

INTRODUCTION TO RUSSIAN LITERATURE I (19th century)

Russian V3333
Fall 2005
MWF 1:10-2:00
Room 309 HAM

Rebecca Pyatkevich
Office 806
Phone 917-620-8081
email rp537@columbia.edu
Office hours: M 2:00-3:00, W 2:00-3:00,
F 12:00-1:00 and by appointment

This course is designed to take you to the next level in mastering Russian, while at the same time introducing you to the work of the major writers of the 19th century and to basic concepts of literary analysis and literary history. You will not only be learning and appreciating these writers in the original, but will learn how to talk about literature and its effects on you in Russian. As in your previous years of Russian learning, we will be using and improving the skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking, while working on reading comprehension and vocabulary building. But we will be doing so while reading the work of the classic authors of 19th century Russian literature and discussing its major characteristics. We will be exploring such issues as the role of the narrator, the development of realism, the portrayal of women, societal issues and their place in literary analysis, and writers' use of the literary tradition, among others. The reading list for the fall includes:

Н.М. Карамзин, «Бедная Лиза» (1792)
А.С. Пушкин, «Станционный смотритель» (1830)
Ю.М. Лермонтов, «Бэла» (глава из романа *Герой нашего времени*, 1842)
Н.В. Гоголь, «Шинель» (1842)
И.С. Тургенев, «Смерть» (1848)
Л.Н. Толстой, «Три смерти» (1859)
Ф.М. Достоевский, «Бобок» (1873)

Classes are conducted in Russian, although questions in English are allowed if necessary. All reading is to be done in Russian. Course requirements include the writing of discussion questions for each class session (15%), short pre-reading home exercises (5%), participation in class discussions (20%), written compositions (20%), a midterm (15%), and a final (25%). For each class session, you will be asked to write an extended discussion question (paragraph-length), in Russian, to present to your classmates; these will serve as the basis of our discussions. Written compositions, in Russian, will be required roughly once every two weeks; you will have a choice of topics. The midterm and final will consist of short identification questions, some translation, and short essay questions (the latter in English). Other types of work may include short presentations and structured debates (part of your class discussion grade).

The texts will be given out in class, sometimes with vocabulary glosses, sometimes without. Although the texts will on occasion be difficult, do not get discouraged. Remember that general comprehension and content understanding is much more important than understanding every word – the latter is far from necessary and will in fact be crippling. Rather than using the dictionary, try thinking of other ways to help you figure out the meaning of words – look for cognates, roots, meanings associated with particular prefixes or suffixes, etc. And do not underestimate the importance of context! Often you will realize that looking a word up in the dictionary only confirms the feeling you thought you had about the word's meaning.

A good Russian-English dictionary (in hard copy) is a good and likely necessary investment – I recommend the Oxford dictionary line. When your dictionary is not with you but your computer is, online resources include the excellent though not yet complete *Русский грамматический словарь* that can be accessed at www.seelrc.org (aside from providing a short English equivalent, this dictionary links any given word to other lexically connected words with the same root); the dictionaries at <http://www.rambler.ru/dict/enru/>, and <http://www.rambler.ru/dict/ruen/>, among others. Links to these dictionaries can be found at all times in the Courseworks “tools” section.

In order to do the homework efficiently and use Courseworks to its full advantage, you will need to russify your computers. Directions for how to do this are attached; you have until the Wednesday of next week to do it; until then, hard copy versions of all assignments and lecture notes will be available. Until next Wednesday, I would like you to do the daily discussion questions by sending them to me by e-mail or by hand if you have to; after that, we will be posting the discussion questions to the “discussion” section of Courseworks.

We will have no class on November 7, 23, and 25th. We will have a make-up class on December 9th. The final exam will be on December XX.

Please feel free to come to me with any questions, issues, or concerns at any time during the semester – whether they be general ones or a question about vocabulary or grammar structure.