

Title: Textbooks as Teachers: Ayn Rand's Course of Study at the University of Petrograd
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Looking back on her education at the University of Petrograd, Ayn Rand recalled that, except for the seminars, she attended classes only sporadically, especially in her freshman year, when there were no street cars. She learned much of the course material from textbooks. Forty years later, she described some of these textbooks; although she did not identify the titles or authors, she supplied information about their contents, their approaches, and her own estimate of their value. The purpose of this paper is to make tentative identifications of two textbooks and to consider how her later judgments and work reflected what she had studied.

One course required of all university students was "Historical Materialism." The "official textbook," she recalled, was a "history of the Communist philosophy"; it recognized Plato as the source, and continued through Hegel to Marx and Lenin. "They were quite opposed to Aristotle." The best match for this description is Nikolaj Buxarin's *Teorija istoričeskogo materializma*, published in 1921. Although her grade in this course was "highly satisfactory," her rejection of its ideas was implicit in her life and explicit in her writing.

Another course was "Ancient World-Views," or ancient Greek philosophy, a full-year class devoted almost entirely to Plato and Aristotle. She decided that she admired Aristotle, but concluded that she could not judge philosophers definitively from a textbook containing only excerpts; she intended to go on to read the originals (and she did). The best match for her description is Aleksandr Vvedenskij's *Lekcii po drevnej filosofii* (1911-12). She ultimately concluded that Aristotle's "definition of the laws of logic and of the means of human knowledge is so great an achievement that his errors are irrelevant by comparison"; the section titles in *Atlas Shrugged*, her final novel, are a tribute to him.