

## Department of Russian and Slavonic Studies

2016-17

<b>Module Name</b>	<b>Chekhov</b>
<b>Module Id (to be confirmed)</b>	<b>RUS4??</b>
<b>Course Year</b>	<b>JS TSM,SH SS TSM, SH</b>
<b>Optional/Mandatory</b>	<b>Optional</b>
<b>Semester(s)</b>	<b>MT</b>
<b>Contact hour per week</b>	<b>2 contact hours/week; total 22 hours</b>
<b>Private study (hours per week)</b>	<b>100 hours</b>
<b>Lecturer(s)</b>	<b>Justin Doherty</b>
<b>ECTs</b>	<b>10 ECTs</b>

### Aims

This module surveys Chekhov's writing in both short-story and dramatic forms. While some texts from Chekhov's early period will be included, the focus will be on works from the later 1880s, 1890s and early 1900s. Attention will be given to the social and historical circumstances which form the background to Chekhov's writings, as well as to major influences on Chekhov's writing, notably Tolstoy. In examining Chekhov's major plays, we will also look closely at Chekhov's involvement with the Moscow Arts Theatre and theatre director and actor Konstantin Stanislavsky.

### Set texts will include:

#### 1. Short stories

'Rural' narratives: 'Steppe', 'Peasants', 'In the Ravine'

Psychological stories: 'Ward No 6', 'The Black Monk', 'The Bishop', 'A Boring Story'

Stories of gentry life: 'House with a Mezzanine', 'The Duel', 'Ariadna'

Provincial stories: 'My Life', 'Ionych', 'Anna on the Neck', 'The Man in a Case'

Late 'optimistic' stories: 'The Lady with the Dog', 'The Bride'

#### 2. Plays

*The Seagull*

*Uncle Vanya*

*Three Sisters*

*The Cherry Orchard*

Note on editions: for the stories, I recommend the Everyman edition, *The Chekhov Omnibus: Selected Stories*, tr. Constance Garnett, revised by Donald Rayfield, London: J. M. Dent, 1994. There are

numerous other translations e.g. those by Ronald Hingley (*The Oxford Chekhov*) or by Ronald Wilkes (Penguin Classics) which are also good. I'm not keen on translations by Peavor and Volokhonsky so preferably avoid.

For the plays, the Penguin Classics edition is fine (translated by Peter Carson) and easy to get hold of. Avoid the recent American versions by Paul Schmidt which are really adaptations. The American translator Laurence Senelick's translations of the plays are highly regarded though, if you come across them.

## Secondary reading

### 1. Critical studies of Chekhov's writing:

Cathy Popkin (ed.), *Anton Chekhov's Selected Stories: Texts of the Stories, Comparison of Translations, Life and Letters, Criticism*, Norton, 2014

Harai Golomb, *A New Poetics of Chekhov's Plays: Presence through Absence*, Sussex Academic Press, 2014

Janet Malcolm, *Reading Chekhov: A Critical Journey*, London: Granta, 2012

James N. Loehlin, *The Cambridge Introduction to Chekhov*, Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 2010

Bartlett, Rosamund, *Chekhov: Scenes from a Life*, London: Simon and Schuster, 2004

Vera Gottlieb and Paul Allain (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Chekhov*, Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 2000

Donald Rayfield, *Understanding Chekhov: A Critical Study of Chekhov's Prose and Drama*, Madison, WI; U of Wisconsin P; 1999. (xvii, 295 pp.)

Richard Gilman, *Chekhov's Plays: An Opening into Eternity*, Yale U. P., 1995

Robert L. Jackson, *Reading Chekhov's Text*, Evanston, ILL.: Northwestern U. P., 1993

Laurence Senelick, *Anton Chekhov*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985

Beverly Hahn, *Chekhov: A Study of the Major Stories and Plays*, Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1977

### 2. Background/general reading

Isaiah Berlin, *Russian Thinkers* (London and Toronto: Hogarth Press, 1978)

James Billington *The Icon and the Axe* (Random House, 1970)

Orlando Figes *Natasha's Dance* (Metropolitan Books, 2002)

Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia. People and Empire* (Fontana, 1998)

Geoffrey Hosking *Russia and the Russians* (Penguin, 2002)

Catriona Kelly, *Russian Literature: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981)

Victor Terras (ed.) *A Handbook of Russian Literature* (London: Yale University Press, 1985)

## Module structure

To be confirmed

## Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module the students should be able:

- \* to approach the works studied with enhanced critical and analytical awareness;
- \* to relate knowledge of this period and subject-matter to other aspects of Russian and European literature and culture.
- \* to demonstrate an enhanced ability to read and engage critically with works of Russian literature;

On successful completion of this module the students should be able:

- \* to develop and present a detailed and analytical argument, in both written and oral forms;
- \* to examine and utilise textual evidence from literary texts in order to support their arguments;
- \* to demonstrate an awareness and understanding of literary-critical terms and approaches specific to the study of prose fiction;
- \* to use available library and electronic resources in order to investigate topics related to the texts in an independent fashion, and to reference such material thoroughly and accurately.

On successful completion of this module the students should be able:

- \* to present competent and sustained argument, in both spoken and written forms
- \* to organise personal and work commitments in order to meet specified deadlines;
- \* to make productive contributions to group work;
- \* to demonstrate a general competence in word-processing and use of the Internet.

## Assessment

(a) One commentary of an extract and one presentation on a text of your choice of between 1,000-1,500 words each, the second being a written-up version of work presented in class, which should include a brief summary of class discussion. The presentation should be submitted by the end of the teaching week following the presentation; the deadline for submission of the commentary is 12.00, Friday of Week 12, Michaelmas Term 2016. Each submission is worth 20% of the global assessment. A schedule of seminar presentations and list of seminar presentation topics will be agreed during the first week of MT.

(b) One course essay (normally 2,500-3,000 words), on a topic agreed with the course lecturer (worth 60% of the global assessment; submission date: 12.00, Friday of Week 1, Hilary Term 2017) There is no examination for this module.

Weighting of assessment components: commentary 20%, presentation 20%, essay 60%.