

GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN MODERN RUSSIAN CULTURE

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines issues of gender and sexuality in Russian culture and society from 1861 to the present day, with emphasis both on historical developments and on contemporary theoretical approaches. It will examine how Russia's awareness of both its difference from and similarity to the West is reflected in matters relating to gender and sexuality. Explicitly interdisciplinary in its focus, the course will deal with questions of social and historical developments, as well as with debates in the artistic and cultural sphere (with literature serving both as a mirror of social life and as a site of debate). It will also consider how key texts in the field of gender studies might be applied in the Russian context. Four main topics are covered: nineteenth-century radical thought and the question of female emancipation and equality; Freud, decadence and *fin-de-siecle* sexualities; revolutionary identities and the New Soviet Man and Woman; and late-Soviet and post-Soviet developments, such as the rise of performative identities, the application of Western critical methods and growth of a gay rights movement. Students will also study a number of key Western theorists of gender and sexuality (Freud, Foucault, de Beauvoir, Woolf, Kristeva, Irigaray, Cixous, Butler, etc.)

Preliminary Reading

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Vol. 1: The Will to Knowledge* (various editions)

Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (various editions)

Rachel Adams and David Savran, *The Masculinity Studies Reader* (Malden and Oxford: Blackwell, 2002)

Mary Eagleton (ed.), *Feminist Literary Theory: A Reader*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996)

Toril Moi, *Sexual/textual politics: Feminist Literary Theory*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2002)

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990)

Adele Marie Barker and Jehanne M. Gheith (eds), *A history of women's writing in Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)

Barbara Evans Clements et al (eds), *Russian Masculinities in History and Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002)

Barbara Heldt, *Terrible Perfection: women and Russian literature* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987)

Catriona Kelly, *Refining Russia: Advice Literature, Polite Culture, and Gender from Catherine to Yeltsin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)

—, *An Anthology of Russian women's writing, 1777-1992* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1994)

—, *A history of Russian women's writing, 1820-1992* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994)

Eve Levin, *Sex and Society in the World of the Orthodox Slavs, 900-1700* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989)

Title: Gender and Sexuality in Modern Russian Culture

Course Code:

Course-unit value: 0.5cu

Availability: Taught in either term 1 or term 2

Open to: MA in Russian Studies, MA in Russian East European Literature and Culture, MA in Gender Studies, MA in Comparative Literature, MRes, other MA degree programmes, subject to requirements

Prerequisite: Knowledge of Russian is NOT required

Course leader: Dr Seth Graham

Other participants:

Aims:

1. To introduce students to four key areas of gender and sexuality in Russian literature and culture since 1861
2. To introduce students to various critical methodologies of gender studies, the study of sexualities and queer theory
3. To consider the relationship between theory and practice in gender studies, to consider the relationship between developments in Russia and the West in the period covered, and to consider the relevance of Western theories of gender and sexuality to the Russian context

Objectives:

1. Awareness of and engagement with key themes and methodologies in gender studies.
 2. Understanding of the development of Russian ideas of gender and sexuality as shaped by social, cultural and historical factors.
 3. Application of theoretical models to specific case studies.
 4. Capacity to reflect on how theoretical models can be challenged by specific applications.
 5. Awareness of the relationship between Western theories and the Russian context and the willingness to explore this relationship.
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Teaching & Learning Methods:

Number of Hours:

Lectures

6

Seminars

14

Private Study

100

Assessment:

The course is examined by TWO assessed essays of 3000 words each, to be presented with bibliography and footnotes, to be submitted by dates confirmed at the beginning of the course. Broadly speaking, one essay will deal with issues of methodology and criticism, the other with issues of cultural context and application. Late submission is penalised according to the rules set out in the MA Handbook. The essays are double-marked and examined externally. Feedback forms with tutor's comments are returned to students without marks; the marks are released after they are confirmed at the MA Examination Board, held at the end of the academic year.