Martin Beisswenger:

Russian Emigration History

Course Description:
This course will examine the cultural and political history of the Russian post-revolutionary emigration during the interwar years. We will ask questions, such as: What exactly was the Russian emigration? How did Russian émigrés conceive of themselves and their culture? How did Russian émigrés maintain their “Russian” identity? What did “Russian” mean for them? How did their identity change over time? How did they see the Soviet Union? How did they see their host countries? What types of interaction took place? Which political projects did Russian émigrés develop? The focus of the course will be on politics and culture, including literature, philosophy, and religion. We will study prominent individuals and their biographies, but will also examine the experience of “ordinary people” and questions of everyday life. Particular attention will be paid to how people’s lives were shaped by their local environment and the varieties of the Russian émigrés’ experience.

Course aims and objectives:
• to introduce students to the history and significance of the Russian emigration as a cultural and political phenomenon and its historiography
• to gain knowledge of life and work of prominent Russian émigré writers and thinkers
• to develop skills in close reading, critical evaluation and analysis of key Russian émigré texts and relevant secondary literature
• to enable students to explore the topic of Russian emigration further and to relate it to Russian, Soviet and European culture
• to enhance students’ foreign language skills and apply them to individual research and presentations

Assignments, tests and grades:
In order to receive a passing grade on this course you will have to:
• participate regularly in class discussions,
• do all the required readings,
• write one book review (2-3 pages) on a monograph of your choice (and in consultation with the instructor) related to the topic of our course,
• pass a final test (“zachet”).
Participation in class and the book review will count for 30% of your final grade each, while the final test determines the remaining 40% of your grade.
**Attendance:**
This is a lecture and discussion course. You will be expected to have done the reading assignments and participate in class discussions. Attendance is mandatory, and you must be on time and prepared. You can have one unexcused absence throughout the course. More absences will lower your course grade. More than three unexcused absences will result in a failing grade for the course. Arriving more than 15 minutes late in class counts as an unexcused absence as well. It is your responsibility to make up missed work, or to meet with the instructor to go over lectures or assignments that were covered while you were absent.

**Academic Integrity:**
As in all university courses, students are required to maintain the personal integrity of their work at all times. In this class, any instances of major plagiarism on any assignment may result in a failing grade in the course and in referral to the Faculty’s Dean’s Office. Plagiarism includes submitting a paper written or significantly revised by someone else, lifting ideas or words from sources without giving credit, quoting without the use of quotation marks, or any other borrowing of materials or writing skills without appropriate acknowledgement. Please come and see me if you are ever unclear about what constitutes plagiarism or how to avoid it. See also: [http://www.hse.ru/org/hse/antiplagiat_info/plagiat](http://www.hse.ru/org/hse/antiplagiat_info/plagiat)

**Course program:**
**Week 1** – Introduction: Emigration – Concepts and Approaches. [Lecture/Seminar]
**Week 2** – Prologue: Civil War and Exile (Ivan Bunin’s *Cursed Days*). [L/S]
**Week 3** – Places: Berlin. [L]
**Week 4** – People: Vladimir Nabokov. [S]
**Week 5** – Places: Paris. [L]
**Week 6** – People: Nikolai Berdiaev. [S]
**Week 7** – Places: Prague. [L]
**Week 8** – People: Marina Tsvetaeva. [S]
**Week 9** – Politics of the Russian Emigration. [L]
**Week 10** – People: The Eurasianists and their Critics [S]
**Week 11** – Epilogue: Vasilii Aksenov’s *Island of Crimea*. [S]