RUSSIAN CULTURE AFTER 1880

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INTRODUCTION
The years from 1880 to the present day have seen an extraordinary series of transformations in Russian history - avant-garde experimentation; the age of Revolution; the rise and gradual dismantling of Stalinist orthodoxies; the collapse of the Soviet Union' and the emergence of contemporary Russian culture on the world stage. Both aesthetically and politically, this period has been extraordinarily rich and varied.

This paper covers the full range of this ‘long’ twentieth century, from the early experiments of avant-garde writers and film-makers, through the feel-good ideological texts of Stalinist Socialist Realism, to recent post-Soviet attempts to come to terms with a complex and traumatic past. In the fraught political arena of Soviet Russia, literature and culture were formed in relation to state imperatives, which could be accepted or rejected, but which were difficult to ignore. The literary and visual texts that we study in this paper provide a wide range of responses to the particular contexts of twentieth and twenty-first-century Russia, and reveal the remarkable creativity that flourished, however paradoxically, in that world.

DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE
This paper offers the chance to tackle many kinds of texts (novels, poems, plays, short stories), to work with many kinds of media (written texts, film, visual and performing arts), and to explore many modes of cultural enquiry (literary criticism and theory, intellectual and cultural history).

The paper is divided into two sections. Section A examines a set text: Mikhail Bulgakov’s novel Master i Margarita (1928-1940). Section B offers five thematic topics that span the full range of the century’s cultural adventures. Each of these topics will require you to think across disciplinary boundaries, to make connections among texts produced in a range of media, and to explore both verbal and visual modes of cultural expression.

Section A of the examination will offer students a choice between writing a commentary on an extract from the set text OR answering an essay question on the set text. Section B will offer a choice of essay questions for each topic; each question in Section B will require you to discuss two or more texts by two or more authors/directors/artists.

All Candidates must answer three questions: one from Section A and two from Section B. You must ensure that at least one of your answers in Section B refers substantively to at least one literary text (i.e. you cannot study only film and visual material to prepare for Section B). As always, you may not discuss the same material in more than one question.

TEACHING
There will be 16 lectures (3 on the set text, 2 on each of the five topics, 3 on theoretical frameworks ) 4 revision seminars in Easter term; and 10 supervisions over the year (2 on the set text, 1 or 2 on each of the five topics, and the rest for revision). Lectures will provide essential background for the course, so you are expected to attend all of them.
**SET TEXTS AND TOPICS, 2015/2016**

**Section A: Set Text**
Mikhail Bulgakov, *Master i Margarita* (1989 or later, as these later editions should mirror the edition prepared by Lidia Ianovskaia for publication in Kiev, 1989, and Moscow, 1990)

**Section B: Topics**
1. Revolution
2. Violence and Mourning
3. The City and Everyday Life
4. Legacies of Stalinism
5. Narrating Difference: Contested Identities in Late/Post-Soviet Culture

**Please note:** The reading list below treats each topic as a separate entity, with distinct primary and secondary sources, but as the course proceeds you will realize that readings you have studied in relationship to one topic may also be discussed in relationship to several others. You may find it possible to write about revolution, for example, in relation to readings set for the topics on violence or the city. Readings for the final two topics may also overlap in their formal and aesthetic concerns with each other and/or with the topics on the city or on violence. Thus, although you will only write on TWO of these five topics in the examination, you should find that your work on each of the five topics enhances your understanding of all the others. This structure also allows you to develop a solid grasp of the period as a whole, while developing your own approach to the topics you choose to prepare for the exam.

**SCHEDULE OF LECTURES**

**Michaelmas**
- Week 1: Revolutionary Forms (EKW)
- Week 2: Revolution (EKW)
- Week 3: Revolution (EKW)
- Weeks 4: Violence (SKL)
- Week 5: Violence (EKW)
- Weeks 6: City (EKW)
- Week 7: City (EKW)
- Week 8: Bulgakov (SKL)

**Lent**
- Weeks 1-2: Bulgakov (SKL)
- Week 3: Socialist Realism (SKL)
- Weeks 4-5: Legacies of Stalinism (SKL)
- Week 6: Conceptualism & Postmodernism (SKL)
- Weeks 7-8: Narrating Difference: Contested Identities in Late/Post-Soviet Culture (SKL)

**Easter**
- Week 1: Revision Seminar 1: Bulgakov (SKL)
- Week 2: Revision Seminar 2: Revolution/Violence (SKL)
- Week 3: Revision Seminar 3: City & Everyday Life (SKL)
Week 4: Revision Seminar 4: Legacies of Stalinism/Narrating Difference

**READING LIST**
Primary and secondary texts are set out below, organised by Section and Topic. Although extensive, the list is not exhaustive, and you may wish to extend your reading in different directions on the advice of your supervisor. The lists of secondary reading are intended to offer a variety of critical and theoretical approaches, but they are limited—primarily, but not exclusively—to scholarly studies in English. Several important critical texts are only available in Russian, and we encourage you to try to read at least a few of them. You will see that a number of journal articles are suggested: do not be put off by the need to obtain these journals in the University Library! The use of articles is one of the most efficient ways to focus your reading and research. Many of the listed articles are available online, either on the CamTools website for this course or from electronic databases such as JSTOR (accessible from the Library home page). Your supervisor will help you to orientate yourself within the bibliography, and to use your time efficiently, by suggesting those texts which most closely relate to the themes and approaches that interest you. Some recommended texts, as well as links to useful web-based resources (for texts, images, and video), are (or soon will be) posted on the CamTools site for this course.

**I. BACKGROUND READING AND REFERENCE WORKS:**
The list below contains essential reference works for the course as a whole. You will want to consult them to get a sense of the general background both for the period as a whole, but also for specific texts and cultural questions. You are not expected to read all of these books, but you are encouraged to use this list as a guide in your preparation for essays and supervisions.

Balina, Marina and Evgenii Dobrenko, eds. *Cambridge Companion to 20th-Century Russian Literature*. CUP, 2011. This book contains many chapters that will be relevant to specific topics in this paper, and would be a useful text to refer to consistently throughout the year. Available online from computers in the .cam.ac.uk domain at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CCOL9780521875356


Emerson, Caryl. *Cambridge Introduction to Russian Literature*. Cambridge, 2008 [see especially Chapters 7-9 on late 19th to early 21st centuries].

II. SECTION A: SET TEXT

**A1. Primary text**  

**Mikhail Bulgakov, Master I Margarita.**

Please purchase your own copy of this text, using an edition prepared AFTER 1989. This novel has a complicated textual history and earlier versions do not conform to the text that scholars consider the closest to a 'final' version.

Those of you who may wish to read a translation before or as you work your way through this difficult text should be aware that ONLY the translations prepared by the teams of Diana Burgin & Katherine O'Conor or Richard Pevear & Larissa Volokhonsky are considered both accurate and complete by the scholarly community.
A2. Secondary readings for Mikhail Bulgakov’s Master i Margarita


Bethea, David. The Shape of Apocalypse in Modern Russian Fiction, Princeton University Press, 1989

Bulgakov, Mikhail. “Moi bednyi bedny Master…: Polnoe sobranie redaktsii i variantov romana ‘Master i Margarita’. Ed. Viktor Losev. Moscow: Vagrius, 2006. [This text allows you to trace the complex textual history of the novel, by comparing its multiple, very different drafts.]


Curtis, Julie. Manuscripts don't burn: a life in letters and diaries, 1991


Renan, Ernst. La Vie de Jesus, 1863 (trans. The Life of Jesus, 1864). An important intertext for The Master and Margarita.


Testa, Carlo. "Bulgakov's Master i Margarita: Post-Romantic Devil Pacts," Canadian-American Slavic Studies, 24 no. 3 (Fall 1990), 257-78

III. SECTION B: TOPICS IN RUSSIAN CULTURE AFTER 1880

This list sets out the topics to be taught this year, together with titles of texts/films, etc. that are particularly recommended for study on each topic. There are two lists of reading for each topic: one contains a list of 'core' readings & visual materials that are particularly suitable for students in part IB and the other contains a list of 'additional' readings that all students are welcome to explore, but which are more challenging linguistically and, thus, more suitable for students in Part II. Lectures will tend to focus on, but will not be limited to, the 'core' texts.

Please remember that you are NOT expected to read all the primary sources listed for each topic, but you should aim to have studied a broadly representative selection of texts related to the topics that you plan to discuss in the exam. The extensive lists of recommended primary and secondary readings below are intended as a map of possible directions for you to explore – and narrow! – in your own reading and research.

There will be at least two questions on the exam paper relating to each of the topics. Each question will require you to answer on two or more works by two or more authors and/or artists. You are free to draw on whatever appropriate material you have at your disposal in response to particular questions—subject to the general principle, which appears as a rubric on the exam paper— that ‘candidates should not draw substantially on the same material more than once’.
B1. REVOLUTION: MONTAGE AND THE AVANT-GARDE

B1.1 Primary Sources

B1.1a Core reading & viewing

Essays/Manifestos:
Burliuk et al, “Poshchechina obschestvennomu vkusu” (1912)
Zamiatin, “O literature, revoliutsii, entropii i prochem” (1923).

Film:
Dziga Vertov, *Chelovek s kinoaparatom* (1929)
Sergei Eisenstein, dir. *Stachka* (1924)

Poems:
Vladimir Maiakovskii, “Noch’”, “Utro”, and others.
Aleksandr Blok, “Dvenadtsat”

Theatre:
Vladimir Maiakovskii, *Misteriia-buff* (1918, 1921). **Part IB expected to read ONLY the prologue and last act of the 1921 version. Part II reads the entire play.**

Visual art:
works by Rodchenko, Popova, Stepanova, Malevich, Tatlin and others

B1.1b Additional reading & viewing

Films:
Eisenstein, *Bronenosets Potemkin* (1926), *Oktiabr* (1928)

Manifestos:
Gan, Aleksei. *Konstruktivism* (1922) [extracts]
Maiakovskii, v.. ‘Kak delat’ stikhi,’ in *How are verses made?: with, A cloud in trousers; and, To Sergey Esenin*, translated from the Russian and with an introduction and notes by G.M. Hyde (1990) [and elsewhere].
Vertov, Dziga. ‘We. A Manifesto’ (1922); other essays also posted on CamTools.

B1.2 Secondary Sources
General background reading on revolutionary culture:


Burger, Peter, *Theory of the Avant-garde* (University of Minnesota Press). Especially documents from LEF.


Selected reading on prose, poetry and theatre:


Stapanian, J.R. *Mayakovsky’s Cubo-Futurist Vision*, 1986


Selected reading on film and visual art:


Joyce, Mark. ‘The Soviet Montage Cinema of the 1920s,’ in *An Introduction to Film Studies*, Routledge, 1996

Lawton, Anna, *Cinema and the Russian Avant-garde: Aesthetics and Politics* Occasional paper (Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies); no. 213, 1986.


**B2. VIOLENCE AND MOURNING**

**B2.1 Primary Sources**

**B2.1a Core reading**


Daniil Kharms, *Sluchai* (1933-1939) and ‘Kassirsha’, (1936). Kharms’ *Sluchai* are very short: you should read all of them, but for purposes of the lecture, focus on ‘Kassirsha’ and the ‘Sluchai’ #1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11, 12, 15, 18, 23, 29, 30.

Anna Akhmatova, *Rekviem* (1935–1961). Most of you studied this poem in part IA. If you wrote on it in the examination for SLA3 or SL1, then you should not write about it in the exam for SL5. If you did not write about it in a previous exam, take this opportunity to read and study it in more depth.

**B2.1b Additional reading and viewing**
Babel, the rest of *Konarmiia*
Kharms, *Elizaveta Bam* (1927)
Aleksandr Vvedenskii, *Elka u Ivanovykh* (1938)
Viktor Shklovskii, *Sentimental’noe putechestvie* (1923)
Nikolai Zabolotskii, ‘Istoriia moego zakliuchenii a’ (1938)

### B2.2 Secondary reading:

**Theoretical readings on violence and mourning**

*NB: The readings listed in this section are densely written and, ‘though recommended ,they are NOT required. You should focus on working through the primary texts before you start wrestling with any of this material. Lectures may refer to this material; if you want to follow up, here’s where to start (representative extracts are posted on CamTools).*

Agamben, Georgio. *Homo sacer* (extracts)
Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed experience: Trauma, narrative, and history*. Johns Hopkins UP, 1996 [the introduction is particularly useful].
*On violence: a reader*, eds. Bruce Lawrence and Aisha Karim (Duke UP, 2007). Contains excerpts of work by Agamben, Arendt, Benjamin, Freud and Marx, which may be useful in thinking about this topic.

Online resource on ‘Violence in Twentieth-Century Russian and Eurasia: Experience, Affect, Memory, and Legacies’:
http://uiuc.libguides.com/content.php?pid=640345&sid=5298334

**Selected Secondary reading on Isaak Babel**


Буденный, С. “Бабизм Бабеля из Красной нови.” Октябрь 3 (1924): 196-197.

**Selected Secondary Literature on Daniil Kharms and the OBERIU**


Wanner, A., Russian Minimalism: From the Prose Poem to the Anti-Story, chapter on Daniil Kharms (Northwestern UP, 2003).


**Selected Secondary reading on Anna Akhmatova**


**B3: The City and Everyday Life**

**B3.1 Primary Sources**

**B4.1a Core reading & viewing**

*Fiction:*

Iurii Olesha, *Zavist* (1929)

Or: Evgenii Zamiatin, *My* (1921)

*Film:*
Abram Room, *Tret’iа meshchanskaia* (1928, a.k.a *Bed and Sofa*)

**B3.1b Additional reading & viewing**

*Fiction & drama*
Evgenii Zamiatin, *My* (1921)
Nikolai Erdman, *Samoubiitsa* (1928)
Mikhail Bulgakov, *Sobach’e serdtse* (1929)
Platonov, ‘Usomnivshiisia Makar’ (1929), *Kotlovan* (1929)

*Film*
Ermler, *Oblomok imperii* (1929)
Barnet, *Dom na Trubnoi* (1927)
Zheliabuzhskii, *Papirosnitsa iz Mosselproma* (1927)
Aleksandrov, *Tsirk* (1936)
B3.2 Secondary Sources

B3.2a. General Reading on the City and Everyday Life


B3.2b. Selected Secondary Reading on Specific Works and Authors or Filmmakers:

**B4. LEGACIES OF STALINISM**

This topic examines the ways in which Soviet and post-Soviet artists responded to the political and cultural legacies of Stalinism after 1953. To understand those responses you will need to have some sense of Stalinist cultural production and practices. Exam questions will require you to discuss material produced *after* Stalin's death, but you are free to discuss this material in comparison to works and ideas that circulated prior to 1953. Material for this topic may also be suitable for discussion in relation to earlier topics, particularly ‘Violence and Mourning’ or ‘The City & Everyday Life’.

**B4.1 Primary Sources**

**B4.1a Core reading and viewing**

Films:
(* = available with English subtitles in some format)
*Mikhail Chiaureli, Padenie Berlina* (The Fall of Berlin, 1949), excerpts posted on CamTools
*Mikhail Kalatozov, Letiat zhuravli* (The Cranes are Flying, 1957)
*Larisa Shepitko, Kryl’ia* (1967)
*Kira Muratova, Korotkie vstrechi* (1967)
Texts:
Pomerantsev, Vladimir. ‘Ob iskrennosti v literature’ (1953). Students in Part IB may focus on pages 218-228.
Erenburg, Il’ia. ‘Ottepel’ (1954). Please read at least the first chapter in advance of the first lecture on this topic. Students in Part IB may read only specified extracts (TBC) in Russian, provided they read the entire novel in English.

Visual Art:
Paintings and installations by Oskar Rabin, Il’ia Kabakov, Komar and Melamid, Erik Bulatov, Grisha Bruskin and others.

B4.1b Additional reading and viewing
Stalin-era films (good background material):
*Sergei Vasil’ev and Georgii Vasil’ev, Chapaev (1934)
*Grigorii Aleksandrov, Tsirk (Circus, 1936) and/or Volga-Volga (1938)
Sergei Gerasimov, Semero smelykh (1936)
*Ivan Pyr’ev, Kubanskie kazaki (1949)

Socialist realist fiction:
Dmitrii Furmanov, Chapaev (1923)
Fedor Gladkov, Tsement (1925, 1941. See Busch for details of the novel’s textual history)
Nikolai Ostrovskii, Kak zakalialas’ stal’ (1932-4)

Films of the Thaw, Brezhnev and glasnost’ eras that work well with this topic:
*Marlen Khutsiev, Mne 20 let (1962/1964)
*Grigori Chukhrai, Ballada o soldate (Ballad of a Soldier, 1959)
*Andrei Tarkovskii, Ivanovo Detstvo (My Name is Ivan, 1962), Andrei Rublev (1966/1971)
*Aleksei German, Moi drug Ivan Lapshin (My Friend Ivan Lapshin, 1984)
*Tengiz Abuladze, Pokaianie (Repentance, 1984)
*Sergei Livnev, Serp i molot (Hammer and Sickle, 1994)
*Nikita Mikhalkov, Utomlennye solntsem (Burnt by the Sun, 1994)

Fiction of the Thaw, Brezhnev and glasnost’ eras that work well with this topic:
Mikhail Sholokhov, ‘Sud’ba cheloveka’ (1957)
Bulat Okudzhava, ‘Bud’ zdomor, shkoliar’ (1961)
Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Odin den’ Ivana Denisovicha (1962), and ‘Matrenin dvor’ (1963)
Varlam Shalamov, additional stories from Kolymskie rasskazy or Levyi Bereg (1950s, 1960s)
Iurii Trifonov, Dom na naberezhnoi (1976)
Valentin Rasputin, Proshchanie s Materoi (1976)
Tatiana Tolstaia, ‘Somnambula v tumane’ (1988)

Songs and/or poems by:

Other visual artists to consider:

Memoirs:
Nadezhda Mandelstam, Vospominaniia (Hope Against Hope)
Evgeniia Ginzburg, Krutoi marshrut (Into the Whirlwind)
Ilia Ehrenburg, Vospominaniia (Memoirs, see sections on 1953-1955) [Compare these with: Thomas Lahusen et al., eds.. Intimacy and Terror: Soviet Diaries of the 1930s.]

B4.2 Secondary Sources

B4.2a. General background reading on the Stalin era and Socialist Realism:


*Soviet Writers’ Congress 1934: The Debate on Socialist Realism and Modernism* (Maxim Gorky, Karl Radek, Nikolai Bukharin, Andrei Zhdanov and others) Wishart, 1977 [A transcript of the debate at which ‘Socialist Realism’ was adopted]


**B4.2b. General background reading on the legacies of Stalinist culture after 1953:**


Khrushchev, Nikita. *Vysokoe prizvanie literatury i iskusstva*. Moscow, 1963. (English trans. available as *The Great Mission of Literature and Art, Moscow, 1964.*) This is a useful collection of Khrushchev’s speeches on art and literary topics.


Oushakine, Sergei. “‘We’re Nostalgic But We’re Not Crazy’: Retrofitting the Past in Russia’, Russian Review 66, 3 (July 2007): 451-482.


B4.2c. Theoretical readings that may be helpful for this topic:


Caruth, Cathy. Unclaimed experience: Trauma, narrative, and history. Johns Hopkins UP, 1996 [the introduction is particularly useful].


Tertz, Abram (pseud. for Andrei Syniavskii). Chto takoe sotsialisticheskii realizm [1959, On Socialist Realism ].

B4.2d. Secondary reading on literature after 1953:

Berggolts, Olga. ‘Razgovor o lirike’ and ‘Protiv likvidatsii liriki’ (1953).


Dobson, Miriam. ‘Contesting the Paradigms of De-Stalinization: Readers’ Responses to One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich,’ Slavic Review 64, 3 (Winter 2005): 580-601


B4.2e. Secondary reading on cinema and television after 1953:
Boym, Svetlana. ‘Stalin’s Cinematic Charisma: Between History and Nostalgia,’ Slavic Review 51: 3 (Fall, 1992): 536.
Widdis, Emma. Visions of a New Land: Soviet Film from the Revolution to the Second World War, Yale University Press, 2003, Chapter 6

B4.2f. Secondary reading and sources for study of visual art in the post-Stalin era:
Reid, Susan E.. “In the Name of the People: The Manege Affair Revisited,” *Kritika* 6, no. 4 (Fall 2005): 673-716.

**Useful websites (see also other links on CamTools):**

- Moscow Conceptualism: [http://conceptualism.letov.ru/](http://conceptualism.letov.ru/)
B5. NARRATING DIFFERENCE: CONTESTED IDENTITIES IN LATE/POST-SOVIECULTURE

1. Please note the potential overlap between the readings suggested for this topic and some of those listed in the bibliographies for Topic 4. You may well find it possible to write about materials from both sets of readings in answers to questions for either Topic (or, indeed, for the topics on Violence or the City & Everyday Life).

2. Please note also that we encourage you to talk with your supervisor about how to pursue your particular interests in contemporary Russian culture in relationship to this topic. The texts listed below are those currently regarded as ‘contemporary classics’: works the appearance of which signaled or provoked a major shift in Russian cultural production. The core reading is concentrated on works produced in the era of glasnost’ and perestroika, but— in consultation with your supervisor—we hope you will choose to compare these key works of the late 20th century with early 21st-century sources of particular interest to you.

B5.1 : Primary Sources

B5.1a Core reading & viewing:

Film:
*Sergei Solov’ev, Assa (1987)
*Aleksei Balabanov, Brat (1997)
*Dmitrii Mamuliia, Drugoe nebo (2010)
* = available with English subtitles in some format

Fiction:
Vladimir Makanin, ‘Kavkazskii plennyi’ (1994)
At least one other, more recent text TBC.

Poetry:
Short poems by Nina Iskrenko, Olga Sedakova, Elena Shvarts

Music:
Songs and music videos by Akvarium, Nautilus Pompilius, DDT, Kino, others. See documents and links on CamTools in ‘Music’ folder.

B5.1b Additional reading & viewing
**Fiction:**
Iskander, Fazil’, stories from *Sandro iz Chegema* (1970s-1980s)
Petrushevskaia, Liudmila. short stories and/or the novella *Vremianoch’* (1994)
Tolstaia, Tatiana, esp. ‘Milaia Shura’, ‘Reka Okkervil’,” ‘Somnambula v tumane’ (all 1980s)
Volos, Andrei, ‘Svoi,’ ‘Chuzhoi’ and other selections from *Khurramabad* (1999)

**Poetry:**
Additional poems by: Nina Iskrenko, Timur Kibirov, Dmitrii Prigov, Lev Rubinshtein, Elena Shvarts, Olga Sedakova, Vera Pavlova, Tatiana Shcherbina. See selections on CamTools.

**Drama:**
*(Video files of performances of some of these texts are available)*
Nina Sadur, *Chudnaia baba* (1981);
Mikhail Shatrov; *Diktatura sovesti* (1987)

**Film:**
Aleksandr Rogozhin, *Osobennosti natsional’noi okhoty* (1994),
Sergei Bodrov, Sr., *Kavkazskii plennik* (1996)
Vera Storozheva, *Puteshestvie s domashnymi zhivotnymi* (2007)
NB: Most of the above are available with subtitles, ‘though it can be tricky to find them.

**Visual art:**
AES Group ([www.aes-group.org](http://www.aes-group.org))
B5.2 Secondary Sources

B5.2a. General background reading on late and post-Soviet culture:
Encyclopedia of Contemporary Russian Culture, ed. by Tatiana Smorodinskaya, Karen Evans-Romaine and Helena Goscilo, Routledge, 2006

B5.2b. Theoretical readings that may be helpful for this topic (see also section B4.2c):


B5.2c. Secondary reading on contemporary prose, poetry, theatre:


Balina, Marina and Mark Lipovetsky, eds.. Russian Writers Since 1980. Dictionary of Literary Biography ; v. 285, Detroit : Gale, c200


Chuprinin, Sergei. ‘Literary Criticism in Post-Soviet Russia: The “Decade of Zeros”’, Toronto Slavic Annual 1, 2003 (247-56)


B5.2d. Secondary reading on contemporary cinema


Condee, Nancy. *The Imperial Trace: Recent Russian Cinema*. Oxford UP, 2009


Useful websites for contemporary Russian film studies:

http://www.kinokultura.com/index.html

http://www.kinoart.ru/

http://www.seance.ru/

http://russiancinema.ru/

B5.2e. Secondary sources on contemporary visual art

*Angels of History. Moscow Conceptualism and its Influence*, ed. by Joseph Backstein and Bart de Baere, Mercatorfonds, 2005


Bown, Matthew Cullerne. *Contemporary Russian Art*, Phaidon, 1989


IRWIN, East Art Map. Contemporary Art and Eastern Europe, MIT Press, 2006 (contributions on Russia by Ekaterina Degot, Marina Koldobskaya and Viktor Misiano)


Useful websites for contemporary Russian visual arts:

www.guelman.ru
http://www.artchronika.ru/
http://nonkonformist.narod.ru/
http://artprotest.org/
Sample Examination Paper (using format that will be followed in Tripos 2016)

MODERN AND MEDIEVAL LANGUAGES TRIPOS  Part IB and Part II

Paper Ru.6

RUSSIAN CULTURE AFTER 1880

This paper is for Part IB and Part II candidates.

All candidates: Answer THREE questions, ONE from Section A and TWO from Section B. Candidates for this paper may NOT draw substantially on material from their dissertations or material which they have used or intend to use in another scheduled paper. Candidates may NOT draw substantially on the same material in more than ONE question on the same paper.

STATIONERY REQUIREMENTS               SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

20 Page Answer Book x 1                 None

Rough work pad

You may not start to read the questions printed on the subsequent pages of this question paper until instructed that you may do so by the Invigilator
SECTION A

1 Answer ONE of the following:

(a) ‘Above all, *Master i Margarita* is an enquiry into the ethical obligations of readers, writers, and interlocutors.’ Discuss.

(b) Write a commentary on the style and content of the following passage:

После укола все меняется перед спящим. От постели к окну протягивается широкая лунная дорога, и на эту дорогу поднимается человек в белом плаще с кровавым подбоем и начинает идти к луне. Рядом с ним идет какой-то молодой человек в разорванном хитоне и с обезображенным лицом. Идущие о чем-то разговаривают с жаром, спорят, хотят о чем-то договориться.

-- Боги, боги, -- говорит, обращая надменное лицо к своему спутнику, тот человек в плаще, -- какая пошлая казнь! Но ты мне, пожалуйста, скажи, -- тут лицо из надменного превращается в умоляющее, -- ведь ее не было!

Молю тебя, скажи, не было?

-- Ну, конечно не было, -- отвечает хриплым голосом спутник, -- тебе это померещилось.

-- И ты можешь поклясться в этом? -- заискивающе просит человек в плаще.

-- Клянусь, -- отвечает спутник, и глаза его почему-то улыбаются.

-- Больше мне ничего не нужно! -- сорванным голосом вскрикивает человек в плаще и поднимается все выше к луне, увлекая своего спутника.

За ним идет спокойный и величественный гигантский остроухий пес. Тогда лунный путь вскипает, из него начинает хлестать лунная река и разливается во все стороны. Луна властвует и играет, луна танцует и шалит. Тогда в потоке складывается непомерной красоты женщина и выводит к Ивану за руку пугливо озирающегося обросшего бородой человека. Иван Николаевич сразу узнает его. Это -- номер сто восемнадцатый, его ночной гость. Иван Николаевич во сне протягивает к нему руки и жадно спрашивает:

-- Так, стало быть, этим и кончилось?
Этим и кончилось, мой ученик, -- отвечает номер сто восемнадцатый, а женщина подходит к Ивану и говорит:

-- Конечно, этим. Все кончилось и все кончается..., и я вас поцелую в лоб, и все у вас будет так, как надо.

Она наклоняется к Ивану и целует его в лоб, и Иван тянется к ней и всматривается в ее глаза, но она отступает, отступает и уходит вместе со своим спутником к луне.

[308 words]

SECTION B

Answers in Section B must refer to works by TWO OR MORE writers/directors/visual artists. AT LEAST ONE of your answers in Section B must refer to ONE OR MORE literary texts.

2 REVOLUTION

Answer ONE of the following:

(a) ‘The collision of political imperatives and formal preoccupations defined the Russian and Soviet avant-garde.’ Discuss.

(b) ‘Может быть, уже теперь не надо больше и писать, а только проповедовать.’ Discuss with reference to Russian and Soviet revolutionary culture.

(c) ‘Realism that is not primitive consists in displacement, distortion, curvature, non-objectivity.’ Discuss with reference to Russian and Soviet revolutionary culture.

3 VIOLENCE AND MOURNING

Answer ONE of the following:

(a) ‘There is no spectacle we so eagerly pursue, as that of some uncommon and grievous calamity; so that whether the misfortune is before our eyes, or whether they are turned back to it in history, it always touches with delight. This is not an unmixed delight, but blended with no small uneasiness’ (Edmund Burke). Discuss.

(b) ‘Normative schemes of intelligibility establish what will and will not be human, what will be a livable life, what will be a grievable death’ (Judith Butler). Discuss.
(c) ‘Mourning creates meaning.’ Discuss.

4 THE CITY AND EVERYDAY LIFE IN RUSSIAN AND SOVIET CULTURE

Answer ONE of the following:

(a) ‘The city is a space of loneliness, not of belonging’ Discuss.

(b) ‘To influence man in the new society, to give him new habits, a new way of thinking: such is the goal of any art.’ Discuss.
(c) ‘To literature today, the plane surface of everyday life is what the earth is to an airplane – a mere runway from which to take off, in order to rise aloft, from daily life to the realities of being, to philosophy, to the fantastic.’ Discuss.

5 LEGACIES OF STALINISM

Answer ONE of the following:

(a) ‘In their experiments with narrative structure and visual form after 1953, writers and filmmakers resisted not only the ‘what’, but also the ‘how’ of Stalinist culture.’ Discuss.

(b) ‘Russian culture during the Thaw reconfigures the possibilities for Soviet desire.’ Discuss.

(c) ‘The voices and visions that enter Russian culture after 1953 differ from those of the Stalin era in their resistance to instant legibility and easy replication.’ Discuss.

7 NARRATING DIFFERENCE: CONTESTED IDENTITIES IN LATE/POST-SOVIET CULTURE

Answer ONE of the following:

(a) ‘The human body becomes a site of reading and misreading in late Soviet and post-Soviet explorations of ethnic and/or national identity.’ Discuss.

(b) ‘The ethnic other is never at home in late Soviet or post-Soviet culture.’ Discuss.

(c) ‘The narration of difference is often a story of separation.’ Discuss.

END OF PAPER