Henry James referred to Russian novels of the 19th century as “loose baggy monsters.” James is not alone in finding Russian literature odd and perplexing. Written largely by an educated elite, eerily self-conscious because of czarist censorship and political repression, Russian literature of the nineteenth century nevertheless confronts many of the crucial concerns of human existence – love and friendship, jealousy and hatred, contentment and envy, conformity and independence, intellect vs. the passions, religion vs. atheism. In this course we will read a combination of short stories and novels. By examining literary depictions of such social institutions as dueling and gambling, courtship and marriage, adultery and spousal abuse, work and leisure, gossip and the society ball, the course will emphasize the relationship between literary text and cultural context. All works will be read in translation.

Learning outcomes:
On successful completion of this unit, students will be able to:

• Demonstrate a broad understanding of the Russian intellectual context of the 19th century and in-depth understanding of selected authors and texts from this period;

• Understand, analyze, and discuss selected works of literature, relating them to the appropriate social, historical and cultural context;

• Communicate ideas in oral and written form, through in-class discussion, written essays, and the final exam.

No computers. This is an analog course

Texts—all available at the IMU bookstore
Please use these editions. Translations matter:

Mikhail Lermontov, A Hero of Our Time, trans. Marian Schwartz (Modern Library)
Nikolai Gogol, The Collected Tales of Nikolai Gogol, trans. Pevear & Volokhonsky (Vintage)
Nikolai Gogol, Dead Souls, trans. Pevear & Volokhonsky (Vintage)
Ivan Turgenev, Fathers and Sons, trans. Richard Freeborn (Oxford World’s Classics)
Fyodor Dostoevsky, Notes from Underground, trans. Pevear & Volokhonsky (Vintage)
Fyodor Dostoevsky, Crime and Punishment, trans. Pevear & Volokhonsky (Vintage)
Leo Tolstoy, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich and Other Stories*, trans. Pevear & Volokhonsky (Vintage)

**Format, prerequisites and requirements of the course**

**Seminar and lecture format.** Active attendance expected (attendance will be taken). From 50–200 pages of reading per week.

**Two 5-page papers** for undergraduates; **one 5-page and one 10-page** for graduate students.¹

**Midterm Exam** (Week 8)

**Final Exam** (Dec 18)

**Quizzes**

There will be 5 unannounced (“pop”) quizzes during the semester. These will be brief, factual quizzes about the material to be read for that class day, although I may ask some less-than-factual, more interpretive, questions as a “warm-up” for class discussion (“What do you see as one of the more interesting images in this story and how do you interpret it?”). The purpose behind the quizzes is, yes, to make sure you’re keeping up with the reading and that you’re reading for details, but also to help you process some of the information from your reading. Your **three best** scores will be factored into your grade, the other two will be discarded.

**Quiz make-up policy:** If you miss class for any reason (excused or unexcused), it will be your responsibility to find out from me what you missed that day. Make-up quizzes will be granted only if you had an excused absence, but you still must take the quiz within two days of “being back in commission.”

**Grading:** Papers: 50%; Participation: 15%; Quizzes: 10%, Midterm: 10%, Final: 10%, Attendance: 5%

**CLASS RULES**

Attendance at each class is required. The only acceptable excuse for an absence is medical and requires a signed note by a licensed physician. For each two unexcused absences, I lower your grade my one whole letter – A to B, C to D, et cetera. After the first week, coming to class late or leaving class early will count as one-half an unexcused absence.

All assignments are to be typewritten or printed. Everything must be double-spaced, with one-inch margins all around.

¹ Graduate students must incorporate 3–4 secondary sources.
Everything you hand in must be proofread for spelling as well as obvious errors in usage and mechanics. Failure to do this will result in a lowered grade on the assignment. Do not rely solely on the computer’s Spell-Check function to proof your spelling since what is a misspelling of the word you want to use often ends up being the correct spelling of some other word, and the Spell-Check, being completely dumb, will not catch it. Handwritten corrections on typed work (stuff crossed out, added, words respelled are not only accepted but encouraged, since they’re usually signs of sedulous proofreading. Better right than neat (as long as it’s readable).

You are required to keep a copy of all your work (including email assignments), so that if the original gets lost or eaten by my dog somehow, I can immediately get the copy from you. This means that any assignment I don’t get or “lose” somehow becomes your responsibility to replace on demand.

You are required to bring your copy of the text under discussion, a notebook, and a pen or pencil to each class. Laptop computers and misnomered “smart phones” will not be used during class.

**CLASS RULES ON PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

Anybody gets to ask any question about any fiction-related issues he or she wants. No question about literature is stupid. You are forbidden to keep yourself from asking a question or making a comment because you fear it will sound obvious or unsophisticated or lame or stupid. Because critical reading and prose fiction are such hard, weird things to try to study, a stupid-seeming comment or question can end up being valuable or profound. I am deadly serious about creating a classroom environment where everyone feels free to ask or speak about anything he or she wishes. Any student who groans, smirks, mimics, snarks, chortles, eye-rolls, or in any way ridicules some other student’s in-class comment will be warned once in private and on the second offence will be kicked out of class and flunked, no matter what week it is.

This does not mean we all have to sit around smiling sweetly at one another for three hours a week. No truths about the form, content, structure, symbolism, theme, or overall artistic quality of any piece of fiction are etched in stone or beyond dispute. In class, you are invited (more like urged) to disagree with one another and with me – and I get to disagree with you – provided we are all respectful of one another and not snide, savage, or abusive. This class, in other words, is not just a Find-Out-What-The-Teacher-Thinks-And-Regurgitate-It-All-Back-At-Him course. It’s not like math or physics – there are no right or wrong answers (though there are interesting versus dull, fertile versus barren, plausible versus whack answers)

**Grading scale:**

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<td>100% +</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-99%</td>
<td>B+</td>
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For the college-wide policy on withdrawals, and about grades like FX, Extended “X” and FN, see http://www.indiana.edu/~college/ado/policies.shtml. The policy as defined there will be followed in this course.

**STANDARD DISCLAIMER**

All information in this syllabus, including course requirements and tentative schedules for the test, papers, etc., is subject to change and should not be considered a substitute for attending class or for any information that is provided to you by your instructor in class.

**Reading/Writing Assignments**

**Week 1**  
Mon, 26 Aug Introduction to the Course and Russian Literature  
**PRINT OUT ALL AND BRING TO CLASS.**

**Week 2**  
Mon, 2 Sep Labor Day  
Wed, 4 Sep Pushkin, *Eugene Onegin (EO)*, chapters 1–3

**Week 3**  
Mon, 9 Sep EO, chapters 4–6  
Wed, 11 Sep EO, chapters 7 & 8

**Week 4**  
Wed, 18 Sep Hero, Part 2

**Week 5**  
Mon, 23 Sep Nikolai Gogol, “Nevsky Prospekt,” “The Nose” in *The Collected Tales*...  
Wed, 25 Sep Gogol, “The Overcoat,” “Diary of a Madman” in *The Collected Tales*...

**Week 6**  
Mon, 30 Sep FIRST PAPER DUE IN CLASS  
Wed, 2 Oct Gogol, *Dead Souls (DS)*, Chapters 1–5

**Week 7**  
Mon, 7 Oct DS, Chapters 6–8  
Wed, 9 Oct DS, Chapters 9–11

**Week 8**  
Mon, 14 MIDTERM EXAM Ivan Turgenev, *Fathers & Sons (F&S)*, Chapters 1–10  
Wed, 16 Oct **F&S**, Chapters 11–22
**Week 9**
Mon, 21 Oct **F&S**, Chapters 23–28  
Wed, 23 Oct Nikolai Leskov, “Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District” (Oncourse)

**Week 10**
Mon, 28 Oct Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, pp. 3–60  
Wed, 30 Oct *Notes* to end

**Week 11**
Mon, 4 Nov Dostoevsky, *Crime & Punishment* (**C&P**), Part 1  
Wed, 6 Nov C&P, Part 2

**Week 12**
Mon, 11 Nov C&P, Part 3  
Wed, 13 Nov C&P, Part 4

**Week 13**
Mon, 18 Nov C&P, Part 5  
Wed, 20 Nov C&P, Part 6 and Epilogue

**Thanksgiving Break**

**Week 14**
Mon, 2 Dec Tolstoy, “The Death of Ivan Ilych”  
Wed, 4 Dec Tolstoy, “The Kreutzer Sonata”

**Week 15**
Mon, 9 Dec Tolstoy, “Father Sergius”  
Wed, 11 Dec TBA

**FINAL EXAM: MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 10:15–12:15**

**FINAL PAPER DUE: WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 18TH BY NOON IN MY MAILBOX IN BH 502**