

RUSS 4302 RUSSIAN AND SOVIET CINEMA

University of Texas at Arlington

Fall 2008, T/TH 11:00–12:20

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Office hours: T/Th 2–3

Course blogs:

<http://russ4302.wordpress.com>

<http://utarussian.wordpress.com>

UTA Russian homepage:

<http://russian.uta.edu>

Course goals

This course surveys the Russian cinematic tradition from its beginnings through the first decade and a half following the disintegration of the USSR. Special attention is paid to the avant-garde film and theory of the 1920s; the totalitarian aesthetics of the 1930s–40s and the ideological uses of film art; the “New Wave” of the 1950s–60s; and cinema as medium of cultural dissent and witness to social change.

Students acquire basic skills of film analysis through reading assignments, classroom discussions and written tasks. The course is taught in English; all films are in Russian with English subtitles. No prior knowledge of Russian language and culture is required. Students of Russian will complete language tasks in lieu of analytical essays (see below).

Course format

The course will meet twice a week for 80 mins per session. It is important to be punctual, since our time for viewing and discussing the films is limited. The first meeting of each week will be devoted to screening and preliminary analysis. The second meeting will be devoted to follow-up analysis of that week's film in the context of assigned readings. Reading assignments are to be completed prior to the class for which they are assigned, and students should be prepared to discuss them in connection with the films we have viewed.

Evaluation

Students will complete two short written assignments and one final research paper.

The written assignments, which must be at least 4–5 pages in length, are based on the weekly readings and on the films analyzed in class.

In place of written assignments, students of Russian will work on language tasks from *Cinema for Russian Conversation*, Vol. 1.

The final paper must be 10–12 pages in length. Students will receive a choice of topics and will be expected to do additional research beyond the assigned readings.

The final exam will test your cumulative knowledge of formal film analysis acquired through course readings, lectures, viewings and written assignments. The final exam for students of Russian will also include a language component.

The breakdown of grades is as follows:

Class participation (attendance, preparation, discussion) 10%

Written assignments or language tasks 30%

Final Research Paper 35%

Final Exam 25%

The FILMS

All films are available for viewing in the Language Acquisition Center (LAC), TH 3rd floor.

Excerpts from the 10 vol. collection, *Early Russian Cinema*:

Vladimir Romashkov, *Stenka Razin* (1908)

Wladyslaw Starewich, *The Dragonfly and the Ant* (1913)

Yakov Protazanov, *Queen of Spades* (1916)

Evgenii Bauer, *A Life for a Life* (1916)

Sergei Eisenstein, *Battleship Potemkin* (1925)

Dziga Vertov, *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929)

Grigorii Aleksandrov, *Circus* (1936)

Sergei Eisenstein, *Ivan the Terrible Part 1* (1944)

Mikhail Kalatozov, *The Cranes Are Flying* (1957)

Grigorii Chukhrai, *Ballad of a Soldier* (1959)

Andrei Tarkovskii, *Andrei Rublev* (1966)

Aleksandr Askol'dov, *Commissar* (1967)

Vladimir Menshov, *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* (1979)

Vasilii Pichul, *Little Vera* (1988)

Pavel Chukhrai, *The Thief* (1997)

Alexei Balabanov, *Brother* (1997)

Aleksandr Sokurov, *Russian Ark* (2001)

Anna Melikyan, *Mermaid* (2007)

Required READINGS

For purchase, available at the UTA bookstore (if acquired elsewhere, please be sure to purchase the Eighth Edition):

Bordwell, David and Kristin Thompson. *Film Art: An Introduction*. Eighth Edition, New York: McGraw-Hill, 2006.

Students of Russian will also purchase the following, available at the UTA bookstore:

Kagan, Olga et al. *Cinema for Russian Conversation*. Vol. 1. Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, 2005.

Coursepacks with required reading for everyone are also for purchase at the bookstore. Readings are excerpted from the texts listed below, as are selected recommended readings mentioned in the weekly schedule. Most of the following books are available in the Central Library and are recommended sources for your research papers:

Atwood, Lynne with Maya Turovskaya et al. *Red Women on the Silver Screen: Soviet Women and Cinema from the Beginning to the End of the Communist Era*. London: Pandora, 1993.

Beumers, Birgit, ed. *Russia on Reels: The Russian Idea in Post-Soviet Cinema*. New York & London: I.B. Tauris & Co., 1999.

Golovskoy, Valery S. *Behind the Soviet Screen: The Motion-Picture Industry in the U.S.S.R., 1972-1982*. Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1986.

Kenez, Peter. *Cinema and Soviet Society, 1917-1953*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge UP, 1992.

Lawton, Anna. *Imaging Russia 2000: Film and Facts*. Washington DC: New Academia Publishing, 2004.

Neuberger, Joan. *Ivan the Terrible: The Film Companion*. KINOfiles Film Companion 9. London: I.B. Tauris; New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2003.

Stites, Richard. *Russian Popular Culture: Entertainment and Society Since 1900*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge UP, 1992.

Taylor, Richard and Derek Springs, eds. *Stalinism and Soviet Cinema*. London and New York: Routledge, 1993.

Taylor, Richard and Ian Christie, eds. *Inside the Film Factory: New Approaches to Russian and Soviet Cinema*. London & New York: Routledge, 1991.

Taylor, Richard and Ian Christie, eds. *The Film Factory: Russian and Soviet Cinema in Documents 1896-1939*. London & New York: Routledge, 1994.

Woll, Josephine. *Real Images: Soviet Cinema and the Thaw*. London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000.

Youngblood, Denise. *Movies for the Masses: Popular Cinema and Soviet Society in the 1920s*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge UP, 1992.

Weekly SCHEDULE and READING assignments

T 26 August

Introduction: Early Russian Cinema.

Featured Films:

Vladimir Romashkov, *Stenka Razin* (1908) [*Early Russian Cinema* Vol. 1, Ch. 3]

Vladislav Starevich, *The Dragonfly and the Ant* (1913) [*Early Russian Cinema* Vol. 3, Ch. 1]

Th 28 August

Early Russian Cinema, cont.

Film Excerpts:

Yakov Protazanov, *Queen of Spades* (1916) [*Early Russian Cinema* Vol. 8, Chs. 7, 12, 16, 19]

Evgenii Bauer, *A Life for a Life* (1916)

Reading Assignment:

Bordwell & Thompson, *Film Art*. Chapter 4: "The Shot: Mise-en-Scene" (112-161).

Yuri Tsivian, "Early Russian Cinema: Some Observations" (*Inside the Film Factory*, 7-30).

T 2 September

Feature Film:

Sergei Eisenstein, *Battleship Potemkin* (1925; 64 mins)

Reading Assignment:

Bordwell & Thompson, *Film Art*. Chapter 6: “The Relation of Shot to Shot: Editing” (218–263).

Sergei Eisenstein, “The Montage of Attractions” (*The Film Factory*, 87–89).

Denise Youngblood, “Introduction” (*Movies for the Masses*, 1–9).

Th 4 September

Reading Assignment:

Béla Balázs, “The Future of Film” (*The Film Factory*, 144–145).

Sergei Eisenstein, “Béla forgets the Scissors” (*The Film Factory*, 145–149).

Anatoli Lunacharsky, “Revolutionary Ideology and Cinema – Theses” (*The Film Factory*, 109–110).

“Resolution of Thirteenth Party Congress on Cinema” (*The Film Factory*, 111).

Recommended reading: Denise Youngblood, “A Historical Overview ‘from Below’” (*Movies for the Masses*, 13–34).

T 9 September

Feature Film:

Dziga Vertov, *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929; 70 mins)

Reading Assignment:

Film Art, “Soviet Montage (1924–1930)” in Chapter 12 (453–456).

Film Art, “Documentary Form and Style. *Man with a movie camera*” in Chapter 11 (410–413).

Dziga Vertov, “We. A Version of a Manifesto” (*The Film Factory*, 69–72).

Dziga Vertov, “The *Cine-Pravda*” (*The Film Factory*, 84).

Dziga Vertov, “The Cine-Eyes. A Revolution” (*The Film Factory*, 89–94).

Dziga Vertov, “The *Cine-Pravda*: A Report to the Cine-Eyes” (*The Film Factory*, 112–114).

Dziga Vertov, “Fiction Film Drama and the Cine-Eye” (*The Film Factory*, 115–116).

Dziga Vertov, “*Cine-Pravda* and *Radio-Pravda*” (*The Film Factory*, 129–131).

Dziga Vertov, “The Factory of Facts” (*The Film Factory*, 150).

Victor Shklovsky, “Where is Dziga Vertov Striding?” (*The Film Factory*, 151–152).

Esfir Shub, “The Manufacture of Facts” (*The Film Factory*, 152).

Th 11 September

Reading Assignment:

Film Art, Chapter 10: “Documentary, Experimental, and Animated Films” (338–381).

Peter Kenez, “The Cultural Revolution in Cinema” (*Cinema and Soviet Society*, 91–113).

Recommended reading: Richard Stites, “Revolutionary Reassortment 1917–1927” (*Russian Popular Culture*, 37–63).

T 16 September

Feature Film:

Grigorii Aleksandrov, *Circus* (1936; 98 mins)

Reading Assignment:

Film Art, Chapter 7: “Sound in the Cinema” (264–303).

Film Art, “The Musical” in Chapter 9 (332–336).

Boris Shumyatsky, “Perfecting Our Mastery” (*The Film Factory*, 373–377) [handout].

Th 18 September

Reading Assignment:

Richard Stites, “Stalin by Starlight 1928–1941” (*Russian Popular Culture*, 64–97).

Peter Kenez, “Censorship, 1933–1941,” “Socialist Realism, 1933–1941” (*Cinema and Soviet Society*, 127–164) [handout].

Recommended reading: Richard Taylor, "Ideology as Mass Entertainment: Boris Shumyatsky and Soviet Cinema in the 1930s" (*Inside the Film Factory* 193–216).

T 23 September / First written assignment handed out in class

Feature Film:

Sergei Eisenstein, *Ivan the Terrible* Part 1 (1944; 96 mins)

Reading Assignment:

Film Art, Chapter 5: "The Shot. Cinematography" (162–207).

Joan Neuberger, excerpts from *Ivan the Terrible: The Film Companion* [handout].

Recommended reading: Richard Taylor, "Propaganda and Film" (*Film Propaganda: Soviet Russian and Nazi Germany*).

Th 25 September

Reading Assignment:

Richard Stites, "Holy War and Cold War 1941–1953" (*Russian Popular Culture*, 98–122) [handout].

Sergei Eisenstein, "My Worthless and Viscious Film" (Coursepack).

Recommended reading: Leonid Kozlov, "The Artist and the Shadow of Ivan" (Taylor, Spring, eds. *Stalinism & Soviet Cinema*, 109–130).

T 30 September

Feature Film:

Mikhail Kalatozov, *The Cranes Are Flying* (1957; 95 mins)

Reading Assignment:

Film Art, Chapter 2: "The Significance of Film Form" (54–73).

Peter Kenez, "Film Hunger, 1945–1953" (*Cinema and Soviet Society*, 187–204) [handout].

Recommended reading: Ian Christie, "Canons and Careers: the Director in Soviet Cinema" (Taylor, Spring, eds. *Stalinism & Soviet Cinema*, 142–170).

Th 2 October

Reading Assignment:

Josephine Woll, "The Best Years of Our Lives" (*Real Images*, 66–82).

Recommended reading: Richard Stites, "Springtime for Khrushchev 1953–1964" (*Russian Popular Culture*, 123–147).

T 7 October / First written assignment due in class

Feature Film:

Grigorii Chukhrai, *Ballad of a Soldier* (1959; 88 mins)

Reading Assignment:

Film Art, Chapter 3: "Narrative as a Formal System" (74–109).

Film Art, "Italian Neorealism," "The French New Wave" in Chapter 12 (459–463).

Recommended reading: Josephine Woll, "Great Expectations" (*Real Images*, 83–99).

Th 9 October

Guest lecture: Joan Neuberger, UT Austin Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies. Date subject to change, TBA.

Reading Assignment:

Herbert Marshall, "The New Wave in Soviet Cinema" (Anna Lawton, ed. *The Red Screen*, 175–191).

Josephine Woll, "The Grand Illusion: Introduction," "Kameradschaft" (*Real Images*, 103–111; 138–150) [handouts].

T 14 October

Feature Film:

Andrei Tarkovskii, *Andrei Rublev* (1966; 185 mins)

Reading Assignment:

Film Art, "Duration of the image: The Long Take" in Chapter 5 (207–213).

Josephine Woll, "Strange Interlude: Introduction," "Odd Man Out" (*Real Images*, 161–183) [handout].

Th 16 October

Screening of *Andrei Rublev*, cont.

Reading Assignment:

Richard Stites, "The Brezhnev Culture Wars 1964–1984" (*Russian Popular Culture*, 148–177) [handout].

Andrei Tarkovskii, "Excerpt from Remarks at a National Film Conference (March 1980)" (Val Golovskoy, *Behind the Soviet Screen*, 120–121).

T 21 October / Second written assignment handed out in class

Feature Film:

Aleksandr Askol'dov, *Commissar* (1967; 105 mins)

Reading Assignment:

Film Art, "The Classical Narrative Cinema," "Narrative Alternatives to Classical Filmmaking" in Chapter 11 (385–410)

Josephine Woll, "The Last Laugh," "Forbidden Games: Introduction," "Farewell, My Lovely" (*Real Images*, 184–208; 225–228) [handout].

Recommended reading: Val Golovskoy, "Screening the Screen: Repertory Control" (*Behind the Soviet Screen*, 29–36).

Th 23 October

Reading Assignment:

Oksana Bulgakova, "The Hydra of the Soviet Cinema: The Metamorphoses of the Soviet Film Heroine" (Atwood, ed., *Red Women on the Silver Screen*, 149–174) [note: the final page of the article (p. 174) is misplaced in the coursepack, falling after the title page to Birgit Beumers, *Russia on Reels*].

Recommended reading: Elena Stishova, "The Mythologization of Soviet Women: *The Commissar* and Other Cases" (Lynn Atwood, ed., *Red Women on the Silver Screen*, 175–185).

Recommended reading: Ann Lawton, "Off the Shelf" (*Kinoglasnost*, 111–137).

T 28 October

Feature Film:

Vladimir Men'shov, *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* (1979; 150 mins)

Reading Assignment:

Film Art, "Form, Style and Ideology" in Chapter 11 (419–426).

Ann Lawton, "The Waning of the Brezhnev Era" (*Kinoglasnost*, 7–51).

Th 30 October

Reading Assignment:

Val Golovskoy, "An Analysis of the Soviet Cinema (1970–1981)" (*Behind the Soviet Screen*, 138–144).

Recommended reading: Val Golovskoy, "American Films on Soviet Screens (1957–1980)" (*Behind the Soviet Screen*, 132–137).

T 4 November / Second written assignment due in class

Feature Film:

Vasilii Pichul, *Little Vera* (1988; 110 mins)

Reading Assignment:

Richard Stites, "Perestroika and the People's Taste 1985–" (*Russian Popular Culture*, 178–203) [handout].

Th 6 NovemberReading Assignment:

Andrew Horton, Michael Brashinsky, “‘We Are *Your* Children’: Soviet Youth, Cinema, and Changing Values” (*The Zero Hour*, 67–98) [handout].

Marina Dozdova, “Sublimations from Socialism: New Images of Women in Soviet Cinematography in the Era of *Perestroika*” (Atwood, ed., *Red Women on the Silver Screen*, 198–209) [handout].

T 11 November / Topics for final research papers handed out in classFeature Film:

Pavel Chukhrai, *The Thief* (1997; 93 mins)

Reading Assignment:

Anna Lawton, “History in the Making and On Screen” (*Imaging Russia 2000*, 39–99).

Th 13 NovemberReading Assignment:

Richard Taylor, “Now that the Party’s Over: Soviet Cinema and Its Legacy” (Birgit Beumers, ed., *Russia on Reels*, 34–42) [handout].

Recommended reading: Anna Lawton, “New Babylon” (*Imaging Russia 2000*, 101–168).

T 18 NovemberFeature Film:

Alexei Balabanov, *Brother* (1997; 96 mins)

Reading Assignment:

Film Art, Chapter 8: “Style as a Formal System” (304–316).

“Russian Cinema – National Cinema? Three Views” (*Russia on Reels*, 43–53) [handout].

Th 20 November

Reading Assignment:

Birgit Beumers, "To Moscow! To Moscow? The Russian Hero and the Loss of the Centre" (*Russia on Reels*, 76–87).

T 25 NovemberFeature Film:

Alexander Sokurov, *Russian Ark* (2001; 96 mins)

Reading Assignment:

Alexander Sokurov, "A letter to the American Viewers: Sailing Russian Ark to the new World": http://www.landmarktheaters.com/Stories/ark_frame.html

Reviews of *Russian Ark* in *Metacritic*: <http://www.metacritic.com/film/titles/russianark/>

Andrew James Horton, "Elegy to History" in *Kinoeye*: http://www.kinoeye.org/02/13/horton13_part1.php

Th 27 November. THANKSGIVING BREAK, no classes

T 2 DecemberFeature Film:

Anna Melikyan, *Mermaid* (2007; 115 mins)

No reading assignment. Work on research papers.

Th 4 December FINAL CLASS / Final research papers due in class

No reading assignment.

T 9 December FINAL EXAM 11:00–1:30