

RUSSIAN THINKERS I: The 19th Century

PHIL 4391:001/5391:003

Spring 2010

T TH 4:00-5:20, 313 Carlisle Hall

Instructors:

Dr. Kenneth Williford

Department of Philosophy & Humanities

305 Carlisle Hall

817-272-0505

williford@uta.edu

Office hours: MF 1:00-2:00; W 3:00-4:00 & by appt.

Dr. Lonny Harrison

Department of Modern Languages

221 Hammond Hall

817-272-5527

lonnyharrison@uta.edu

Office hours: T TH 2:00-3:00



Mikhail Nesterov's *Philosophers* (1917)
Pavel Florensky (left) and Sergei Bulgakov

Course Description and Objectives

This course is a survey of the history of Russian thought from the end of the Eighteenth Century to the end of the Nineteenth Century. Russian philosophy is highly distinctive and exhibits, often quite self-consciously, the reactive autonomy and exceptionalism characteristic of many Russian cultural productions. With a few very notable exceptions, Russian thinkers are little known outside of Russia, but they have played a very significant role in shaping Russian literature and political consciousness. With an uncanny and fluid ability to float from the heights of metaphysical abstraction to very concrete social and human problems, Russian thinkers have made important contributions to the philosophy of history, the theory of social organization, the philosophy of religion, the foundations of psychology, the philosophy of language, logic and the philosophy of science.

We will learn about Russia's "martyr" for the Enlightenment, **Radischev**, imprisoned and exiled by Catherine the Great. We will learn about **Chaadaev** and the emergence of the rift between the "Slavophiles" (represented by **Kireevsky** and **Khomyakov**) and the "Westernizers" (represented by **Herzen** and **Belinsky**) —a rift with reverberations in present-day Russia, about the Russian "Nihilists" (**Chernyshevsky**, **Dobrolyubov**, **Pisarev**) and Anarchists (**Bakunin**, **Kropotkin**) and other Russian thinkers of the era, and about the philosophical and "existential" contributions of **Tolstoy** and **Dostoevsky**. We will also study the Hegelian background of 19th Century Russian thought. Throughout, we will trace out the lines of influence and reaction between Russian philosophy and Western European philosophy during the buildup to the 1905 and 1917 revolutions.

Required Texts

Russian Thinkers by Isaiah Berlin (second edition, Penguin 2008)

Fathers and Sons, by Ivan Turgenev (any decent edition)

Hegel and Marx: Introductory Lectures, by Elie Kedourie (Blackwell 1995)

The Grand Inquisitor: with related chapters from The Brothers Karamazov, edited by Charles Guignon (Hackett 1993)

The Portable Tolstoy, edited by John Bayley (Penguin 1978)

Additional Texts

Most of the primary text readings listed on the schedule are taken from *Russian Philosophy* (3 vols.) edited by James P. Scanlan, Mary-Barbara Zeldin, and James M. Edie (University of Tennessee Press, 1977).

The secondary readings are taken from the following “standard” histories:

Philosophy in Russia: From Herzen to Lenin by Frederick Copleston (Notre Dame, 1986)

A History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism by Andrzej Walicki (Stanford, 1979)

Evaluation

A final 20-25 page research paper due at the end of the semester, attendance and participation.

Tentative Schedule

Week One

1/19 Introduction

1/21 Copleston, Ch. 1; Leibniz’s letter to Peter the Great

Week Two

1/26 Walicki, Chs. 1&2

1/28 Radischev

Week Three

2/2 Walicki Chs. 3-4

2/4 Walicki Ch. 5

Week Four

2/9 Chaadaev

2/11 Chaadaev 2 (“Apology of a Madman”)

Week Five

2/16 Walicki, Ch. 6

2/18 Kireevsky

Week Six

2/23 Khomyakov

2/25 Berlin, “A Remarkable Decade”

Week Seven

3/2 Kedourie, Chs. 1-4

3/4 Kedourie, Chs. 5-8

Week Eight

3/9 Kedourie, Chs. 9-12

3/11 Kedourie, Chs. 13-15

3/15-3/19 Spring Break

Week Nine

3/23 Walicki, Chs. 7-9

3/25 Belinsky

Week Ten

3/30 Walicki, Ch. 10, Berlin, “Russia and 1848”

4/1 Herzen

Week Eleven

4/6 Walicki Ch. 11, Cherneshevsky

4/8 Turgenev, Berlin, “Fathers and Children”

Week Twelve

4/13 Turgenev

4/15 Walicki Ch. 12, Lavrov

Week Thirteen

4/20 Walicki Chs. 13, 14, 18

4/22 Walicki Ch 15, Dostoevsky

Week Fourteen

4/27 Dostoevsky

4/29 Dostoevsky

Week Fifteen

5/4 Tolstoy, “My Confession”

5/6 Tolstoy, “My Confession”