The course provides an introduction into contemporary Russia. Through fiction, film, and academic studies, we will analyze how Russia is being transformed today. First, we explore changes of individual and collective identities ("generation" or "class") after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Then we look at the role of market relations in defining new cultural practices ("consumption" and "criminality"). Finally, we examine ways in which Russian people reestablish their relations with the Soviet past and envision their future ("nostalgia").

Knowledge of Russian is not required.

Requirements:
Class participation (discussion, weekly position papers) – 35 %
One in-class presentation – 10%
Midterm paper (5-page film review) – 20 %
Final paper – 35 %

REQUIRED BOOKS:


**Serguei Alex. Oushakine.** *The Patriotism of Despair: Nation, Loss, and War.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009


INTRODUCTION

**FILM: Spinning Boris.** (Dir. Roger Spottiswoode, 2003)

Optional reading:


THE PARTY IS OVER: Collapse


FILM: Gagarin’s Pioneers (Dir. Vitaly Mansky, 2005).

Optional reading:


THE RITE OF PASSAGE: Transition


MAKING SENSE: Ideology


Olga Shevchenko. The Routinization of Crisis, or On the Permanence of Temporary Conditions.. In: Shevchenko, Crisis and the Everyday, pp. 62-87.

Optional reading:
Arnold van Gennep. Other Types of Passage; Conclusion. 189- 194 In: van Gennep, A. *The Rites of Passage*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960, pp. 166-188; 189-194.


**NEW RICH, NEW POOR: Class**


**FILM: Tycoon: New Russian (Dir. Pavel Lungin, 2002).**

Optional reading:


**LEARNING A NEW WORD: Biznes**


Optional reading:

FALL RECESS


SITES OF TRANSFORMATION: Space


FILM: *Oxygen* (Dir. Ivan Vyrypaev, 2009).

Optional reading:


A NEW AGE: Generation P


SPIRITS OF FRIENDSHIP: Alcohol

Dale Pesmen. Do not Have a Hundred Rubles, Have Instead a Hundred Friends Standing Bottles, Washing Deals, and Drinking for the Soul. In: Pesmen, Russia and Soul, pp. 126-145; 170-188.


Film: The Wedding (Dir. Pavel Lungin, 2000).

Optional reading:


DEPLOYMENT OF FORCE: Violence


Optional reading:
FILM: Dead Man’s Bluffing (Dir. A. Balabanov, 2005).


WAR CAUSULTIES: Chechnya


Arkady Babchenko. *One Soldier’s War*. New York: Grove Press, 2006 (excerpts). Preface; Special Cargo (pp. 156-172); The Storming Operation (pp. 256-272); Traitors (pp. 374-396).


**FILM**: *War* (Dir. A. Balabanov, 2002).


**A NEW PAST**: *Nostalgia*


**FILM**: *Russian Ark*. (Dir. Alexander Sokurov, 2002).

Optional reading: Oleg Gazmanov: *I was born in the USSR*.

