

# Love and Death in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Russian Literature in Translation

LNGS 25500 / ENGL 25500: 3 credits

Spring 2017

Dr. Benjamin Rifkin

T/Th 9:25 to 10:40

## Course Description

In this course we will read a variety of texts written by prominent Russian authors from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century through the very beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, tracing the course of the development of the Russian literary canon from sentimentalism to romanticism and absurdism, through the rise of psychological realism and the subsequent wave of symbolism. We will connect the development of the Russian literary canon to literary trends in Western Europe, especially England, France, and Germany, as well as the United States, paying special attention to how Russians appropriated foreign cultural concepts to convey ideas consistent with their own sense of “Russianness”. As we consider different texts and different literary movements, we will ask again and again how the presentation of narrative in different ways changes the way we understand that narrative and how these narratives frame the human experience.

**Fulfillment of ICC Requirements:** Effective Spring 2017, this class has been approved by IC’s *Committee for College-Wide Requirements* for meeting the qualifications of the *Integrative Core Curriculum*. Contingent upon successful completion of all course requirements and the uploading of required learning outcome artifacts onto *Taskstream* (indicated elsewhere on this syllabus), this class meets and satisfies the ICC **Identities** theme and **Inquiry, Imagination, and Innovation** theme and **Creative Arts** perspective and **Humanities** perspective designations and the ICC **Writing Intensive** designation.

## Course Texts

*Russian Short Stories from Pushkin to Buida*, ed. and transl. by Robert Chandler (Penguin Classics, 2006)

*Eugene Onegin: A Novel in Verse*, Alexander Pushkin and James E. Falen (Oxford World’s Classics, 2009)

*Hero of Our Time*, Mikhail Lermontov and Paul Foote (Penguin Classics, 2001)

*Fathers and Sons*, Ivan Turgenev and Richard Freeborn (Oxford World’s Classics, 2008)

*Notes from Underground*, Fyodor Dostoevsky and Richard Pevear (Vintage Classics, 1994)

*Petty Demon*, Fyodor Sologub and Murl Barker (Ardis, 2009)

*The Plays of Anton Chekhov*, Anton Chekhov and Paul Schmidt (Harper Perennial, 1998)

Additional materials posted to Sakai

### **ICC Student Learning Outcomes**

- a) Students will understand and analyze human expression through the lens of the humanities.
- b) Students will recognize and begin to appraise existing arguments and articulate arguments of their own.
- c) Students will describe and interpret the values, beliefs, and behaviors of self and others in the context of historical cultural institutions.
- d) Students will recognize and explain the forms and techniques of a variety of literary movements.
- e) Students will analyze how literary texts stimulate emotions, provoke thoughts, or guide actions and beliefs.

### **Writing Intensive Student Learning Outcomes**

- a) Students will develop and articulate knowledge about 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian literature and literary trends, engaging in critical thinking in the analysis of literary texts in accordance with the conventions of the discipline of literary criticism through frequent practice of informal writing (on quizzes, see below) and formal writing (in one of the two formal papers and in essays on the midterm and final exam).
- b) Students will develop an understanding of audience expectations, genres and conventions appropriate to communicating in the discipline of literary criticism (in formal papers and in essays on the midterm and final exam)
- c) Students will enhance their writing skills in the composition of two formal papers, each 1500 words in length, that are the product of multiple stages of writing including brainstorming, drafting, the integration of sources, and revision on the basis of substantial and formative feedback on the first draft.

### **DMLL and English Student Learning Outcomes**

- a) Students will enhance their awareness of and appreciation for Russian culture and their understanding of Russianness in comparison with their own national/cultural identities.
- b) Students will read literary works closely with focused attention to the nuances of language, content, and form.
- c) Students will demonstrate critical thinking in the analysis of texts and creativity and synthesis in the creation of their own literary works (recasting assignment).
- d) Students will learn to write essays in clear expository prose, with fluent and varied sentences, coherent organization, and mechanical and grammatical correctness.
- e) Students will compose thesis-driven textually supported literary analyses based on their readings of literary works.

**ePortfolio Artifacts:** Students are expected to upload into their ePortfolios in TaskStream course assignments, including Paper 1 and/or Paper 2, as well as essays written for the midterm and final exams (both administered as take home examinations) as artifacts demonstrating fulfillment of ICC (theme and perspective) and writing learning outcomes. The two paper assignments and the two essay prompts on the midterm and final examination are designed to elicit student work demonstrating attainment of *all* the diverse student learning outcomes listed above. *It is your responsibility to select essays from the exams and/or final papers to TaskStream.*

**Students with Documented Disabilities:**

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, reasonable accommodation will be provided to students with documented disabilities on a case by case basis. Students must register with Student Accessibility Services (100 Rothschild Place) and provide appropriate documentation to the college before any academic adjustment will be provided.

**Academic Honesty**

Plagiarism is the condition in which someone else's work appears in your own with inappropriate documentation. It is a very serious form of academic misconduct.

Examples of plagiarism include but are not limited to:

- Quoting directly from another source without attribution OR without using quotation marks
- Paraphrasing from another source with no in-text attribution, even if you've listed the source on your Works Cited page
- Handing in an essay that was written either partially or entirely by someone else
- Comparing responses to exam questions during the exam itself

Any incident of academic misconduct will result in expulsion from the course and immediate referral to the Office of Judicial Affairs. For information on the College policies on academic misconduct and plagiarism, please see the Ithaca College Student Policy Manual, sections 7.1.2.6. and 7.1.4.1. Volume 7 of the Policy Manual is available online at:

<http://www.ithaca.edu/attorney/policies/vol7/index.htm>.

The papers, midterm exam, and final exam are all written as "homework," not in class. You may use your own notes, refer to the literary texts, use other works, but you may not consult with any other person and will be required to sign a statement on the midterm and final exams identifying your work as your own.

**Note on Religious Observance**

If you are observing a religious holiday, inform me by e-mail at least two weeks prior to the holiday and you will be excused from class participation and the daily quiz for that day.

**Course Requirements:**

(1) Class Participation

Class participation will also be an important part of your grade; the course is, after all, designed as a seminar. Most of the important work we do will develop as a result of our conversations, and it is essential therefore that each of us comes to class having read the assigned material carefully, and prepared to participate in thoughtful discussion. Class participation is graded on the basis of the degree to which students participate in discussion in whole class, group, or pair activities, including asking questions and responding to comments or

questions by other students. The following scale will be used to evaluate class participation on a daily basis:

On-time, fully prepared, fully engaged and contributing	7 points
On-time, partially prepared, mostly engaged and some contributions	6 points
On-time, unprepared, engaged but few contributions	5 points
On-time, unprepared, partially engaged, little contribution	4 points
Absent	0 points

Students will lose 1 point for every 10 minutes late to class. In addition, points will be deducted for behaviors that impede the learning of others or adversely affect the classroom environment (such as texting during class). The class participation grade for the semester will be calculated as the percentage of CP points earned against all those available after allowing for the deletion of the 3 lowest class participation grades (which could be absences). Students will receive a daily notice of their class participation grade on their written quiz when the quiz is returned at the following class session.

### (2) Daily Quizzes

Every class session will begin with a reading quiz consisting of a few questions based on the reading assigned for that day and the discussion we had at the previous class session. Questions will be true/false, multiple choice, fill in the blank, and always one question requiring a paragraph that fulfills the course's expectation for work in the genre of informal writing. You are allowed to refer to your notes while they take these quizzes (so take notes on your reading!), but the notes must be your own and must be handwritten (not photocopied or computer printed) unless you have an accessibility accommodation. The quizzes are pass/fail (1 point or 0 points) and in order to pass a quiz, you must get at least 2/3 of the questions right. The quiz grade for the course is constituted as the percentage of quizzes passed on the basis of all quizzes given. Please note that if you are late to class, you will not be able to take the quiz that day and a grade of 0 will be entered for that day's quiz. There is one extra credit option to replace one failing grade for a quiz (which could have been from an absence) for the first half of the semester and one for the second half (see the schedule of assignments for details).

### (3) Midterm Exam

The midterm exam is a take-home assignment for which you can use your own notes, our texts (poems, short stories, novels, etc.) but no other additional information. You may not consult with any other individual in preparing your midterm exam. The exam consists of some short answer questions, a 750-word analysis of a passage from a text you haven't seen before on the basis of literary analysis we have conducted through this point of the semester, and a 750-word essay comparing two texts we have read on the basis of their stylistic features.

### (4) Final Exam

The final exam is a take-home assignment for which you can use your own notes, our texts (poems, short stories, novels, etc.) but no other additional information. You may not consult with any other individual in preparing your midterm exam. The exam consists of some short answer questions, a 750-word analysis of a passage from a text you haven't seen before on the basis of literary analysis we have conducted through this point of the semester, and a 750-word

essay comparing two texts we have read on the basis of their stylistic features. The final exam must be submitted by a deadline that coincides with the final exam slot for this course as established by the registrar.

### (5) Paper Assignments

The option “a” paper is 1500 words in length, while the option “b” paper is 1500 words in length with an additional 1000-word commentary. Both papers are submitted in a first draft and final version, with a peer-editing process in between the two submissions. Students must write one paper under “option a” and one paper under “option b”.

*Papers submitted late will incur a 2-point penalty on the rubric for each calendar day they are late. First drafts that are submitted late will lose peer editing points for the author of the late paper; the peer editor who didn't get the paper will not be penalized. Remember that the total score for the first draft is 25 points, so a paper that is one week late will be able to earn a maximum of 9 points (36%).*

#### (5-1) Paper 1

Option (a): Select a scene from a well-known American film or television show and recast it as a short story (including authorial narration) as if it had been written by one of the authors we have studied thus far this semester. Annotate your essay with footnotes identifying stylistic features typical of the author whose style you are emulating.

Option (b): Select one of the works listed below and analyze it using the tools and methods we have explored thus far this semester: Pushkin, “Ruslan and Liudmila”; Pushkin, “The Tales of Belkin”; Lermontov, “Bela”; Lermontov, “The Demon”; Gogol, “Nevsky Prospekt”; or Gogol, “Terrible Vengeance”.

#### (5-2) Paper 2:

Option (a): Select a scene from a well-known American film or television show and recast it as a short story (including authorial narration) as if it had been written by one of the authors we have studied after Gogol through the date of the deadline for this paper. Annotate your essay with footnotes identifying stylistic features typical of the author whose style you are emulating.

Option (b): Select one of the works listed below and analyze it using the tools and methods we have explored thus far this semester: Turgenev, “First Love”; Turgenev, “Asya”; Dostoevsky, “The Honest Thief”; Dostoevsky, “The Christmas Tree and a Wedding”; Tolstoy, “Alyosha the Pot”; Tolstoy, “God Sees the Truth But Waits”; Tolstoy, “How Much Land Does a Man Need”.

**Paper Rubrics are appended to the syllabus (after schedule of assignments)**

First Draft: Total 30 points

Content: 0-4 points (assignment parameters met)

Logic: 0-3 points

Depth of Analysis: 0-4 points

Organization and Clarity: 0-3 points

Mechanics (including citation): 0-3 points

Formal Tone: 0-2 points

Accurate Usage of Literary Terms: 0-4 points

Peer Edit of Your Partner's Paper: 0-5 points

Final Version: Total 30 points

Content: 0-4 points (assignment parameters met)

Logic: 0-3 points

Depth of Analysis: 0-4 points

Organization and Clarity: 0-3 points

Mechanics (including citation): 0-3 points

Formal Tone: 0-2 points

Accurate Usage of Literary Terms: 0-4 points

Reflection and Enhancement Based on Peer-Edit: 5 points

Peer Editing Rubric: One point for constructive suggestion in each assessment area and up to five points for comprehensive and meaningful response to these suggestions, adapted from the Reed College Writing Center:

1. **Mirroring:** What is the main point of the paper? (Summarize in no more than three sentences) (1 point)
2. **Believing:** Accept the writer's point of view and try to extend the paper's argument-- provide additional examples, suggest questions that might provoke further thought, discuss parallels. (1 point)
3. **Doubting:** Provide counter-evidence and counterarguments for the author. If you did not accept this argument, what objections might you raise? Are there other solutions or interpretations for this problem? Pursue one counterargument in a paragraph or suggest several concerns more briefly. (1 point)
4. **Suggesting:** Based on your experience as a writer, what suggestions might you give this author? This is the time to warn the author if the paper merely repeats class lecture, discussion, or articles we have read, or if the paper allows extended plot summary to displace development of argument. Is the thesis a hypothesis or a statement of fact? Are there any places where the argument seems to get off track? This is also a chance to suggest revision tactics, remark on the essay's style, proportions, etc. (2 points)

Extra Credit: You can earn extra credit (replacing one failed quiz grade) by watching a film and writing a one-page paper about it for each half of the semester. In the first half of the semester, the film for this option is based on Gogol's story, "Viy," and for the second half of the semester, the film for this option is based on Chekhov's story, "Lady with a Dog." For "Viy," you must

write how the film reflects or does not reflect characteristics of Gogol's literary style. For "Lady with a Dog" you must describe how the film conveys the style of psychological realism reflected in the narrative style of Chekhov's text.

### Course Grade:

Class Participation	10%
Quizzes	10%
Paper 1 First Draft	10%
Paper 1 Final Version including peer editing	15%
Paper 2 First Draft	10%
Paper 2 Final Version including peer editing	15%
Midterm Exam	15%
Final Exam	15%

### Schedule of Readings and Assignments

*Schedule may be changed with notice; monitor Sakai for announcements!*

#### Sentimentalism

T Jan 24 Introduction to the course, to Russia and its culture and history, and to the concepts of Romanticism and Realism

#### Russian Romanticism

Th Jan 26 Karamzin, "Poor Liza" (<http://lol-russ.umn.edu/hpgary/Russ3421/Karamzin.pdf>)

T Jan 31 Pushkin, "Queen of Spades" (and, optional, film showing *Window to Paris*)

Th Feb 2 - Pushkin, *Eugene Onegin* (Falen Translation)

Th Feb 9 Visit from representatives of IC's Writing Center  
Selected Verse by Zhukovsky, Pushkin, and Lermontov

#### Absurd

T Feb 14 Gogol, "The Overcoat"

Th Feb 16 Gogol, "The Nose" and Excerpts from *Dead Souls*  
Brainstorming for Paper 1 in groups by option (a) or (b)  
*If you are doing the extra credit option, you should start working on it now.*

#### Emergence of Psychological Realism

T Feb 21 Lermontov, "The Fatalist" (from *Hero of Our Time*)

Th Feb 23 Lermontov, “Princess Mary” (from *Hero of Our Time*)  
*Paper 1 First Draft Due in two copies; begin peer editing for homework*

Political Literature

T Feb 28 Pavlova, “At the Tea Table”  
Peer editing for Paper 1 Draft begins in class and continues for homework

Th Mar 2- Turgenev, *Fathers and Sons* (first half); *Peer editing for Paper 1 due to your partner in class today*

T Mar 7 *Father and Sons* (conclusion); *If you are doing the extra credit option for this half of the semester, it is due today by the end of class.*

Th Mar 9 Chernyshevsky, *What Is to Be Done* (excerpts) and selected works of poetry by Nekrasov and others. *Paper 1 Final Paper Due: Submit with first draft, peer editor report, and final reflection*

SPRING BREAK: MARCH 13 – 17

*Midterm Exam Due through Sakai by class time on March 21*

Literature and Existentialism

T Mar 21- Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*  
T Mar 28

T April 4 Dostoevsky, “The Dream of a Ridiculous Man”

Psychological Realism

Th Apr 6 Dostoevsky, “The Grand Inquisitor” (excerpt from *Brothers Karamazov*)

T Apr 11 Tolstoy, “The Death of Ivan Ilyich”  
([https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The\\_Death\\_of\\_Ivan\\_Ilych/I](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Death_of_Ivan_Ilych/I))  
Brainstorming for Paper 2 in groups by option (a) or (b)

Th Apr 13 Tolstoy, excerpt from *Anna Karenina*  
Tolstoy, excerpt from *War and Peace*

### Echoes of Gogol

T Apr 18 Leskov, “The Steel Flea” ([https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The\\_Steel\\_Flea](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Steel_Flea))  
*Paper 2 First Draft Due in two copies; begin peer editing for Paper for homework*

### Russian Symbolism

Th Apr 20- Sologub, *Petty Demon* (first half)  
T Apr 25 Sologub, *Petty Demon* (Conclusion)  
*If you are doing the extra credit option for the second half of the semester, you should start working on it now (read the short story in advance of the syllabus deadline and watch the film).*  
Selected works of poetry by Russian symbolists  
*Peer edit for Paper 2 due in class today.*

### Late Century Psychological Realism

Th Apr 27 Chekhov, “Lady with a Dog” (<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/13415/13415-h/13415-h.htm>)  
T May 2- Chekhov, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Paper 2 Final Paper Due: submit with first draft, peer editor report, and final reflection*  
Th May 4 Chekhov, *The Cherry Orchard* (conclusion)  
*Extra Credit Option Paper Due*

Optional Evening Session, Bring Popcorn: We will find a time to watch Woody Allen’s *Love and Death* and enjoy catching a lot of references to 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian literature.

**Final Exam: take home exam due as per registrar’s schedule**

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## **Paper Rubrics and Structure of Midterm and Final Examinations**

### **Paper Option A**

Choose one of the short stories listed on the syllabus for the first part of the semester (Paper 1) or the second part of the semester (Paper 2), all available on Sakai for this assignment, and analyze how the author’s literary style conforms to or departs from the literary style of works we have read so far this semester by comparing and contrasting with two other texts we have studied in

class thus far, with examples and citations from all three texts. Your paper is to be 1500 words in length and must use APA style documentation.

**Paper Option A Rubric**

	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 or 0 points
Thesis	Clear and specific, strong, interesting, plausible	Plausible, but broad and difficult to prove	Thesis does not correspond with assignment	Thesis weak (1) or missing altogether (0)
Evidence	Excellent examples, sufficient in number from all relevant texts, appropriately used	Good examples, appropriately used, but insufficient in number or not drawn from all relevant texts	Not all examples are used appropriately, may be insufficient in number, not drawn from all relevant texts	Insufficient number of examples, not drawn from all relevant texts, not always appropriately used
Coherence / Logic	Argument flows coherently and logically at all times, reader is never confused	Argument generally flows coherently and logically, but reader may sometimes be confused	Argument does not flow coherently and logically and there are numerous points of confusion	Argument lacks coherence and logic
Mechanics: Grammar, Punctuation, Spelling	There are no or very few mechanical errors and those present do not impede successful communication	There are some mechanical errors and some of them do impede successful communication.	There are many mechanical errors and they frequently, but not always, impede successful communication	Many mechanical errors impede successful communication
Length		Length within 10% of specified expectation	Length departs by more than 10% but less than 20% from specification (too short or too long)	Length departs by more than 20% (1 point) or by more than 30% (0 points) from specification
Documentation	Correct use of documentation in footnotes and works cited	Mostly correct use of documentation, some errors	Many errors in documentation	Minimal or no documentation
Peer Editing Process (First Draft Only)		Peer Edit of Partner's Paper (First Draft Only)	Excellent and constructive response, many useful suggestions	Good and constructive response with some useful suggestions

### **Paper Option B**

Take a scene from a well-known American novel, short story, television show, or film and recast it as a scene from a larger Russian work in the literary style of one of the authors we have read this semester. Write a 1500-word paper dense with examples of the chosen literary style, footnoting each example of the literary style you've chosen to emulate and each example of "Russianness." You must have at least 10 examples of the literary style and at least 5 examples of "Russianness." Begin your paper with a paragraph identifying the American work you are adapting and setting the scene. The count of 1500 words of your scene does not include the words used in your footnotes to identify the examples required for this assignment. With your paper, write a 1000-word commentary identifying the key features of the literary style you've chosen, providing examples of those features from texts you have read for our course this semester, using APA documentation.

**Paper Option B Rubric for Scene**

	3 points	2 points	1 or 0 points
Clarity of scene setting in first paragraph	Reader is immediately and efficiently oriented to the scene	Reader is somewhat oriented to the scene	Reader is unclear as to the setting of the scene
Examples of Literary Style	Both sufficient in number, appropriate matches	Either sufficient in number or appropriate in matches, but not always	Neither sufficient in number nor appropriate in matches in many cases
Examples of Russianness	Both sufficient in number, appropriate matches	Either sufficient in number or appropriate in matches, but not always	Neither sufficient in number nor appropriate in matches in many cases
Coherence	Scene flows coherently and logically, reader is never confused.	Scene generally flows coherently and logically, reader is sometimes confused	Scene does not flow coherently, reader is frequently or always confused
Mechanics: Grammar, Punctuation, Spelling	There are no or few mechanical errors and they do not impede communication	Frequent mechanical errors sometimes impede communication	Numerous mechanical errors frequently impede communication
Length	Within 10% of specified length	Departs by more than 10% but less than 20% from the specified length	Departs more than 20% (1 point) or by more than 30% (0 points) of the specified length)
Peer Edit of Partner's Paper (First Draft Only)	Excellent and constructive response, many useful suggestions	Good and constructive response with some useful suggestions	Response is not thoroughly engaged or there is no response

**Paper Option B Rubric for Commentary**

	3 points	2 points	1 or 0 points
Identification of literary style and features	Appropriately and accurately selected and explained, sufficient number of examples	Some features are appropriately and accurately selected, may have insufficient number of examples	Few or no features are appropriately and accurately selected, insufficient number of examples
Coherence	Essay flows coherently and logically with no moments of confusion for the reader	Essay generally flows coherently and logically with only one or two moments of confusion for the reader	Essay does not flow coherently or logically and there are numerous moments when the reader is confused
Mechanics: Grammar, Punctuation, Spelling	There are no or very few mechanical errors and they do not impede communication	Some mechanical errors sometimes impede communication	Many mechanical errors which often or very often impede communication
Documentation	Appropriate and accurate use of documentation without any errors	Some errors in documentation, but it is always used when necessary	Documentation is frequently inaccurate or it is missing entirely

**Structure of Mid-Term Exam (Take Home / Open Note)**

1. Identification: In a sentence or two identify the authors, titles, literary or cultural terms. (5 items – 10 points)
2. Close Textual Analysis 1: Write a 300-word essay analyzing this excerpt from a work we have *not* studied yet this semester, identifying literary features typical of one or another style we have considered and comparing the excerpt to one or more works we have read this semester. (30 points)
3. Close Textual Analysis 2: Write a 300-word essay analyzing this excerpt from a work we have *not* studied yet this semester, identifying literary features typical of one or another style we have considered and comparing the excerpt to one or more works we have read this semester. (30 points)
4. Essay: Write a 150-word essay in response to one of the following prompts, drawing examples from the work you've chosen to write about. (15 points)
  - a) What is your favorite text we've read so far this semester and why is it your favorite piece?
  - b) What is your least favorite text we've read so far this semester and why is it your least favorite piece?
5. Essay: Write a 150-word essay in response to one of the following prompts, drawing examples from the work you've chosen to write about. (15 points)
  - a) Which is the text have we read so far this semester that you think is most profound and why?
  - b) Which is the text have we read so far this semester that you think is most important for your understanding of Russian literature or of Russianness and why?
  - c) Which is the text we've read so far this semester that you think is most relevant to your life and why?

**Structure of Final Exam (Take Home / Open-Note)**

1. Identification: In a sentence or two identify the authors, titles, literary or cultural terms. (5 items – 10 points)
2. Close Textual Analysis 1: Write a 300-word essay analyzing this excerpt from a work we have *not* studied yet this semester, identifying literary features typical of one or another style we have considered and comparing the excerpt to one or more works we have read this semester. (30 points)
3. Close Textual Analysis 2: Write a 300-word essay analyzing another excerpt from a work we have *not* studied yet this semester, identifying literary features typical of one or another style we have considered and comparing the excerpt to one or more works we have read this semester. (30 points)
4. Essay: Write a 150-word essay in response to one of the following prompts, drawing examples from the work you've chosen to write about. (15 points)
  - c) What is your favorite text we've read so far this semester and why is it your favorite piece?
  - d) What is your least favorite text we've read so far this semester and why is it your least favorite piece?
5. Essay: Write a 150-word essay in response to one of the following prompts, drawing examples from the work you've chosen to write about. (15 points)
  - d) Which is the text have we read so far this semester that you think is most profound and why?
  - e) Which is the text have we read so far this semester that you think is most important for your understanding of Russian literature or of Russianness and why?
  - f) Which is the text we've read so far this semester that you think is most relevant to your life and why?