

UMBC UGC New Course Request: MLL 360: Topics in Russian Culture

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Proposed Effective Date: Spring semester 2021

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COURSE INFORMATION:

Course Number(s)	MLL 360
Formal Title	Topics in Russian Culture
Transcript Title (≤30c)	Topics in Russian Culture
Recommended Course Preparation	MLL 301 and/or a Russian language course
Prerequisite NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, a prerequisite is assumed to be passed with a "D" or better.	
# of Credits Must adhere to the UMBC Credit Hour Policy	3
Repeatable for additional credit?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Max. Total Credits	12 This should be equal to the number of credits for courses that cannot be repeated for credit. For courses that may be repeated for credit, enter the maximum total number of credits a student can receive from this course. E.g., enter 6 credits for a 3 credit course that may be taken a second time for credit, but not for a third time. Please note that this does NOT refer to how many times a class may be retaken for a higher grade.
Grading Method(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reg (A-F) <input type="checkbox"/> Audit <input type="checkbox"/> Pass-Fail

PROPOSED CATALOG DESCRIPTION (Approximately 75 words in length. Please use full sentences.):

This course will focus on a broad range of topics (events, movements, literary and cultural achievements) that have helped shape Russian intellectual thought throughout the country's history. Students will be introduced to concepts that have had a lasting impact and are essential for a proper understanding of Russian culture. Topics will be announced each semester offered. Readings and discussion in English. This course is repeatable for a maximum of 12 credits. Recommended preparation: MLL 301 and/or a Russian language course.

RATIONALE FOR NEW COURSE:

a) Course need: Since the retirement of our specialist in Russian literature and culture two years ago (Dr. Elaine Rusinko), the Russian area has not been in a position to offer English-language Russian culture courses, which, in addition to being a cornerstone of our major, helped attract new students to our Russian program. We now have an adjunct instructor who is, to some extent, able to fill this gap in our program. We feel that the most reasonable and flexible way to handle the need for Russian literature and culture courses is the proposed topics course, which is modelled on an offering in the German area—the language area with challenges most similar to ours: MLL 332: Topics in German Culture. It is hoped that through the various topics offered under the proposed MLL 360 we will be able to attract more students to our Russian program, which has seen some decline in enrollment in recent years (reflecting a nationwide trend).

b) How often offered: The course will be offered at least once per academic year, allowing majors more flexibility in fulfilling their elective requirement of nine credits (see the accompanying Russian area program change, providing for one MLL-rubric course as an elective).

- c) *Course program fit:* The course will serve as one of the three required electives within our program (see our proposed program change).
- d) *Primary student population:* The course is aimed at Russian majors and minors, although the recommended preparation is broad enough to appeal to all MLL majors and students in other disciplines.
- e) *Course level:* The course content of the various topics will be sufficiently advanced, with assessments that include in-depth 10-15-page research papers.
- f) *Course preparation:* Within our department, MLL 301 Textual Analysis (“This course introduces techniques of analytical reading and reader response that apply to a broad range of texts …”) would provide the broadest and most relevant analytical tools for this proposed culture course. And a background in Russian language will allow majors to approach certain texts in the original language.
- g) *Grading method:* Since the course is aimed primarily at Russian majors, regular grading is the most appropriate.
- h) *Repeatability:* Students may want to repeat the course as topics change, although only one instance of the course will be used for the program electives.

ATTACH COURSE SYLLABUS (mandatory):

Since this course is proposed as a topics course, with changing topics, we have no standard syllabus, but I've attached a representative syllabus from a course (“Russian Thought and Culture”) which was recently taught under MLL 300 Selected Topics in Modern Languages and Linguistics.

MLL 300
Russian Thought and Culture
MW 4pm-5:15pm, FA 526

Spring 2020

Dr. Randy Kidd

Office: 526 Fine Arts
rkidd@umbc.edu

Office Hours: MW 5:15-6:15 and by appt

I. Course Description

Russia is unique in many ways. In almost all aspects of culture, Russia has been deeply influenced by both East and West. We will examine Russian thought and culture from this interdisciplinary and cross-cultural perspective. Topics include religious thought in Russia; Russian responses to the Scientific Revolution, Enlightenment and Age of Revolution in Europe; the rise of universities and scientific societies in Russia; scientism in Russia and the advent of ‘scientific socialism’; and finally, Soviet scientific achievements. This interdisciplinary course draws from geography, anthropology, history, philosophy, religious studies, the sciences and linguistics. This course is taught in English.

II. Course Objectives

- Evaluate Russian thought and culture in historical context
- Enhance close-reading skills in a variety of fields
- Develop formal writing skills
- Complete a ten-page research paper that pertains to Russian thought and culture

III. Course Materials

Required Textbooks

A History of Russian Thought, William Leatherbarrow and Derek Offord, Eds., Cambridge Press 2012
ISBN: 9781107412521

Russia and the Soviet Union: A Historical Introduction from the Kievan State to the Present,
John M. Thompson, 7th Ed., Westview Press, 2013 ISBN 9780813346960

Russian Short Stories from Pushkin to Buida, Robert Chandler, Ed., Penguin Books 2006,
ISBN 978-0140448467

IV. Evaluation

Your grade will be based primarily on your performance on weekly reading quizzes, two midterm exams, one research paper, a comprehensive final examination and class participation.

Points will be calculated as follows:

Reading Quizzes	(10 x 2 pts)	20
Midterm Exams	(2 x 10 pts)	20
Research Paper		20
Final Exam		20
Presentations	(2 x 5 pts)	10
Attendance and Participation		10

Quizzes and Examinations:

We will have 11 reading quizzes; these will cover ONLY the relevant chapters of *Russia and the Soviet Union*. These are brief quizzes, usually consisting of four questions, drawing upon the major points of the assigned chapter. There are no make-up quizzes but your lowest quiz score will be dropped. There are two midterms and one comprehensive final-examination. Examination questions may be objective and essay and will cover lecture, primary-source reading material, and the relevant chapters of *A History of Russian Thought*. A review will be offered prior to each exam.

Research Paper:

One paper, based on primary-sources and recent scholarship, is required. The paper should be between 10-15 pages and pertain to some aspect of Russian thought and culture. We will have four workshops to help you throughout the process—from conducting a literature search, to selecting a thesis, to drafting your paper. The paper is meant to both help you sharpen your research and writing skills, and look more deeply into one aspect of Russian thought and culture.

Presentations:

Presentations are 5-10 minute PowerPoints or digital stories designed to amplify a key aspect of each meeting's topic. Topics may either be selected from the syllabus Tentative Schedule of Assignments, or on something of your own interest, in consultation with the instructor. Please look at the presentation options and decide early which two you would like, so that I may reserve them for you.

Attendance and Participation:

Attendance is required. If you miss a class it is up to you to find reliable notes. For more information, please review UMBC's Attendance Policy:

<https://registrar.umbc.edu/services/registration/information-about-withdrawal-and-absence/>

V. Etiquette

Disrespectful behavior, as well as any writing, homework, or online that do not follow social etiquette (insults, extreme statements, offensive comments to other people's beliefs, etc.) will result in a zero for the exercise and will be reported to the MLLI department for further disciplinary action.

VI. Academic Integrity Statement

"By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UMBC's scholarly community in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and helping others to commit these acts are all forms of academic dishonesty, and they are wrong. Academic misconduct could result in disciplinary action that may include, but is not limited to, suspension or dismissal. <http://www.umbc.edu/provost/integrity/faculty.html>)

VII. Important

As an instructor, I am considered a Responsible Employee, per UMBC's Policy on Prohibited Sexual Misconduct, Interpersonal Violence, and Other Related Misconduct (located at <http://humanrelations.umbc.edu/sexual-misconduct/umbc-resource-page-for-sexual-misconduct-and-other-related-misconduct/>). While my goal is for you to be able to share information related to your life experiences through discussion and written work, I want to be transparent that as a Responsible Employee I am required to report disclosures of sexual assault, domestic violence, relationship violence, stalking, and/or gender-based harassment to the University's Title IX Coordinator.

As an instructor, I also have a mandatory obligation to report disclosures of or suspected instances of child abuse or neglect

(www.usmh.usmd.edu/regents/bylaws/SectionVI/VI150.pdf).^[1] The purpose of these reporting requirements is for the University to inform you of options, supports and resources; you will not be forced to file a report with the police. Further, you are able to receive supports and resources, even if you choose to not want any action taken. Please note that in certain situations, based on the nature of the disclosure, the University may need to take action.

If you need to speak with someone in confidence about an incident, UMBC has the following Confidential Resources available to support you:

The Counseling Center: 410-455-2472

University Health Services: 410-455-2542

After-hours counseling and care available by calling campus police at 410-455-5555)

Other on-campus supports and resources:

The Women's Center, 410-455-2714

Title IX Coordinator, 410-455-1606

Additional on and off campus supports and resources can be found

at: <http://humanrelations.umbc.edu/sexual-misconduct/gender-equitytitle-ix/>.

VIII. Accommodations: Student Disability Services (SDS)

UMBC is committed to eliminating discriminatory obstacles that may disadvantage students based on disability. Services for students with disabilities are provided for all students qualified under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, the ADAAA of 2009, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act who request and are eligible for accommodations. The Office of Student Disability Services (SDS) is the UMBC department designated to coordinate accommodations that would allow for students to have equal access and inclusion in all courses, programs, and activities at the University.

If you have a documented disability and would like to request academic accommodations, please refer to the SDS website at sds.umbc.edu for registration information and to begin the process, or alternatively you may visit the SDS office in person in the Math/Psychology Building, Room 212. For any questions or concerns, you may contact us through email at disAbility@umbc.edu or phone at (410) 455-2459.

IX. Additional Opportunities

Russian Club: We have a very active Russian Club, which organizes parties and museum trips and attends events at the Russian Embassy. Join "UMBC Russians" on Facebook. We welcome your input and initiative in organizing activities.

Russian Chorus: MLL 299-02 is a Pass/Fail one- or two-credit class in Russian choral music. We are fortunate to have a professional instructor of choral music, who will be teaching Mondays and Wednesdays at 12:00. No experience is necessary, and even beginning students can join in. See "Russian Chorus" in Web Links at the Blackboard course site. For permission to enroll, see Vira Zhdanovych (FA 456) or the administrative assistants in the MLL office (FA 463).

Study Abroad: Think ahead about the possibility of participating in a summer study tour of Russia or a summer program in Russian, either in this country or abroad. For more information, visit the Office of International Education Services, 222 Administration Building.

If you have any questions, problems, complaints or suggestions regarding the class, be sure to bring them to my attention. Don't wait until the end of the semester.

X. Tentative Schedule of Assignments (RSU = *Russia and the Soviet Union*; RSS = *Russian Short Stories*; HRT= *A History of Russian Thought*; HDT = Handout)

Most meetings consist of brief lectures followed by discussion of primary and secondary sources. Meetings also include presentations that amplify key lecture or discussion topics.

Mon Jan 27

- Intro and Background
- Syllabus
- Russian thought and culture timeline

Wed Jan 29

- Lect: Russian Geography, Prehistory
- Pres: Scythians
- Pres: Varangians
- Disc: RSU Ch 1, pg. 1-16
- Disc: Herodotus, *On Scythia* (primary-source handout)

Mon Feb 3

- Lect: Who are the Russians?
- Pres: Kiev
- Disc: RSU Ch 1, pg. 16-25
- Disc: Ibn Rustah, *On the Slavs* (primary-source handout)

Wed Feb 5

- Lect: Handling Sources in Research
- Pres: The Primary Chronicle
- Research Workshop I: Selecting a Research Topic; Beginning a Literature Review

Mon Feb 10

- Lect: Religion in Russia; East-West Schism
- Pres: Rublev
- Pres: Eastern Orthodox Christianity
- Disc: *The Primary Chronicle* (primary-source handout)

Wed Feb 12

- Lect: Mongols in Russia
- Pres: Batu and the Golden Horde
- Disc: *Tatar Brutality* and *The Mongol Invasion of Rus* from the Chronicle of Novgorod
(primary-source handouts)

Mon Feb 17

- Lect: Mongols in Russia (cont.)
- Pres: Moscow
- Disc: RSU Ch 2

Wed Feb 19

Lect: The Ivans
Pres: Ivan III
Pres: Boyars

Mon Feb 24

Lect: Ottomans in the East, Renaissance and Reformation in the West;
The Fall of Constantinople
Research Workshop II: Arguing a Thesis
Literature Review due

Wed Feb 26

Lect: Ivan IV; The Time of Troubles
Pres: Ivan IV; The Oprichnina
Pres: St. Basil's
Disc: RSU Ch 4
Disc: *An English View of Muscovite Government* (primary-source handout)

Mon Mar 2

Research Workshop III: Thesis Presentations
Literature Review due
Thesis due
Review for Midterm I

Wed Mar 4

Midterm I

Mon Mar 9

Lect: Serfdom, Succession and Siberian Expansion in the Seventeenth Century
Pres: Mikhail Romanov
Pres: Siberia
Disc: RSU Ch 5

Wed Mar 11

Lect: Rise of Modern Thought in the West- Reform, Revolution and Enlightenment
Pres: Peter the Great, biography
Disc: RSU, Ch 6, pgs. 99-107

Spring Break

Lect: Peter the Great and the Sciences; University Culture and Scientific Academies
Pres: Peter the Great- Universities and Schools
Disc: RSU, Ch 6, pgs. 107-11
Disc: *First Issue of 'Vedomosti'* (primary-source handout)

Mon Mar 23

Lect: Catherine the Great and Europe
Pres: Catherine the Great
Disc: RSU, Ch 7
Disc: *Radishchev's A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow* (primary-source handout)

Wed Mar 25

Disc: HRT, Ch 4, *Russia's 18th Century Enlightenment*

Disc: Pushkin, *The Shot; Mozart and Salieri* (primary-source handouts)

Mon Mar 30

Lect: Hegel and the Roots of Marxism; Science and Scientism

Pres: Kazan Imperial University

Disc: HRT, Ch 3, *Russian Intelligentsias*

Wed Apr 1

Lect: Revolution in France; Napoleon Invades Russia

Pres: Alexander I

Disc: RSU, Ch 8

Mon Apr 6

Lect: Revolutions in Europe, Marx and the German Idealists, Fashionable Marxism

Pres: Revolutions of 1848

Pres: Karl Marx

Disc: RSS, Gogol, *The Greatcoat*

Disc: *Haxthausen on the Commune and the Tsar* (primary-source handout)

Wed Apr 8

Lect: Crimean War

Pres: Alexander II

Disc: RSU, Ch 9

Research Workshop III: Conclusions and Peer Review

Mon Apr 13

Midterm Review

Pres: Dostoyevsky

Disc: Dostoyevsky, *Bobok*

Review for Midterm II

Wed Apr 15

Mid Term II

Mon Apr 20

Lect: World War I; Revolutions in Thought

Pres: Lobachevsky

Disc: RSU, Ch 10

Wed Apr 22

Lect: Revolution in Russia; ‘Scientific’ Socialism?

Pres: Lenin

Pres: Pavlov

Disc: RSU, Ch 11

Disc: Soviet legal decrees (primary-source handout)

Mon Apr 27

Lect: World War II; Thought and Culture Under Stalin
Pres: Akhmatova
Disc: RSU, Ch 12
Disc: RSS, Kharms, *The Old Woman*

Wed Apr 29

Lect: Russia as a Superpower
Disc: RSU, Ch 13
Disc: Shalamov, *Berries*

Mon May 4

Lect: Collapse of the Soviet Union
Pres: Solzhenitsyn
Disc: RSU, Ch 14
Disc: Solzhenitsyn , *What a Pity*

Wed May 6

Lect: Boris Yeltsen, Chechen War and The Rise of Putin
Disc: RSU, Ch 15

Mon May 11

Lect: Putin and Russia Today
Disc: RSU, Ch 16
Review for Final Exam

Research paper due in class

Wed May 13 Study Day

Thurs May 14 - Weds May 20 Final Exams