

School of Arts & Sciences Prospectus for REES 0471 Everyday Life in the Soviet Union

Course Description

This course studies the development of 19th and 20th-century Russian literature through one of its most distinct and highly recognized genres -- the short story. The readings include great masters of fiction such as Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Solzhenitsyn, and others. The course presents the best works of short fiction situating them in a larger cultural-political context. The students learn about the historical formation, poetic virtue, and thematic characteristics of major narrative modes such as sentimentalism, romanticism, utopia, realism, modernism, and socialist realism. We study literary devices, styles, and trends of storytelling such as irony, absurd, satire, grotesque, anecdote, etc. Main topics include culture of the duel; the role of chance; the riddle of death; anatomy of madness; imprisonment and survival.

Course Structure

- ☐ The class meets Tue-R 12:00-1:30. The duration of each class meeting is 80 min.
- ☐ All readings in the course are in English.
- ☐ The course is mix of discussions and lectures.

Assignments Types:

- ☐ Daily readings
- ☐ Written and oral assignments in preparation for discussions, including two 1.5-2 page long response papers (2)
- ☐ Midterm interpretative paper: an analysis of a short-story or fragment (3-4 pages)
- ☐ Final research paper or interpretative paper (4-6 pages)
- ☐ Student-led discussions, prepared in teams (1 per each team)
- ☐ Pop-quizzes on readings