Proposed Course

“Capitals at the Crossroads of Cultures”:
Honoring Complexity and Diversity Despite Imperial Situation

Three credits, once per week, 15 weeks

Course Description:

This course is intended for those who love to travel through space and time. It offers a map for wandering around the main literary capitals of the former Russian Empire/former Soviet Union/current Russia/current Ukraine. Our class focuses on the Russian capitals situated at the crossroads of different cultures: Petersburg as the North capital, Moscow as the diurnal capital, Kyiv as the ancient capital and current Ukrainian capital, and Odesa as the Southern capital. For centuries, people of various backgrounds shared the same urban spaces and, subsequently, created, moderated, and reflected them in literature. Reading various Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, and Yiddish literature texts, we will examine how they reflect on the same cities. We will accumulate literary imagery of St. Petersburg/Petrograd/Leningrad, Moscow, Kyiv/Kyiv/Kijów, and Odesa, culled from the works by Alexander Pushkin, Adam Mickiewicz, Nikolay/Mykola G(H)og(h)ol, Lesya Ukrainka, and Isaak Babel, among others. We will reconstruct and analyze the mythologeme of the City through the lenses of different literary traditions and trace commonalities and divergences in different authors' approaches to the same urban spaces. The course covers the period from the early 19th century (Romanticism) to the early 21st century (postmodernism). The course does not aim at covering all city-related texts. It is about cumulating literary myths of the particular City. During class discussions, you will compare different paradigms of the City according to the

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\[1\] I want to give my learners time for reading and completing different homework activities. Ideally, I would teach it on Wednesday. Since we have different types of activities in class, they do not feel that they have a long three-hour class.

\[2\] This course will immerse learners in the complexity and diversity of the Russian Imperial/ Anti- and Post-Imperial political and cultural space. Learners will see that contemporaries who lived in the same place and time felt and described that place differently. Therefore, the respected writers who contributed to different national literatures depicted the same cities differently. Through the pace of the course, students will work with such concepts as a center and periphery, domination and marginalization, and social and epistemic injustice. Learners will be introduced to ethnic, racial, and gender diversity by reading literary texts by authors of diverse identities. Learners will get a broader perspective on the DEI principles by analyzing texts written by representatives of the dominant and marginalized groups of the Russian Empire.
period, historical moment, author's origins, and personality. Juniors and seniors who love reading literary fiction are welcome. Students with a good command of Russian or native speakers will have the ability to use their language skills. You are also welcome if you can read Ukrainian, Polish, or Yiddish. You can show off your unique skills in North American academe.

Course pre-requisite: recommended completion of at least one course on the early modern and modern history of Eastern Europe, or deep interest in Eastern European culture and literature.

Course requirements:

1. Attendance is obligatory. Participation in-class discussions will be reflected in your grades and strongly encouraged.
2. Approximately 100 pages of readings per week. All readings will be on the Perusal social reading platform. You do need to purchase any book!
3. One or two short (ten-minute) presentations on the biography of the writer, including information about their national literary tradition.
4. Regular contribution to the weekly Kahoot games
5. Regular weekly discussion on LMS
6. Two short writing assignments (two book reviews or one book review and one film review of the same country of origin)
7. Creating a website
8. Close-up of the conference.

Attendance, Attention, and Participation:

Attendance means you are sitting in the class and participating in discussions and group work. You must come to class fully prepared: reading, watching, submitting your Kahoot questions, and posting on Canvas after the meeting are mandatory. You can miss only one class during the semester without a reflection on your final evaluation. If you cannot be in class because of unforeseen circumstances, such as a family death or sickness requiring hospitalization, your excuse must be documented.

I cannot anticipate the demography of enrollment. However, all learners should develop critical thinking, sympathy, and compassion and understand the world's complexity from a global perspective. This course will allow learners to see global issues outside US domestic politics.

In the course requirements, I follow a policy of small steps when learners do a small amount of work but regularly collect their achievements. All activities work for the final cumulative project when the learner needs to monetize everything they did during the semester. I also consider the individuality of each learner. Those who are too shy to speak out loud can contribute to the online discussion. The final paper as a genre usually intimidates students, but creating a website is project-based learning which supposes to engage learners. Quizzes are also stressful, but if the assessment is in Kahoot, the gamification soothes the stress.
**Extra curriculum activities**: You have four out-of-class extra credit point opportunities. You may watch a related film screening or listen to a relevant lecture on campus or anywhere in the City and write a two-to-four pages report, due within two weeks of the event. Also, post your comments about the film or lecture on LMS and three related questions.

**Quizzes = Kahoot games**: The assessment of the reading and watching will be done through the Kahoot game. To make the game collaborative, after reading the assigned text and watching a film, each student must send to the Instructor one question related to the actual material of the reading or movie and four possible answers (only one is the correct answer). The Instructor will combine all queries in the Kahoot game. These games are designed to demonstrate your factual knowledge of dates, historical context, character names, and titles. We will play Kahoot every Wednesday beginning from Week 3. You cannot make up the quiz or take it on another day if you miss the class. Nevertheless, you will get points for the submitted questions. You also can boost your general evaluation by sending more than one question with proposed answers.

**Presentation requirements:**

A presentation has to be brief, informative, logical, and chronological. Requirements and guidelines on how to make a successful presentation you will find on our LMS in the rubrics “Presentation.” There you will find the criteria for the assessment. Knowing them lets you self-guide when you are working on your presentation. It is an integral element of the course. The presenter should introduce to the class historical events, the life of the writer, or the historical context of the assigned text so that other students can see the connection to the subject of the course. The presenter is strongly encouraged to make an appointment with the Instructor one week ahead of the presentation to discuss the talk's main points. PowerPoint or video sequences are welcome but not required. What is essential for your production is that it includes a map. Since we are working with overseas content, you must incorporate maps into your presentation. We need to see the location of the country you are talking about, the area of the town where your author lived, and the place you have read in the novel or watched in the movie.

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5 I want my learners to develop their interest in the subject matter and enjoy the process of learning. Small "cookies" as extra credit points suppose to engage students and make the course more enjoyable and less stressful. They know that if they do not succeed in one activity, they can "cover it up" with another activity.

6 Obviously, in this course, Kahoot games are a form of assessment, but they are also a tool for engagement, team building, and the opportunity to master the art of "asking questions." I ask participants to send me questions ahead of time. By this request, I secure their readiness for the class discussion. Very quickly, participants learn that the game's quality depends on the questions' quality. Therefore, they try to submit interesting questions. Having this activity regularly, they develop their critical thinking and writing skills. The fact that the questions are more important than answers makes the process less stressful because they are not afraid to make a mistake or afraid to fail because they are not fast enough to answer the question.

7 Public speaking is a critical skill that should be developed. It is stressful, especially for certain groups of learners (first-generation, home-schooled, and marginalized students who did not use to be at the center of attention). Knowing all mentioned above, I invite students to my Office to help them to complete this assignment. For those who have "a stage fear," I offer an option to
**LMS posts:** Canvas posts consist of two parts: first, a summary paragraph of our weekly reading and screening(s); second, your question(s) about the readings or the films. You are also encouraged to answer the questions posted by your colleagues. Each post will be calculated according to your input into the discussion. I do not grade the content of your posts, but I calculate their quantity. It is essential to see that you regularly contribute to the online discussion. If you ignore this assignment, it will reflect on your final grade for the course. You are supposed to post your reflections on Canvas every week after we work in the class – it is your Summary reflection of the working week.

**Course Writing Assignments: Book reviews**

As a part of the final project, you will write two reviews.
Option 1: You write two book reviews on the same literary tradition.
Option 2: You write two book reviews about the same City but with different national traditions.

**Before writing the assignment:** make sure you know the conventions of review as a genre. You will have a template for self-check if your review contains all aspects of the genre principles. Plus, it would help if you thought about the audience: who will read/watch and the context of reading/watching.

**Before submitting your book reviews** to the Instructor, you will introduce them to your classmate for peer review. There will be a few stages of writing and editing before submitting.

My assessment criteria will be "traditional": the review should be informative, contextualized, and addressed to a specific or general audience. Narration should be clear and logical; transparent transitions should be from one statement to another. I will read your work on the same day as I receive the text and make my comments. You are welcome to improve your writing and submit it to me again during the week. After that, I will write you feedback which I will include in my written evaluation of the course.

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make a recording of their presentation. In this way, they can have several attempts. Presentations are an essential part of the learning subject. That is why I want students to be active listeners during their peer's presentations. Request a question after the presentation to "secure" an active listening process.

8 This activity is a form of creating an "annotated bibliography." Contributing to the digital discussion weekly, learners make notes that they can use to work on the final project. It also engages students in a collaborative learning process by engaging in communication with their classmates and the ability to use their notes.

9 Writing a book review is a part of professionalization. It develops writing skills and helps learners find "their" writing voice. I want them to collaborate with each other, which is why I assign peer reviewing before submitting the final project. It works for team building and helps challenged students succeed with the assignment.
Final Project: Website design\textsuperscript{10}

As a final project, you must create a website dedicated to the City of your expertise or national literature (Capitals in Russian/Ukrainian/Polish/Yiddish literary traditions). Our library media specialist (assigned for this course) will come to the class at the beginning of the semester and will provide you with information about different media platforms you can host your site and instructions on how to create your website. You may continue collaborating with them during the semester and ask for help. You are welcome to consult with me about the content of your work, illustrations, and design.

Your website should have such rubrics as:

- Introduction (addressing your City or literary tradition. Selected bibliography is required)
- The famous public figure(s) (could be a brief essay about the person(s) you did your presentation(s). Selected bibliography is required)
- Two reviews (you may use those reviews you wrote previously)
- Annotated bibliography of one monograph and two articles about your City of expertise
- Practical fun: You may add a brief dictionary of useful phrases, some recipes of the traditional cuisine, or just links to some music or information about tourist sights.
- Information about yourself.

The tip here: Write your Introduction at the end and address your site's content.

Criteria for the assessment: Your site should be informative and address our course's core concepts. Your site should be easy to navigate and approachable to the users. You can choose the genre and audience for your website, but all content and design should follow your preferred style. For example, you cannot write an academic Introduction and then have a review in hip-hop style, including recipes writing them in cheesy style.

Close-up conference: In the last week of the semester, you are presenting your websites, sharing with your classmates what you were analyzing in your writing assignment\textsuperscript{11}.

A SATISFACTORY EVALUATION means completing 75\% of the program and contributing to all course activities.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{10} Creating a website helps students sum up everything they learned during the semester. More importantly, it allows them to develop practical skills. It encourages design thinking, one of the more demanding skills in any professional environment. For first-generation and low-income learners, seeing the practical/concrete result of their learning effort is essential, and creating a website is an excellent opportunity to do it. The skills they developed while completing this assignment are transferable, and they can use them in the future for self-promotion.

\textsuperscript{11} A close-up conference is a good opportunity to learn how to promote your work. It also reflects how a learner develops their public speaking skills besides their design thinking skills. Active listening to their peers' presentations and engaging in Q&A sessions allows students to refresh their memories of the course and to see it holistically.

\textsuperscript{12} Every learner is an individual and has unique situations. Therefore, I do not use the "universal" template for grading. Each learner has an opportunity to choose their own course pace and how
At the end of the course, you will improve your writing (informal and formal), public speaking, intercultural awareness, computer literacy, and time management skills. Also, at the end of the course, you should know:

- How to make a public presentation
- How to write a review
- How to make a peer review
- How to create your website
- How to analyze a literary text
- The prominent writers of Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, and Yiddish literature.
- Theoretical Approaches to the urban space as a cultural text
- The basics of the literary process from the literature of Romanticism to Postmodernism
- Specific Conventions of urbanistic texts
- The Historical and cultural context of Nation-building in the Frame of the Russian Empire

**Reading List:** ALL TEXTS WILL BE UPLOADED ON THE PERUSAL PLATFORM FOR SOCIAL READING. YOU DO NOT NEED TO PURCHASE ANY BOOKS. Do not get discouraged by the number of names and titles. In many cases, you are required to read only excerpts from more extensive texts. In addition, some of the texts are available only in the original for those who can read in corresponding languages.

**Primary Sources:**

Dziga Vetrov, *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) film

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13 For me, the subject matter is the bait to engage students in a learning process. I also always consider the situation of first-generation and low-income students who care about receiving the immediate "material" result of learning. Therefore, in my backward course design, I emphasize the soft skills students receive during the course first, and then I stress the knowledge they will receive during the course. I also apply the main principle of the transparent curriculum and explain to learners what they should do and why they should do it.

14 This course is rich in reading different texts and writers. Purchasing all assigned texts might be challenging for low-income learners. Therefore, I designed this course to make all readings available on the Perusal. By using extracts of texts for educational purposes, I do not break copyright regulations, and I make this course more affordable for students. Perusals allow us to control students' engagement and see who might struggle to succeed in the course. Though, I can prevent failure in the early stages. Perusal also has an audio format text delivery, allowing it to accommodate learners with blindness.

15 There are four modules in the course named after the four cities. Each module is designed according to chronological order.
Kyiv/Kiev/ Kijów/Yehupets

Alexandr Pushkin, *Ruslan and Ludmila* (excerpts), (1820); *The Song of Wise Oleg* (1822)
Orest Somov, *The Witches of Kyiv* (1833)
Nikolay Gogol/Mykola Gogol, *Taras Bulba* (excerpts), (1835)
Taras Shevchenko, *Kyiv in Fine Arts*, (1844 – 1847)
Ivan Nechy-Levytskyi, *Clouds* (excerpts), (1871)
Nikolay Leskov, *The Cathedral Clergy* (excerpts), (1872)
Waclaw Czechowski, *Kijów i Jego Pamiątki* (excerpts) (1901)
Sholom Aleicgem, *The Bloody Hoax*, 1911(?)
Dovid Bergelson, *Departing/Descent* (excerpts) (1913)
Yoysef Shur/ In Darch Times (1919)
Jaroslaw Iwaszkiewicz, *Zenobia of Palmyra* (1920)
Mikhail Bulgakov, *The City of Kyiv* (1927)
Valerian Pidmohylny, *The City* (excerpts) (1927)
V. Domontovych, *Girl with A Teddy Bear* (excerpts) (1928)

Moscow

Alexander Pushkin, *Eugene Onegin* (excerpts) (1833)
Yuri Lermontov, *Oh, Moscow, Moscow, I love you as a son*...(1840?)
Lev Tolstoy, *War and Peace* (excerpts) (1869)
Anton Chekhov, *The Bird Market* / *В Москве на Трубной площади* (1883)
Lesya Ukrainka, *The Noblewoman* / *Боярня* (1914)
Sholem Asch, *Before the Deluge* (excerpts) (1927-32)
Mikhail Bulgakov, *Dog’s Heart* (excerpts) (1925)
Andrey Platonov, *The Moscow Violin*, (1927)
Venedikt Yerofeyev, *Moscow-Petushki* (excerpts), (1969)

Petersburg:

Alexandr Pushkin, *Bronze Horseman* (1833)
Adam Mickiewicz, *Digression of Forefathers Eve* (1832)
*Pan Tadeusz* (excerpts) (1834).
Taras Shevchenko, *A Dream (A Comedy)* (1844)
*An Artist* (excerpts) (1856)
Hrygoriy Kvitka-Osnovyanenko, *Pan Halavsky* (excerpts) (1939)
Nikolay Gogol / Mykola Hohol, *Nevsky Prospekt* (1835)
The Overcoat (1842)
Fedor Dostoyevsky, *Double* (1846), *White Nights* (1848)
Andrey Bely, *Petersburg (excerpts)* (1913).
Sholem Asch, *Before the Deluge (excerpts)* (1927-32)
Anna Akhmatova *Requiem* (1935 – 1940)
Josef Brodsky *Peterburgskii roman* (1961)

*Odesa*

Adam Mickiewicz, *Sonnets of Odessa* (1822)
Alexander Pushkin, *Eugene Onegin (excerpts)*, (1833)
Mendele Mocher Sforim, *Fisheke the Lame*, (1869)
Ivan Nechuy-Levtsky, *Above the Black Sea/ Nad Chornym Morem (excerpts)* (1888)
Isaak Babel, *Odessa Tales*, (1926)
Yuri Yanovsky, *Hollywood on the Black Sea (excerpts)*, (1928)
*Master of the Ship (excerpts)*, (1928)
Valentin Katayev, *A White Sail Gleams*, (1936)
Dina Rubina, *Russian Canaries* (2014)

*Secondary sources (NOT OBLIGATORY, JUST OPTIONAL)*\(^{16}\):

Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, in The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism (2\textsuperscript{nd} edition), 2010, pp. 824 - 841

\(^{16}\) Secondary sources are optional because I want learners to be able to handle the amount of reading. Also, for some students, especially in the first years of learning, reading theoretical, abstract texts takes much work. All basic principles and terminology I introduce in the lecture. So, those who would like to challenge themselves are welcome to read.


**Content Warning**: Some texts may contain explicit violence, gore, sexual, and/or racist materials, unpleasant stereotypes, representations of alcohol or drug use, abuse of humans, discrimination, and politically incorrect, culturally, or religiously abusive content. If you cannot read these texts or find it inappropriate to discuss such materials, please inform me during the first two weeks of the course. The solution might be that I will substitute some texts with others for you or that you will need to decide whether you can take this course.

**Technology use policy**: Studies proved that students better memorize when making notes independently using pens or pencils. So, during the class, you cannot use any technological tools like laptops, cell phones, or tablets. All notes have to be taken personally by you. Readings with all comments and highlights are supposed to be in the printed variant if you need them for the discussion in class. Texting, Skyping, and Facebooking are banned in the class. If you feel anxious and need to check your phone immediately, leave the room and do not interrupt the class.

**Communication**: You are supposed to check your e-mails and the LMS regularly. Everything necessary for the course will be on the Syllabus and the LMS. Check the rubrics, *Announcements & Assignments* at least one day before the class; then, you will have time to prepare. If you have

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I support freedom of speech and academic freedom, and I am against any ban on books. I believe it is necessary to discuss complex issues or uncomfortable topics, and only an open public forum can secure liberal democracy. However, as an educator, I am obliged to create a welcoming, safe zone for all my learners disregarding their social, ethnic, race, gender, and any other forms of identity. Therefore, I have to warn my learners about possible challenges and find the most optimal way for them to succeed in the course. On the first day of classes, I overview all course material and warn students about possible challenges. They have an opportunity to decide for themselves how to deal with the course content.
any questions, please be sure you have read the Syllabus and checked the LMS: the answer to your question might be there already.

Religious holiday and observation policy:

I have total respect for all religious events and practices. If you are going to attend an important for you religious event, please inform me about that two weeks ahead. Otherwise, your absence from the class will cost you a grade penalty. If an examination or project is due during your absence, you will be given an assignment equivalent to the one completed by those students in attendance. Your claim of a religious conflict will be accepted at face value.

Athlete students: If you are an athlete and represent the university in events that overlap with the class, please come to the office hours and talk to the Instructor about the possibility of completing the missed classes. All your absent days have to be documented.

Disability resources: If you are a student with disabilities, please inform me about your need for accommodation. If you require accommodation for access and participation in this course must be registered with the Disability Resource Center. Please contact Disability Resource Center to coordinate all details.

Support services: If you have any concerns like academic, emotional, personal, bureaucratic, safety, health, housing, or employment, you are strongly encouraged to reach out for advice or referrals to the University Undergraduate Success Center.

Policy on Academic Dishonesty:

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty constitute a serious infraction of University rules, and students suspected of academic dishonesty will be reported immediately to the Dean of Students Office for a review of the case without any excuses and discussions. Cheating, Fabrication, and Compilation without quotation marks are forbidden and would be counted as plagiarism!

Nota bene: This Syllabus is a guide and is created to provide an accurate overview of the course. However, circumstances and events may introduce some changes. The policy of the course is unchangeable, but how this course will develop the amount of time we spend with one or other text can change according to the dynamic of the group.

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18 It is a critical remark. By mentioning the possibilities of possible changes, firstly, I want to secure some space to maneuver in unforeseen circumstances (hurricanes, extreme weather conditions). Second, I comfort students that if they need some changes, they are possible, and they should not worry about it.
Student Information and Agreement Form

Please fill out and sign this form and return it at the beginning of your second day of the class. I will count it as a homework assignment.

Name:

Preferred Name if different:

Pronoun:

UIN:

Major(s):

Minor(s):

Reasons for taking this course. Check all that apply.

- General education credit [ ]

- Slavic studies credit [ ]

- Elective [ ]

- Other [ ]

Courses you have taken in the following related fields. Check all that apply and list examples of course numbers, titles, and instructions to the best of your recollection.

Russian language [ ]

Russian studies [ ]

Slavic studies [ ]

Film history, analysis, and culture [ ]

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This form allows me to learn about learners, their identities, interests, and possible challenges at the beginning of the semester. I can accommodate them better with the information I receive from this survey. The requirement to read and sign the Syllabus makes a social contract "Syllabus" actual and introduces learners to the professional (mature) world.
You have fluent reading skills in\(^{20}\):

- Russian [ ]
- Ukrainian [ ]
- Polish [ ]
- Yiddish [ ]

List three academic, intellectual, or personal success goals you hope to accomplish through this course by the end of the semester as a consequence of taking this course.

List any concerns or challenges you foresee impacting your success in class (disability, work schedule, family obligation, financial concerns, shortage of tie between this class and another one, athletic schedule, etc.). How will you overcome your challenge (campus resource of support services, counseling, office hours, tutoring, a mentoring program, etc.)? How can I help you overcome this challenge?

Read and sign the agreement with the following statement:

I have read this Syllabus, understand its implications (and have sought clarification of those parts that were unclear to me), and will abide by it, including the rules regarding academic dishonesty. I understand that the course instructor has the right to make and announce in advance necessary, reasonable alterations to the class content and deadline schedule as needed to maximize learning.

Signature of Student:__________________________________________________________

Date: __________________________

\(^{20}\) This question is important because of two reasons. First, I want to acknowledge those students who are probably heritage speakers of that language or who made an effort to learn another language. Second, I want to assign those students reading in original, which might encourage others to start their journey in second language acquisition.
Reference List for CDIPS Final Project


