussion and writing, develop and improve upon skills used in understanding and appreciating literature.

## **Attendance Policy**

Regular attendance and active participation in informed discussions are deemed vital for this course.

Attendance will be taken each class period and together with participation will determine a significant portion of your grade. More than two absences may negatively affect your participation grade.

A reasonable excuse should be provided by email or in person prior to your absence unless it is an emergency. In either case, valid documentation will be required before an absence is considered excused.

## Grading Policy

Evaluation will be based on the following criteria:

- active participation in class discussions - 15%,
- paper #1 - 15 %,
- paper #2 - 20%,
- oral presentation – 5%,
- midterm - 20%,
- final exam - 25%.

**Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows (in accordance with QC Undergraduate Grade Equivalences):**

A+	97-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69
A	93-96	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	60-66
A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72	F	0-59

## College Resources

All students should be aware of the Writing Center in 229 Kiely Hall, which offers feedback and support to student writers. Students who need ongoing support for their writing should set up a “standing” weekly appointment for tutoring at the Writing Center. Students who want help on a specific assignment or for a particular problem can stop by the Writing Center or call 718-997-5676 to schedule a one-hour drop-in session. Students may also submit work online using the Center’s e-tutoring option. More information is available at the website: <http://writingatqueens.qc.cuny.edu/the-writing-center/>.

**Students with disabilities** that may require accommodation or additional support should register with the Office of Special Services in 111 Frese Hall:

<http://www.qc.cuny.edu/StudentLife/services/specialserv/Pages/default.aspx>

## Description of Assignments and Exams

### Readings

Read the assigned texts before coming to class. Keep a little ahead of the reading assignments in order to be prepared to take part and to fully benefit from what is said in class. Be sure to set aside sufficient time for the substantial reading required.

Doing well in the course means reading critically and engaging thoughtfully with the texts and our discussion of them. Reading critically involves (1) considering the text in its historical, biographical and cultural context, (2) asking yourself questions about content and being prepared to respond in class to questions about content, (3) examining your personal response to issues that arise in the text, (4) identifying the main ideas of the text and of class discussion and restating them in your own words, (5) evaluating the author's argument in the text, and (6) comparing and contrasting the author’s treatment of a given subject in different works. The requirements of LIT 1-4, QC 1, 2, LO 1-7 will be met.

### Discussions

Following the instructor’s lecture presentation in the beginning of a class, much of class time will be spent in class discussion of the reading assignments. Discussions are very important components of this course. Your participation in the discussion is important; therefore, your attendance is required. During the first class, there will be an introductory discussion, during which the students will introduce themselves. Literary discussions

throughout the semester will be based on the course readings. Both the in-class discussions and those continued on the discussion board (on the course site on the Blackboard, if assigned) are a place where students can demonstrate their understanding and their knowledge of the subject, their ability to analyze the literary works and to prove their arguments. Students are expected to participate in each a discussion in order to demonstrate their knowledge of the material and their active engagement in this course.

#### How to prepare for a discussion:

- Read the assigned materials, including stories, instructor's lecture and critical materials from the textbook or posted in the Blackboard - *Course Materials*;
- Answer instructor's questions provided in advance;
- On the Blackboard – discussion board (if assigned): read all posts made by other classmates;
- Comment on your classmates' posts;
- Demonstrate a good and excellent knowledge of the stories, lectures, and readings;
- Show the ability to analyze literary characters and to compare and contrast the ideas, expressed by different authors;
- Proofread your posts and comments - please do not "text," use the literary language instead. The requirements of LIT 1-4, QC 1, 2, LO 1-7 will be met.

#### Papers

Two papers of critical analysis and commentary on the texts will be assigned. These papers are not to be about the author or things external to the text. They should reflect your own careful reading and analytical reaction to the texts and related class discussion. The papers should be given brief informative titles, indicating the content. Use a 12-inch font and double-space. Include at the end of the paper a list of works cited (following proper bibliographic form) even if the only work you used was the primary text. (If you are reading the text in translation, always indicate the translator in addition to the author.) Follow the guidelines for papers (including bibliographic entries) elaborated in The MLA (Modern Language Association) Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. Keep a copy of papers submitted for your protection. Late papers will be accepted in the case of a documented health issue. Papers must be delivered in class or via e-mail on or by the due date (TBA). Further instructions regarding the papers will follow. The requirements of LO 1-7, LIT 3,4 will be met.

#### Oral Presentation

During the first two classes, an oral presentation on a specific topic/questions will be assigned to each student (or to a group of students) for a certain date. This presentation should be 10-15 minutes long (equal approximately to 3-4 typewritten pages) and should represent student's own analysis of the work under the discussion. It may also be done as a PowerPoint presentation. Absence during a scheduled presentation will result in the grade 0% for this assignment. The requirements of LIT 1-4, QC 1, 2, LO 1-7 will be met.

#### Exams

The midterm exam will consist of short answer questions and commentary on selected key passages from the texts. You will be required to write a one-paragraph answer to each of the *two* examination questions based on the *two* stories. These stories will be chosen by the instructor from all stories studied before the mid-term exam, and their titles will be announced on the day of this exam. The preparation questions will be both posted in advance in the *Examinations – Preparation for the Mid-Term* and provided on the day of this exam. will include essay questions and commentary on key passages and definitions of key terms. You will be required to write a one-paragraph answer to each of the four examination questions: two of the will be based on the two stories, and the remaining two will be definitions of the key terms. The stories will be chosen by the instructor from all

stories studied *after* the mid-term exam, and their titles will be announced on the day of this exam. The questions on the key terms will cover the content of the entire course (cumulative). The preparation questions will be both posted in advance in the *Examinations – Preparation for the Mid-Term* and provided on the day of this exam.

Exams can be made up only in the case of documented illness or circumstances. The requirements of LIT 1,3, LO 1-7 will be met.

### Policy on Plagiarism

Like any form of academic dishonesty, plagiarism can result in a failing grade in the course and further disciplinary action such as suspension or dismissal from the College. Plagiarism is cheating. Plagiarism means passing another's ideas off as one's own or using some source without properly crediting it. In writing papers or exams, indeed, in all classwork, you must document direct quotations, paraphrases, information and ideas.

### Feedback to Students

Feedback on your grades, participation, assignments and exams will be provided upon completion of each assignment and/or upon your request in person or via the email. Please visit me during my office hours, call and/or email me at [svetana.cheloukhina@qc.cuny.edu](mailto:svetana.cheloukhina@qc.cuny.edu) , if you have any questions about the course content or about your course standing.

## **Course Calendar**

Class Meeting	Day & Date	Topic	Readings/Assignments	Objectives/ Criteria Met
1	Mon., Jan 27, 20XX	Introductory lecture. Syllabus. Definition of the genre of the short story. General Requirements and Expectations. Students' oral presentations assigned.	For the next class: Read Familiarize yourselves with discussion questions posted on the Bb.	LIT 1, QC 1,2
2	Wed., Jan.29,20XX	Russian Short Stories: The Development of the Genre.  19 <sup>th</sup> -century:  Alexander Pushkin	Throughout semester: Reading assignment for the following class - see topic. Discussion: questions posted on the Bb. Students' oral presentations on assigned topics.  "The Shot," Gibian, pp. 22-34	LIT 1, 2,3,4 for all reading assignments and discussions. LO 1-7 for all students' presentations QC 1,2 Addressed in discussion throughout

				semester
3	Mon., Feb. 3, 20XX	Mikhail Lermontov	From the Author' Introduction to <i>A Hero of Our Time</i> ;  Preface to <i>Pechorin's Diary</i> ; "Princess Mary", Gibian, 132-201.	
5	Mon., Feb. 10:	Ivan Goncharov	"Oblomov's Dream," Gibian, 295-335	
6	Wed., Feb. 12:	College is closed. No classes		
7	Mon., Feb. 17:	College is closed. Presidents' Day.		
8	Wed., Feb. 19:	Ivan Turgenev	Paper 1 is due "First Love," Gibian, 336-389;	Paper LO 1-7, LIT 1-4
9	Mon., Feb. 24:	Ivan Turgenev, cont.	"On the Russian Language" Gibian, 391	
10	Wed., Feb. 26:	Fedor Dostoevsky	"The White Nights" (E)	\
11	Mon., March 2:	Fedor Dostoevsky, cont.	"On the Mission of Russia," Gibian, 433;  "On the Russian Distinctiveness and Universality," Gibian, 433-439	
12	Wed., March 4:	Leo Tolstoy	"The Death of Ivan Ilych" Gibian, 440-488;	
13	Mon., March 9:	Leo Tolstoy, cont.	"Master and Man", Gibian 489-528;  "Alyosha the Pot," Brown, 1-9.	
14	Wed., March 11:	Anton Chekhov	"The Chameleon," (E)  "Fat and Thin" (E)	
15	Mon., March 16:	20 <sup>th</sup> -century:  Anton Chekhov, cont.	Paper 2 is due "The Bishop," Brown.	Paper LO 1-4, LIT 1-4
16	Wed., March 18:	Aleksand Kuprin	"A Clump of Lilacs" (E)  "Olesya" (E)	

17	Mon., March 23:	Ivan Bunin	"Light Breathing," Brown, 58-65	
18	Wed., March 25:	Nadezhda Teffi	"Time," Brown, 66-73	
19	Mon., March 30:	Boris Pasternak	Three abstracts from the novel <i>Doctor Zhivago</i> by Pasternak Brown, 153-168.  Preparation for midterm. No presentations scheduled	
20	Wed., April 1:	Midterm exam	Midterm exam	QC 1,2; LO 1-7
21	Mon., April 6:	Daniil Kharms	From "Events"; (E)  "Anekdoty from the Life of Pushkin" (E)	
22	Wed., April 8:	Vladimir Nabokov	"The Return of Chorb," Brown, 379- 390	
23	<i>April 9-17</i>	<i>Spring Recess</i>	<i>Spring Recess</i>	
24	Mon., April 20	Vladimir Nabokov, <i>cont.</i>	"The Visit to the Museum," Brown, 391-402	
25	Wed., April 22:	Mikhail Sholokhov	"One Man's Destiny" (E)	
26	Mon., April 27:	Alexander Solzhenitsyn	"Matrena's Home," Brown, 435-480	
27	Wed., April 29:	Sergei Dovlatov	"Nomenclature Half Boots," (E); "The Finnish Crepe Socks," (E)	
28	Mon., May 4:	Yuri Kazakov	"Adam and Eve," Brown, 507-538.	
29	Wed., May 6:	Liudmila Ulitskaia	"The Fugitive" (E)	

30	Mon., May 11:	Viktor Pelevin	From <i>Pineapple Water for the Fair Lady</i> (E)  Last presentation	
31	Wed., May 13:	Final class. Course review.	Preparation and for the final exam.	
32	Monday, May 18, 1.45 PM -3.45 PM	Final Exam		LIT 1,3 LO 1-7