

# RUSSIAN 290: MAD, BAD, AND DANGEROUS TO KNOW

## Heroes and Heroines of Russian Literature

TTH, 1:50-3:20, Miller 210, Lewis and Clark College.

Spring 2013

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Office Hours: Tues. 12-1, Wed. 1-2, **\*\*and\*\*** by appointment



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I want a hero: an uncommon want,  
When every year and month sends forth a new one,  
Till, after cloying the gazettes with cant,  
The age discovers he is not the true one.

-- Byron, *Don Juan*

### Course description:

In this course, we will look at the complicated, maddening, irresistible men and women who are at the heart of one of the richest literary traditions in the world. We will interrogate the idea of the hero by looking at the way the hero functions in key novelistic texts of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Is the hero a prototype, a figure that follows predictable narrative patterns, only superficially adjusted for the particulars of the age? Or, on the contrary, is he or she a representation of the average man or woman of the age? Or, indeed, is he or she the personification of desires and aspirations of a whole society? If the novel is meant to be, in some way, a microcosm or a reflection of the world outside the text, then what does the personality – or personalities – at the novel's center tell us about that world? In other words, how does the hero of a novel structure our experience of reading?

In pursuing the answers to these, and other, questions, we will work deductively, practicing close reading as well as involving wider contexts when appropriate. In the two shorter papers we will concentrate on analyzing a particular work, whereas the longer final paper and research project will ask you to focus on a particular issue surrounding the issue of hero and heroization.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** By the end of this course, students who have participated actively in the course and completed all the assignments in a satisfactory manner will:

- ✓ Gain an understanding of the evolution of Russian literature and literary history through studying its pre-eminent authors and works.
- ✓ Learn or improve their ability to process literary texts critically: including understanding and proper use of literary terms, understanding of audience and voice, and techniques of close reading and interpretation.
- ✓ Learn or improve their ability to utilize the conventions of the literary research paper or the literary analysis paper, including (if applicable) use and citation of secondary sources.
- ✓ Improve their ability to participate, in a collaborative and collegial manner, in a group engaged in a particular intellectual task, verbal or written.

**CLASS MATERIALS:**

We will read the following works:

Aleksandr Pushkin, *Eugene Onegin* (1825-1833)  
Mikhail Lermontov, *A Hero of Our Time* (1840-1841)  
Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from the Underground* (1876)  
Lev Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina* (1873-1877)  
Evgeny Zamiatin, *We* (1920-1921)  
Boris Pasternak, *Doctor Zhivago* (1955)

All materials are available for purchase (and possibly rental) at the LC Bookstore. Any additional supplementary texts will be posted on Moodle.

**Requirements:**

Requirements for the class consist of careful and thoughtful (and timely!) reading, active involvement in class discussion, completion of preparatory assignments, and writing of two smaller, and one larger final paper.

Because the class will be run more like a seminar than a lecture, it is imperative that you attend class, and that you come prepared. That means completing the day's reading assignment, reading any supplementary material on Moodle, and submitting the preparatory written assignment (guided or unguided reflection, forum post, etc.).

2 absences and 2 missed written assignments are allowed for any reason; additional modifications may be made in cases of illness, religious observance, or personal emergency, but need to be discussed with me in person. Detailed directions about the two short papers (3-4 pages) and the final paper (8-10 pages) will be available later. You can rewrite all the papers.

**Grading** will be based on the following scale:

✓ Attendance	15%
✓ Participation	15%
✓ Assignments (reading responses; forum posts, etc.) to be completed before each class	25%
✓ Paper 1	10%
✓ Paper 2	10%
✓ Presentation	10%
✓ Final Paper	15%

**Office hours:**

Please come to office hours with any questions, concerns, thoughts, ideas, notes, desires that you may have. I may not always be able to make allowances (though I'll try), but I will certainly listen and discuss.

**Email:**

Important class notices will be distributed *via E-mail*. Please make sure to check your @lclark.edu address at least once a day. You are responsible for any information that is announced in this fashion.

I will make every attempt to answer your emails promptly, usually within 24 hours. Periods when it may take longer will be announced in advance.

**Electronic devices in the Classroom:**

I prefer that you use pen and paper for taking notes, rather than more advanced devices (which may also distract you).

**University-wide policies:**

Lewis & Clark has university-wide code of conduct and code of academic integrity. As members of our class and our LC community, I expect you to adhere to these codes of conduct. If you have any concerns about yourself or another member, please come talk to me confidentially in office hours. You can read the relevant policies here:

<http://www.lclark.edu/live/files/6594-code-of-conduct-201011>

<https://college.lclark.edu/administration/academicconduct.php>

<http://www.lclark.edu/live/files/6597-college-policies-201011>

See, as well, the policy on disabilities: <http://www.lclark.edu/live/files/6600-disability-policy>

### **Accessing MOODLE:**

Browse to our Moodle page from the main Moodle web page at <http://moodle.lclark.edu>:

1. Login using your L&C login and password
  2. Scroll down in the list until you find the desired department, click the link
  3. Locate RUSSIAN 290: Mad, Bad, and Dangerous to Know and click on the course name.
  4. You will be asked to use an enrollment key, use the key: hedgehog
- After this one-time enrollment, you'll be able to see the course in your list of courses right underneath your login.