
LHSP 151.004

The Magic and Mystery of St Petersburg

Winter Term, 2004

Th 4-6

Brown Lounge, 2510 ALH

St. Petersburg, which celebrated its 300th anniversary last year, is a major center of world culture, famous for its art, architecture, splendid palaces, and the many works of literature it has spawned. The city is both a statement of imperial power (founded by Peter the Great to be a 'window onto Europe') and a mysterious, even diabolical city in the eyes of many artists. It is mysterious, magical, and seductive. This course will introduce the city in its glory, its mystery, and its intriguing contradictions. We will look at art, history, and literature, and will make use of multi-media and Internet resources to explore St. Petersburg in its many incarnations. Classes will be informal, with discussions, and one eight-page paper will be required. Most of the course materials will be placed on a Course Tools web site, where students registered for the course will be able to sign in and gain access to readings and other materials.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES:

MARCH

Th 4 **Introduction.** Some background information. Why St Petersburg? Why now?
What is St Petersburg, where is St Petersburg.

Assignment – using Internet and printed resources, identify three key events in the history of the city and prepare to present your conclusions in class.

Th 11 **Understanding St Petersburg.** Multi-media presentation, discussion of student research.

Assignments – read Pushkin's "The Bronze Horseman", "The Queen of Spades"; Gogol's "The Overcoat", "The Nose" (web site). Identify the key moments in the careers of each author and prepare to present your conclusions in class.

Th 18 **Gogol', Pushkin and the fantastic city.** Discussion of the treatment of the city in the work of Pushkin and Gogol.

Assignments – Dostoevsky's "White Nights", extracts from *Crime and Punishment* (course web site). Look for materials on Dostoevsky and St Petersburg and prepare to present your conclusions in class. Read poetry of Elena Schwarz (course web site).

Th 25 **"I love you, Peter's creation – well, not really..." – Dostoevsky and St Petersburg. Class visit from Elena Schwarz.** Discussion of St Petersburg in the work of Dostoevsky, Dostoevsky in the city of St Petersburg.

Assignments – watch films *Russian Ark* and *Brother* (LRC). Look for informative web sites on the Hermitage, Sokurov, Balabanov, and their films, and prepare to present your conclusions in class. Attend reading of Elena Schwarz (7.30 pm, Rackham Auditorium).

APRIL

Th 1 **Images of St Petersburg Today.** Discussion of films, *Russian Ark* and *Brother*. Discussion of reading.

Assignments – Listen to Shostakovich's opera, "The Nose", his "Leningrad Symphony". Look for informative web sites on Shostakovich and on the siege of Leningrad, and prepare to present your conclusions in class. Individual meetings with instructor this week to discuss paper topics and paper. Read prose and poetry of Joseph Brodsky, look at events and information associated with the tercentenary. Look for informative web sites on Brodsky and on the tercentenary, and prepare to present your conclusions in class

Th 8 **Film showing in class – Petersburg and Moscow.**

Th 17 **Shostakovich and St Petersburg. Joseph Brodsky. The city in the 21st Century** Discuss music of Shostakovich, idea of city in his music, the Seige of Leningrad. Discuss poetry and prose of Joseph Brodsky.

Fri 30 **Paper due.**

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OFFICE HOURS: M 12-1, W 1.15-2.15, F 10-11, or by appointment.