

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures
RUSS 2117: Russian Speculative Philosophy

Tuesdays 2.30-5.15
CL 236

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Russian speculative philosophy and philosophical culture have tended to confound existing markers familiar to analytic and continental philosophical systems. On the one hand, they have produced a radically materialist line, culminating in Leninism. On the other hand, they have retained features of an enduring mysticism, with only grudging concessions to the vexation of secular life. These oddly compatible systems exist as declaredly philosophical thought, but have also been integrated into other cultural texts—the major novels, poetry, visual arts—where claims to "philosophical thinking" dominate to a greater extent than in Western culture. The course will move from Radishchev and the Decembrist crisis through the nihilist and populist thought, Solov'ev and Berdiaev, Lenin and Stalin, to the recent writings of Mamardashvili and Ryklin.

ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend all classes. More than two unexcused absences will affect the final grade. **More than three** will result in failure, regardless of the student's prior standing. Excused absences, such as illness or death in the immediate family, must be documented. Absent students are responsible for acquiring relevant class notes and handouts from fellow students. Work assigned in a student's absence will not be given a later deadline without prior agreement with the instructor.

EVALUATION

Participants will be graded on the basis of written work (50%) and seminar contribution (50%), which may include quizzes or in-class writing assignments, given without notice.

COURSE METHODOLOGY

1. Emphasis will be on primary texts; some secondary texts provided as an initial orientation. Participants are strongly encouraged to read additional material as needed.
2. In order to facilitate independent reading, the core assignment will not exceed 150 pages a week. The instructor is interested in evidence of outside reading.
3. Participants will provide one-page handouts to augment their own *short* (5-7 minutes *maximum*) commentaries, organized around research questions formulated in advance. In the 15 weeks, *ten such one-page handouts* will be generated. At first, recommended research questions are provided; gradually, participants will initiate their own research questions in advance of the class.
4. Two implicit queries of our common reading are a.) comparative differences and similarities within sets and b.) historical stages of thought in individual thinkers. Participants are strongly encouraged to track more global, recurrent questions—the relationship to the West (and *which* West?); the changing relationship to Hegel (and *which* Hegel?); the status of individual consciousness in a tradition of collectivity and state-enforced compliance; the relationship between the intelligentsia and *narod*; the mutual impact of metropole and periphery; the suitability of autocratic power; geography and consciousness; the philosophy of action; elite leadership of the peasantry (or its contrary); the locus of revolutionary change; legal and illegal political agitation; the ethical value of violence; the necessity of elite, secret cadres, etc.

DISABILITY POLICY

If a student has a disability that requires special teaching, testing accommodations, or other classroom modifications, he or she must notify the instructor and the Office of Disabled Student Services (DDS) no later than the Add/Drop date (Friday, 5 September). The student may be asked to provide documentation of the disability to determine the appropriateness of accommodations. To notify DDS, call 648-7890 (Voice or TDD) to schedule an appointment. The office is located in 216 William Pitt Union.

TEXTS (items marked * are of primary importance)

Reserve list (on 2-hour and overnight reserve at Hillman Library):

*Berdyaev, Nicholas. *The Russian Idea*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1962. [DK189.2 B4613 1962](#)

- Berlin, Isaiah. *Russian Thinkers*. Ed. Henry Hardy and Aileen Kelly. New York: Penguin, 2008. [DK189.2.B47 2008](#)
- Chamberlain, Lesley. *Motherland. A Philosophical History of Russia*. London: Atlantic Books, 2004. [B4201.C53 2004](#)
- . *The Philosophy Steamer. Lenin and the Exile of the Intelligentsia*. London: Atlantic Books, 2006. [DK265.9.I55 C43 2006](#)
- Dostoevskii, F. M. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridsati tomakh*. Vol. 5 of 30. Leningrad: Nauka, 1973. [PG3325.A1 1972](#)
- *Edie, James M., ed. et al. *Russian Philosophy*. 3 vols. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1976. [B4201.E3](#) (Greensburg Campus)
- *Kuvakin, Valery, ed. *A History of Russian Philosophy*. 2 vols. Buffalo: Prometheus, 1994. [B4201.H57 1994](#)
- Maslova, N. and T. Pleshakova, eds. *The Russian Experience: Ideas in History*. Commack, NY: Nova Science, 1995. [DK38.R87 1995](#)
- *Raeff, Marc, ed. *Russian Intellectual History*. New York: Humanities Press, 1978. [DK32.7.R3](#)
- *Riha, Thomas, ed. *Readings in Russian Civilization*. 3 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974. [DK4.R52](#)
- *Scanlan, James, ed. *Russian Thought after Communism: The Recovery of a Philosophical Heritage*. Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 1994. [B4201.R86 1994](#)
- *Walicki, Andrzej, ed. *A History of Russian Thought from the Enlightenment to Marxism*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979. [HN523.W3413](#)
- Zenkovskii, V. V. *A History of Russian Philosophy*. Tr. George L. Kline. New York: Columbia University Press, 1953. [B4201.Z54 1953a](#)

For consultation (not on reserve):

1. General texts:

- Averintsev, S. S., et al. *Filosofskii entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*. Moscow: Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia, 1989.
- Billington, James. *The Icon and the Axe: An Interpretive History of Russian Culture*. New York: Random House, 1966.
- Clowes, Edith W. *Fiction's Overcoat: Russian Literary Culture and the Question of Philosophy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004.
- Emel'ianov, B. V., K. N. Liubutin, et. al. *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*. SPb: Akademicheskii proekt: 2005.
- Lektorskii, V. A., ed. *Filosofia ne konchaetsia: iz istorii otechestvennoi filosofii, XX vek*. V. 1-2. Moscow: "Rossiiskaia polit. Entsiklopediia," 1998.
- Novikov, A. I. *Istoriia russkoi filosofii*. SPb: Lan', 1998.
- Zamaleev, A. F., red. *Letopis' russkoi filosofii: 862-2002*. SPb: Letnii sad, 2003.

2. Specialized texts (specific author, historical period, etc.)

- Artem'eva, Tat'iana Vladimirovna. *Ot slavnogo proshlogo ke svetlomu budushchemu. Filosofii istorii i utopia v Rossii epokhi Prosveshcheniia*. Moscow: Aleteiia, 2005.
- Berdiaev, Nikolai. *Mutnye liki: tipy religioznoi mysli v Rossii*. Moscow: Kanon+, Reabilitatsiia, 2004.
- Dugin, Aleksandr. *Evroziiskii put' kak natsionalnaia ideia*. Moscow: Arktogeia-tsentr, 2002.
- Solov'ev, V. S. *Filosofskii slovar' Vladimira Solov'eva*. Rostov-na-Donu: Feniks, 1997.

SCHEDULE (assignments due on the date indicated)

WEEK 1: Tuesday, 26 August. Gentry as intellectual resource

Syllabus

Context: Gentry Conservatives and Revolutionaries (Karamzin, Radishchev, the Decembrists)

WEEK 2: Tuesday, 2 September. Enlightenment revolts: "political" change vs. "social" change

Radishchev, Aleksandr (1749-1802). *Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow* (excerpt). Edie I: 68-76 (8)

- Shkurinov, Pavel. "Alexander Radishchev." Kuvakin I: 87-102 (15)
- Walicki. "The Culmination of the Enlightenment in Russia: Aleksandr Radishchev." 35-52 (17)

Excerpts from Decembrist documents. Riha II: 295-302 (7)

Bogatov, Vitaly. "The Decembrists." Kuvakin I: 103-112 (9)

- Chaadaev, Petr (1794-1856).** *Philosophical Letters* (Letters 1, 3, 5, 6, 8). Edie I: 106-54 (48).
 ---. "Apology of a Madman." Riha II: 30 (1)
 • Kamensky, Zakhar. "Pyotr Chaadayev." Kuvakin I: 131-39 (8)
 • Walicki. "Petr Chaadaev." 81-91 (10) [123]

WEEK 3: Tuesday, 9 September. Russian Hegelianism

- Belinskii, Vissarion (1811-48).** "The Russian People and the Russian Tsar." Edie I: 296-299 (3)
 ---. "Society and the Individual." Edie I: 300-303 (3)
 ---. Letters to Botkin. Edie I: 304-311 (7)
 ---. Letter to Gogol'. Edie I: 312-20 (8)
 • Firsov, Viktor. "Vissarion Belinsky." Kuvakin I: 207-218 (11)
 • Walicki. "The Russian Hegelians: From 'Reconciliation with Reality' to 'Philosophy of Action.'" 115-34 (19)
 • ---. "Belinsky and Different Variants of Westernism." 135-51 (16)
 • ---. "The Petrashevtsy." 152-61 (9) [76]

WEEK 4: Tuesday, 16 September. Slavophilia

- Aksakov, Ivan (1823-86).** "A Slavophile Statement (Address to the St. Petersburg Benevolent Slavic Committee)." Riha II: 378-82 (4)
Aksakov, Konstantin (1817-60). "On the Internal State of Russia." Raeff 230-51 (21)
Kireevskii, Ivan (1806-56). "On the Nature of European Culture and Its Relation to the Culture of Russia" (Letter to Count E. E. Komarovskii). Raeff 174-207 (33)
Khomiakov, Aleksei (1804-60). "On Humboldt." Raeff 209-229 (20)
 • Kuvakin, Valery. "Khomyakov" Kuvakin I: 189-206 (17)
 • Serbinenko, Vyacheslav. "Slavophilism." Kuvakin I: 140-62 (22)
 • Walicki. "The Slavophiles." 92-114 (22) [139]

WEEK 5: Tuesday, 23 September. Hegelian Westernism and Russian Socialism

- Herzen, Aleksandr (1812-70).** "Young Moscow" (from *My Life and Thoughts*). Riha II: 321-31 (10)
 • Pavlov, Alexei. "Alexander Herzen." Kuvakin I: 219-230 (11)
 • Walicki. "The Origins of 'Russian Socialism.'" 162-82 (20) [41]
Bakunin, Mikhail (1814-76). "The Paris Commune and the Idea of the State." Edie I: 407-14 (7).
 ---. "God and the State." Edie I: 415-24 (9).
 • Kuvakin, Valery. "Mikhail Bakunin." Kuvakin I: 291-302 (11)
 • Walicki. "Anarchism." 268-89 (21) [89]

WEEK 6: Tuesday, 30 September. Enlighteners of the 1860s

- Chernyshevskii, Nikolai (1828-89).** "The Aesthetic Relation of Art to Reality" (excerpts). Edie II: 16-28 (12)
 • Maslin, Mikhail. "Nikolai Chernyshevsky." Kuvakin I: 238-47 (9)
Dobroliubov', Nikolai (1836-61). "The Organic Development of Man in Connection with His Mental and Spiritual Activities." Raeff 263-287 (24)
 • ---. "What is Oblomovism?" (excerpts). Riha II: 332-43 (11)
 • Bogatov, Vitaly. "Nikolai Dobrolyubov." Kuvakin I: 248-58 (10)
Pisarev, Dmitrii (1840-68). "The Realists" (excerpts) Edie II: 79-96 (17)
 ---. "Thinking Proletariat." Edie II: 97-108 (11)
 • Byelenkova, Lyubov. "Dmitry Pisarev." Kuvakin I: 259-68 (9) [103]

WEEK 7: Tuesday, 7 October. Populism and the 1870s

- Lavrov, Petr (1823-1900).** *Historical Letters* (excerpts). Edie II: 123-169 (46)
Mikhailovskii, Nikolai (1842-1904). "What is Progress?" (excerpts). Edie II: 177-87 (10)
 ---. "Three Stages of History" (excerpts). Edie II: 188-98 (10)
 • Alexeyev, Vladimir. "Nikolai Mikhailovsky." Kuvakin I: 325-35 (10)
 • Walicki. "Populist Ideologies." 222-67 (45) [121]

WEEK 8: Tuesday, 14 October: no class (Fall Break)**WEEK 9: Tuesday, 21 October: Literary prophesy and reaction**

- Dostoevskii, Fedor (1821-81).** "Pushkin: A Sketch (1880)." Raeff 288-300 (12)
 ---. *Zimnie zametki o letnikh vpechatleniakh*, especially Chapter 3 ("I sovershenno lishniaia"). Vol. 5: 53-64. In F. M. Dosotevskii. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridsati tomakh*. Vol. 5 of 30. Leningrad: Nauka, 1973. (9)
- Kuvakin, Valery. "Fyodor Dostoyevsky." Kuvakin II: 367-83 (16)
- Tolstoi, Lev (1828-1910).** "The Law of Violence and the Law of Love" (excerpt). Edie II: 213-34 (21)
 ---. "The Meaning of the Russian Revolution." Raeff 323-57 (34)
- Kozlov, Nikita and Valery Kuvakin. "Leo Tolstoy." Kuvakin II: 384-96 (12)
- Leont'ev, Konstantin (1831-91).** "The Average European as an Ideal and Instrument of Universal Destruction" (excerpt). Edie II: 271-80 (9)
- Avdeyeva, Ludmila. "Konstantin Leontyev." Kuvakin II: 410-20 (10)
 - Walicki. "Ideologies of Reaction after the Reforms." 290-308 (18) [141]

WEEK 10: Tuesday, 28 October. Messianism and apocalypse

- Fedorov, Nikolai (1828-1903).** "The Question of Brotherhood or Relatedness, and of the Reasons for the Unbrotherly, Dis-Related, or Unpeaceful State of the World, and of the Means for the Restoration of Relatedness." Edie III: 16-54 (38)
- Rozanov, Vasili (1856-1919).** "Apocalypse of Our Times" (excerpt). Edie II: 286-304 (18)
- Kuvakin, Valery. "Vassily Rozanov." Kuvakin II: 554-69 (15)
 - http://www.isfp.co.uk/russian_thinkers/vasily_rozanov.html
- Bulgakov, Sergei (1871-1944)**
- Kuvakin, Valery. "Sergei Bulgakov." Kuvakin II: 621-38 (17) [70]

WEEK 11: Tuesday, 4 November. Metaphysical idealism

- Solov'ev, Vladimir (1853-1900).** Lectures on Godmanhood. Edie II: 62-84 (22)
- Kuvakin, Valery. "Vladimir Solov'ev." Kuvakin II: 436-54 (18)
- Frank, S. L. (1877-1950).** "Of the Two Natures in Man." Edie III: 306-314 (8)
- Losskii, Nikolai (1870-1965).** "Intuitivism." Edie III: 321-42 (21)
- Starchenko, Nikolai. "Simon Frank." Kuvakin II: 665-77 (12)
- Shestov, Leon (1866-1938).** "Kierkegaard and Dostoevskii." Edie III: 227-247 (20) **OR**
 ---. In Memory of a Great Philosopher: Edmund Husserl." Edie III: 248-76 (28)
- Zakydalsky, Taras. "Lev Shestov and the Revival of Religious Thought in Russia." Scanlan 153-64 (9)
 - http://www.isfp.co.uk/russian_thinkers/lev_shestov.html [110-18]

WEEK 12: Tuesday, 11 November. The Russian Idea

- Berdiaev, Nikolai (1874-1948).** *The Russian Idea*
- http://www.isfp.co.uk/russian_thinkers/nikolay_berdyaev.html [260]

WEEK 13: Tuesday, 18 November. Dialectical materialism

- Plekhanov, Georgii (1856-1918).** "The Development of the Monist View of History" (excerpts). Edie III: 358-365 (7)
 ---. "For the Sixtieth Anniversary of Hegel's Death." Edie III: 366-67 (1)
 ---. "Materialism or Kantianism" (excerpts). Edie III: 382-86 (4)
 ---. "Fundamental Problems of Marxism" (excerpts). Edie III: 387-89 (2)
- Lenin, Vladimir (1870-1924).** "Materialism and Empirio-Criticism" (excerpts). Edie III: 410-36 (26)
 ---. From *Philosophical Notebooks*. Edie III: 437-54 (17)
- http://www.isfp.co.uk/russian_thinkers/vladimir_lenin.html
- Stalin, Iosif (1878-1953).** "On the Constitution." Riha III: 615-23 (8)

- van Ree, E. "Stalin as a Marxist Philosopher." *Studies in East European Thought* 52: 4 (December 2000): 259-308 (49) [114]

WEEK 14: Tuesday, 25 November: Eurasianism

Gumilev, Lev (1912-92). *Etnogenez i biosfera Zemli.*

---. *Drevniaia Rus' i Velikaia step'.*

- Laruelle, Marlene. "Aleksnder Dugin: A Russian Version of the European Right?" Kennan Occasional Paper 294. Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center, 2006. [DK510.766.D84 L37 2006](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/OP294.pdf) online at <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/topics/pubs/OP294.pdf>
- Shlapentokh, Dmitriy, ed. *Russia between East and West: Scholarly Debates on Eurasianism.* Boston: Brill, 2007 [DK32.7 .R875 2007](http://www.bruill.com/9780203987500)

WEEK 15: Tuesday, 2 December: Late Soviet debates

Zinov'ev, Aleksandr (1922-2006). *The Reality of Communism.* Pp. 27-31, 33-38, 47-48, 50-51, 60-66, 90-93, 188-92, 227-32 (29)

Mamardashvili, Merab (1930-90). "Consciousness and Civilization." In Maslova, N. and T. Pleshakova, eds. *The Russian Experience: Ideas in History.* Commack, NY: Nova Science, 1995. 1-15 [DK38 R87 1995](http://www.novascience.com/9781556068875)

- Zweerde, van der, Evert. "Philosophy in the Act: The Socio-Political Relevance of Mamardašvili's Philosophizing." *Studies in East European Thought* 58:3 (September 2006): 179-203 (24) **and other articles** in this special issue online at <http://www.springerlink.com/content/j49777223p41/?p=a38516e0964e4c69bd408e5e77f39b3&pi=6>
- http://www.isfp.co.uk/russian_thinkers/merab_mamardashvili.html
- Scanlan, James. "Interpretations and Usages of Slavophilism in Recent Russian Thought." Scanlan 23-30 (7)
- Tul'chinskii, G. L. "Filosofskaia kul'tura Rossii 1970-1990x." *Filosofskii vek* 24. Chast' 1 (2003): 278-295 (17) online at <http://ideashistory.org.ru/pdfs/31tulchinsky.pdf> [91]

WEEK 16: Tuesday, 9 December. The "return" of Russian philosophy? Choose among these texts:

Ryklin, Mikhail. "Bodies of Terror: Theses toward a Logic of Violence." *New Literary History*. 24: 1 (Winter 1993): Culture and Everyday Life. 51-74 (23)

- Emerson, Caryl Emerson. Preface of Mikhail Ryklin, "Bodies of Terror." *New Literary History*. 24: 1 (Winter 1993): Culture and Everyday Life. 45-49 (4)

Ryklin, Mikhail. "'Stsena bratstva' ili moral'yi mazokhizm? Popurri na temy Valeriia Podorogi." *Simii divan* 9 (2006): 151-68. Cf. Dostoevskii, *Zametki*, Chapter 3.

- Clowes, Edith W. "Russia's Deconstructionist Westernizer: Mikhail Ryklin between Moscow and Berlin." *Landschaft* 1 (January 2008): 1-17 (16) online at <http://www.pitt.edu/~lands/clowes08.pdf>
- Aizlewood, Robin. "The Return of the 'Russian Idea' in Publications, 1988-91." *Slavic and East European Review* 71: 3 (July 1993): 490-99 (9)
- Bazhanov, Valentin. "Philosophy in Post-Soviet Russia (1992-1997): Background, Present State, and Prospects." *Studies in East European Thought* 51: 3 (September 1999): 219-241 (22)
- Epshtein, Mikhail. "The Phoenix of Philosophy: On the Meaning and Significance of Contemporary Russian Thought." *Symposion. A Journal of Russian Thought*. vol. 1 (1996): 35-74 (39) http://www.emory.edu/INTELNET/ar_phoenix_philosophy.html
- Rybas, Alexander. "On Contemporary Russian Philosophy." *Landschaft* 1 (January 2008): 1-20 (19) online at <http://www.pitt.edu/~lands/rybas08eng.pdf>; see also <http://www.pitt.edu/~lands/rybas08rus.pdf>
- Stoeckl, Kristina. "Sergei S. Horuj's 'Synergetic Anthropology': One More Phenomenon of Philosophy Grounded in Orthodoxy or an Original Approach in Religious Philosophy?" *Landschaft* 2 (July 2008): 1-25 (24) online at <http://www.pitt.edu/~lands/stoeckl08.pdf>
- Zweerde, van der, Evert. "Soviet Philosophy Revisited—Why Joseph Bochenski Was Right While Being Wrong", *Studies in East European Thought*. 55: 4 (December 2003). 315-342 (27).