**Cityscapes Through the Prism of Culture Studies**

**Title of the Course:** Cityscapes Through the Prism of Cultural Studies

**Type:** Non Mandatory

**Duration:** three months (first year)

**Total hours:** 50

**Author/lecturer:** Jan Levchenko

**Invited speakers:** Vassily Zharkov (The Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences), Julia Biedash (School of Cultural Studies of the Higher School of Economics)

**1. General Description**

This course will examine the basic terms and concepts related to Cultural Studies, as they are being practiced in Russia and select Western countries, the key figures of the discipline, and a concise collection of fundamental texts. It will demonstrate the ways in which culture has been defined in the past, as well as how these definitions are being used and re-thought within the current cultural discourse. In addition, it will also offer insight into how culture is analyzed and explained by cultural theory as well as how it is being produced, promoted, and consumed in various contexts.

This course will give special attention to the city as the subject of cultural analysis. With lectures, seminars and field-trips it will introduce the students to the major urban issues as seen through the lenses of Cultural Studies. It will also explain the main methodologies currently available for the research of contemporary cityscapes.

The city of Moscow will serve as a territory for this course's investigations. Students will explore the centre and the periphery of the megapolis and, through a series of interviews, discussions, and research assignments, try to understand the specificity of its urban culture and the logic of its multiple cultural processes.

**Methodology**

Cultural Studies is traditionally identified as the field of interdisciplinary critical analysis of ‘cultural products’. Cultural researchers use numerous methodologies often borrowed from other fields (such as, for instance, semiotics, discourse analysis, content analysis, participant observation, history and psychoanalysis) to research places of cultural interactions, various aspects of everyday life, rituals and traditions, arts and crafts, and many other subjects.

As a result of its interdisciplinary nature, Cultural Studies also exploits theories which were originally developed within other disciplines: from Feminism and Structuralism to post-Colonialism and neo-Marxism. Very often, as in the case of psychoanalysis or semiotics, the theory is also the method.

The course, therefore, explains Cultural Studies not as a pure and structured science but as a set of interpretations supported by a wide range of theories. Is also allows for a critical review of the field itself, and for speculation about what new cultures we can expect to emerge in the future.

The theoretical knowledge and particular methodologies will be introduced during lectures and then applied during seminars, field-trips, and small research projects.

**Main goals of the course:**

1. to introduce students to the field of Cultural Studies and provide an overview of the main theories of the field
2. to help to identify political, economic, and social issues that affect research objectives of Cultural Studies
3. to help to apply the methods of cultural analysis to the cityscapes of Moscow
4. to help extrapolate the experience of Moscow to other cases and demonstrate how to adapt the research methodology to other contexts
5. to explain how to collaborate with a professional cultural researcher effectively and use his or her expertise in Urban Design projects
6. to examine the specificity of Russian Cultural Studies (‘Kulturologia’) and to demonstrate how the approach to cultural research vary from country to country

**After successful completion of the course, the students will be able to:**

1. take cultural perspective into account in research-based design projects
2. apply cultural analysis to various cityscapes and urban issues
3. choose the relevant methodology and the appropriate theoretical framework depending on the theme, territory, and objectives of a particular study
4. work with cultural researchers and use their expertise in multidisciplinary projects
5. think critically and independently about cultural matters

**Connections to other courses of the Programme**

The course is thematically and methodologically related to the following courses: *Critical Thinking, Urban Histories, Urban Design,* and *Curatorial Practices.*

**2. Structure and Thematic Composition**

The course introduces Cultural Studies as an academic discipline but, at the same time, is adapted to specific needs of Urban Designers. It allows for individual interpretations of urban phenomena and prompts students with various backgrounds to try out new methods of research.

**Thematic structure**

Hours per theme (example):

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *#* | *Theme* | *Total hours* | *Lectures* | *Seminars* | *Practical/*  *Field trips* |
| *1* | *Culture:*  *How does it work?* | *2* | *2* |  |  |
| *2* | *The Gateway to Cultural Studies* | *4* | *2* | *2* |  |
| *3* | *Russian Culture and Its Specificity* | *4* | *2* | *2* |  |
| *4* | *Urban Culture and the Concept of History* | *4* | *2* | *2* |  |
| *5* | *Ideology and the Images of Power in Cityscapes* | *6* | *2* | *2* | *2* |
| *6* | *The City of Utopia* | *6* | *2* | *2* | *2* |
| *7* | *Scapes of Consumerism* | *6* | *2* | *2* | *2* |
| *8* | *Towards the New Cultures of Mobility* | *6* | *2* | *2* | *2* |
| *9* | *Urban Nature* | *6* | *2* | *2* | *2* |
| *10* | *The Ghetto* | *4* | *2* | *2* |  |
| *11* | *Future Cultures* | *2* |  | *2* |  |
| *Total:* |  | *50* |  |  |  |

Themes per week or visit (example):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Week 1 (4 hours) | Theme 1  Theme 2 (lecture) |
| Week 2 (6 hours) | Theme 2 (practice)  Theme 3 |
| Week 3 (4 hours) | Theme 4 |
| Week 4 (6 hours) | Theme 5 |
| Week 5 (6 hours) | Theme 6 |
| Week 6 (6 hours) | Theme 7 |
| Week 7 (6 hours) | Theme 8 |
| Week 8 (6 hours) | Theme 9 |
| Week 9 (6 hours) | Theme 10  Extra-Theme: Future Cultures |

**3. COURSE CONTENT**

Theme 1. **Culture: How does it work?**

Introduction to the course: goals, objectives, thematic outline, and requirements. What is culture? Why human culture? Origins and various definitions of culture. Culture as an opposition to nature; its association with intelligence and education. Prerequisites of cultural reflection (European Antiquity, Renaissance, Enlightenment, Modernity of the late nineteenth to early twentieth century). Understanding culture of the global age and its main oppositions (high versus low, public versus private, traditional versus contemporary, Western versus Eastern, etc).

**Literature.**

Burke, Peter. *What Is Cultural History?* 2nd Ed. London: Polity Books, 2008.

Geerz, Clifford. *Interpretations of Cultures*. Any edition since 1973.

Hall, Stuart. *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE, assoc. with the Open University, 1997.

Williams, Raymond. *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society.* London: Croom Helm, 1976.

**Extra Reading:**

Shashidhar, S. *Culture and Society. An Introduction to Raymond Williams*, in *Social Scientist*, Vol. 25, No 5/6 (May-Jun 1997), 33-53.

Twitchell, J. *Carnival Culture: The Trashing of Taste in America*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1992.

Theme 2. **Gateway to Cultural Studies**

2.1. Lecture. Cultural Studies: guidelines to and limits of the discipline (contiguous disciplines); key figures and basic methods (qualitative and quantitative, visual and discursive, etc.). Why should we, and how to, understand cultural theory? The ‘national’ idea of culture in the early twentieth century: its crisis and future challenges. Change of dominant discourses in Cultural Studies: between cultural anthropology of the 1950s and the ‘political culture’ of the 1990s. From ‘ordinary culture’ (Raymond Williams) to ‘multicultural world’ (Gayatri Spivak). What types of professionals are involved in cultural production and studies? Could cultural theory help liberal arts and social sciences to communicate with each other?

2.2. Discussion. Introductory conversation about the students’ personal cultural experiences; cultural differences; and specific characteristics of their cities of origins. A short test and a discussion about the course (expectations, suggestions, objectives, etc) – establishing the common purpose.

**Literature:**

Barker, Chris. *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice.* 4th edition. London: SAGE, 2012.

Sardar, Ziauddin; Van Loon, Borin, and Richard Appignanesi (eds.) *Introducing Cultural Studies*. Cambridge, UK; New York; Lanham, Md.: Icon ; Totem Books; Distributed to the trade by National Book Network, 1999.

Spivak, Gayatri Ch*.* “Can Subaltern speak?” *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture.* Ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg. University of Illinois Press. 1988, 271-313.

Williams Raymond. “Culture is Ordinary”, *Williams R. Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism.* London: Verso, 1989, 3-14.

**Extra Reading:**

Hall Stuart; Hobson Dorothy; Lowe, Andrew; Willis, P. (eds). Culture, Media, Language. Birmingham: Unwin Hyman Publ., 1980 (or any stereotype edition, for example, Taylor & Francis, 2005, etc).

Johnson, Richard. The Practice of Cultural Studies. London; Thousand Oaks (CA): SAGE, 2004.

Theme 3 **Russian Culture and Its Specificity**

3.1. Lecture. Russian Culture since the nineteenth century. Russia as/and Europe in travelogues and diaries; self-reflective writings of Russian intellectuals (critical essays by Pyotr Chaadayev and others). The speculative idea of ‘Russia’s own special way’: its origins, purposes, and critics. The ambiguity of the issue of ‘cultural differences’ in Cultural Studies. The specificity of Cultural Studies in Russia (‘kulturologia’).

3.2. Seminar with an invited speaker. *Beyond Stereotypes: Tolstoevsky and Other Stories*

Proposed speakers: Vassily Zharkov (Political Science), Julia Biedash (Cultural Studies), Alexander Markov (Cultural and Literary History).

**Literature:**

Billington J. “The Uncertain Colossus”, in Billington J. *The Icon and the Axe. An Interpretive History of Russian Culture*. New York: Vintage Books, 473-598.

Laruelle, M. “The Discipline of Culturology: A New ‘Ready-Made Thought’ for Russia”, in *Diogenes* 51.4 (2004), 21–36.

Mrovczynsky-Van Allen, Artur. “The Russian Idea and Its Interpretation”, in Mrovczynsky-Van Allen, Artur. *Between the Icon and the Idol. The Human Person and the Modern State in Russian Literature and Thought.* Eugene (OR): Cascade Books, 2013, 81-115.

**Extra:**

Gerasimov, Ilya, Sergey Glebov, and Marina Mogilner. “The Post-Imperial Meets the Postcolonial: Russian Historical Experience and the Postcolonial Moment”, in *Ab Imperio,* 2 (2013), 97–135.

Scherrer, Jutta. “Kul’turologija: Russia’s Search for Identity”, in *Budapest Review of Books*, No 01/04, 2002, 5-11.

Theme 4 **Urban Culture and the Concept of History**

4.1. Lecture. How is the idea of culture connected to the concept of history? What is urban culture and how different it is from the non-urban (rural, tribal, parochial, etc). In what sense could a city (and a cityscape) be a subject of Cultural Studies and what are the main issues in discussion? In what ways does the urban context capture and represent history and memory? Key types of urban dwellers in the past and in the present as defined and described by cultural thinkers and philosophers – for instance, ‘flaneurs’ (W. Benjamin) or ‘die Angestellten’ (S. Kracauer). Scientific methods of description of the historical and the collective past versus the personal and the private (according to P. Nora, M. Halbwachs, A. Assmann).

4.2. Seminar. Discussion of the first two chapters of David Frisby’s *Cityscapes of Modernity.*

Supporting methodology: ‘thick’ historical description (by C. Geerz; see literature for Theme 1) and content analysis.

**Literature:**

Frisby, David. *Cityscapes of Modernity: Critical Explorations.* Cambridge (UK): Polity Press, 2001.

Hayden, Dolores. “Urban Landscape History: The Sense of Place and the Politics of Space”, in Hayden, Dolores. *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes.* Boston: MIT Press, 1997, 14-43.

Kromm, Jane. “The Flâneur/Flâneuse Phenomenon”, in Kromm, Jane, Bakewell, Susan Benforado (eds.) *A History of Visual Culture.* Oxford, New York: Berg, 2010, 147-156.

Nora, Pierre. “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire”, in *Representations,* No 26: *Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory* (Spring 1989), 7-24.

**Extra Reading:**

Berland J. “Angels Dancing: Cultural technologies and the Production of Space”, in Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula Treichler (eds.) *Cultural Studies*, New York: Routledge 1991, 38-54.

Hansen, Miriam Bratu. “America, Paris, the Alps: Kracauer (and Benjamin) on Cinema and Modernity”, in Charney, Leo; Schwartz, Vanessa R. (eds.) *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995, 362-402.

Zukin, Sharon. *The Culture of Cities*. London, New York; Blackwell, 1995.

Theme 5. **Ideology and the Images of Power in Cityscapes**

5.1. Lecture. How does the urban environment reflect ideology? How do the sacred and the profane demarcate the city? Visual anthropology of Socialist and Capitalist Moscow.

5.2. Discussion of selected chapters from the book *Moscow* by Karl Schlögel (Reaktion Books, 2004)

5.3. Individual field-trips. Students will be asked to find and make pictures of old and contemporary ‘icons of power’ in today’s Moscow, share them on Facebook and make comments to each other’s images in real time.

In class students will collectively discuss their findings (their design and messages) and compare them to the description of Moscow in Schlögel’s book. Short presentations of selected examples of ideologically charged urban spaces will conclude the session.

Supporting methodology: case study.

**Literature**

Lowe, David, and Joel, Tony. “Cities and Sites”, in Lowe, David, and Joel, Tony. *Remembering the Cold War. Global Contest and National Stories*. London: Routledge, 2013, 70-162.

Papernyi, Vladimir. *Architecture in the Age of Stalin. Culture Two.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Schlögel, Karl. *Moscow.* London: Reaktion Books, 2004.

**Extra:**

Hudson, Hugh D. Jr, *Revolution and Architectural Schools of Thought*, in Hudson, Hugh D. Jr, *Blueprints and Blood. The Stalinization of Soviet Architecture, 1917-1937*. Princeton University Press, 15-51.

Vale, Lawrence J., “Capital and Capitol: An Introduction”, Vale, Lawrence J. *Architecture, Power, and National Identity.* 2nd Edition. London: Routledge, 2008.

Theme 6. **The City of Utopia**

6.1 Lecture. City (Ir)Rationalized: the concept of ‘Ideal City’ in cultural history. From ‘La Citta di Dio’ in Italian Renaissance to the twentieth century totalitarian capital cities through the lens of studies of arts and literature (Lyman Tower Sargent, Ruth Levitas, Phil Wegner)

6.2. Discussion of the film ‘Hammer and Sickle’ (Sergey Livnev, 1995), students will be asked to use the optics proposed by *Nancy Condee* in the book *‘Soviet Hieroglyphics’*.

6.3. Field-trip. Images of Abundance in Soviet Culture. A Tour of the Exhibition of National Economic Avhievements (VDNKh). Students will be asked to shoot short thematic videos and post them on the Facebook group page.

**Literature:**

Clark, Katerina. *Moscow, The Fourth Rome. Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931-1941.* Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press, 2013.

Condee, Nancy. *Soviet Hieroglyphics.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.

Paperny, Vladimir. “Hot and Cold War in Architecture of Soviet Pavilions”, in Devos, Rika; Ortenberg, Alexander; Paperny, Vladimir (eds.) *Architecture of Great Expositions, 1937-1959: Messages of Peace, Images of War.* Burlington (VT): Ashgate Publishers, 83-98.

**Extra:**

Buck-Morss, Susan. *Dreamworld and Catastrophe. The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West.* Boston: MIT Press, 2000.

Clark, Katerina. *The Soviet Novel. History as Ritual.* University of Chicago Press, 1981.

Groys B. *The Total Art of Stalinism. Avant-Garde, Aesthetics, Dictatorship, and Beyond.* Princeton University Press, 1992.

Theme 7. **Scoping Consumerism**

7.1. Lecture Commodification of history and consumerist aspects of urban culture as one of the main themes of contemporary Cultural Studies. The ‘tourist gaze’ (J. Urry): from travellers to shoppers. How and why do people ‘purchase’ symbols and views of cities? A short history of tourism and shopping. Exploration of shopping practices in Cultural Anthropology.

7.2. Discussion of classical texts of the Consumer Culture Theory (J. Baudrillard, F. Jameson). How to verify or refute theories with qualitative research? (a short introduction to the Participant observation methodology)

7.3. Field-trip. *A True Shopper’s Diary. What a shopping street or a mall can tell us*? Students will be asked to make notes and sketches while observing people choosing goods, trying clothes on, and inquiring about prices in Moscow shops. All diaries will be subseqently presented in class.

Supporting methodology: Participant observation

**Literature:**

Baudrillard, Jean. *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures.* 4th edition. London, New Dehli: SAGE, 2003.

Kromm, Jane. “To the Arcade: The World of the Shop and the Store”, in Kromm, Jane, Bakewell, Susan Benforado (eds.) *A History of Visual Culture.* Oxford, New York: Berg, 2010, 190-199.

Patterson, Patrick Hyder. “Risky Business: What Was Really Being Sold in the Department Stores of Socialist Eastern Europe?”, in Bren, Paulina, Neuberger, Mary (eds.) *Communism Unwrapped. Consumption In Cold War Eastern Europe.* Oxford University Press, 2012, 116-139.

Stearns, Peter N. “Consumerism In Russia”, in Stearns, Peter N. *Consumerism In World History. The Global Transformation of Desire.* London: Routledge, 2001, 75-82.

**Extra:**

Rappaport, Erika D. “A New Era of Shopping”: The Promotion of Women’s Pleasure in London’s West End, 1909-1914”, in Charney, Leo; Schwartz, Vanessa R. (eds.) *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995, 130-155.

Roberts, Graham. *Consumer Culture, Branding and Identity in the New Russia: From Five-year Plan to 4x4.* London, New York: Routledge (to be published in 2016).

Zukin, Sharon. *Point of Purchase: How Shopping Changed American Culture.* New York: Routledge, 2002.

Theme 8 **Towards the New Cultures of Mobility**

8.1. City as a Mobility Hub: How do transport networks and their exponential growth change the very mechanism of cultural interaction? New modes of transportation as seen in the context of urban culture and civilization. ‘Myth of the Machine’ (L. Mumford), ‘Automobile Nation’ (J. Jacobs), ‘Mobile Technologies of the City’ (J. Urry).

8.2. Discussion of the fragments of fiction and documentary movies featuring the Moscow subway. Students will also be asked to find literary fragments about Moscow subway and write a short essay about them.

8.3. Field-trip. The Underground Palace: its symbols, designs, and users. Students in small groups will be asked to work on several routes in the Moscow subway and document their experience according to proposed thematic chapters (e.g. ‘Stalin’s Metro’, ‘Metro as a Bomb Shelter’, ‘Hi-Tec Temptations in the Moscow Dubway’, ‘Secret Beauty and Secret Passages’, etc).

**Literature:**

Jacobs, Jane. “Erosion of Cities or Attrition of Automobiles”, in Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities.* New York: Random Books, 1961 (or any revised edition until 2009).

Mumford, Lewis. *The Myth of the Machine. Vol. II: The Pentagon of Power.* New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publ., 1970.

Urry, John. *Mobilities.* Cambridge (UK): Polity Press, 2007.

**Extra:**

Fried, Lewis. *Makers of the City.* Boston: University of Massachusets Press, 1990.

Packer, Jeremy. “Raging With a Machine”, in Packer, Jeremy. *Mobility without Mayhem: Safety, Cars, and Citizenship.* Durham (NC): Duke University Press, 2008, 231-266.

Sparberg Alexiou, Alice. *Jane Jacobs: Urban Visionary.* New Brunswick (NJ), London: Rutgers University Press, 2006, 68-94.

Theme 9. **Urban Nature**

9.1 Lecture. Parks, Gardens, and Boulevards: function, idea, and fantasy of nature in urban culture. ‘The Garden of Eden’, ‘The Garden of Arcane Delights’ and other motives in fine arts. ‘Cottage gardens’ and ‘national’ styles in the eighteenth century European gardening. Case study: Semiotics of a boulevard and the social structure in the nineteenth century.

9.2. Discussion of an an article about a picturesque garden in the urban landscape (tbc)

9.3. Field-trip. Moscow Parks. Between Natural and Unnatural. Students will work in the ‘Museon’ and ‘Gorky Park’ for a day, gathering material for a short illustrated essay about the relationship between nature and culture in the structures of these parks.

**Literature:**

Borsay, Peter. “Pleasure Gardens and Urban Culture in the Long Eighteenth Century”, in Conlin J. (ed.) *The Pleasure Garden, From Vauxhall to Coney Island*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013, 49-77.

Brown, Jane. *The Pursuit Of Paradise: A Social History Of Gardens And Gardening.* London: Harper Collins, 1999.

Jacobs, Jane. “The Uses of Neighborhood Parks”, in Jacobs, Jane. *The Death and Life of Great American Cities.* New York: Random Books, 1961, 89-111.

Williams, Raimond. *The Country and The City.* New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973.

**Extra:**

Hanák, Péter. “The Garden and the Workshop: Reflections on Fin-de-Siecle Culture in Vienna and Budapest”, in Hanák, Péter. *The Garden and the Workshop: Essays on the Cultural History of Vienna and Budapest*. Princeton (NJ): Princeton University Press, 2014, 63-97.

Roosevelt, Priscilla. “Tatiana’s Garden: The Paradox of Estate Park Design”, in Roosevelt, Priscilla. *Life on the Russian Country Estate. A Social and Cultural History.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 19 74-101.

Theme 10. **The Ghetto: Marginalized Communities in Contemporary Cities**

10.1. Lecture Subcultures and their exploration by cultural researchers of the New Left (categorisation and methods of the Birmingham critical school). The opposition ‘Center versus Periphery’ in Cultural Studies. Urban subcultures in the USSR (underground art and music, ethnic communities, dissidents, criminal societies, etc.) and their Post-Soviet trajectories.

10.2. Discussion of the film ‘Everybody Dies But Me’ (Valeria Guy Germanica, 2008).

**Literature:**

Gdaniec, Gordula. Cultural Diversity between Staging and the Everyday. Experiences from Moscow, St. Petersburg and Other Russian Cities”, in *Cultural Diversity in Russian Cities: The Urban Landscape in the Post-Soviet Era (Space and Place)*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010.

Hoffmann, David L. “The Urban Environment and Living Standards”, in Hoffmann, David L. *Peasant Metropolis: Social Identities in Moscow, 1929-1941*. Ithaca & New York: Cornell University Press, 1994, 127-157.

Smith, Mark B. *Property of Communists: The Urban Housing Program from Stalin to Khrushchev.* DeKalb (IL): Northern Illinois University Press, 2010.

**APPENDIX**

**Conclusion and a Forecast**

Final Discussion. Concluding remarks and a debate about the future of culture and its studies.

**4. GRADING**

*Explanation of the grading system*

Grading is based on 4 elements:

* Attendance
* Seminar Presentations (at least 2)
* Short intermediate papers, Facebook posts (at least 3)
* Final paper

Each grade is attributed according to 10-point scale and is weighed in the following order:

Attendabce – 20%, Seminar Presentations – 30 (15+15) %, Intermediate papers – 30 (10+10+10)%, Final paper – 20%.