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Russian 258: Fire and Ice – Siberia in Fictio



This course explores the idea of Siberia in Russian fiction. What does the taiga, the tundra, the forests, the prison camps, and the eternal Lake Baikal mean to the Russian and native Siberian imagination? We begin with the voice of native Siberians, whose folktales define a unique relationship with the natural world. We move on to the perspectives of European Russians and ideas about the role of Siberia in the fate of the realm. We also consider the prison camps in both the 19th (Dostoevsky) and 20th (Shalamov) centuries. Finally, we return to the natural world through the ground-breaking environmentalism of Russia’s great author, Valentin Rasputin. *In English.*

Jan 20	SIBERIA: ITS LAND AND ITS PEOPLES
Jan 25	SIBERIAN FOLKTALES: ORIGINS <i>The Sun Maiden and the Crescent Moon</i> Akanidi the Bright Sunbeam, 30-40 How Happiness Came, 41-47 The Sun Maiden and the Crescent Moon, 55-58 Brave Azmun, 71-81 Why the Sun Forsook the Tundra, 150-153 Mistress of the Fire, 176-178 Wife for a Walrus, Lord of the Sea, 180-183 Man-Bear, 191-196
Jan 27	SIBERIAN FOLKTALES: HEROES & VILLIANS <i>The Sun Maiden and the Crescent Moon</i> <u>OUERY#1 DUE BY NOON VIA E-MAIL</u> How Anga Fetched a Serpent’s Skin and a Bear’s Fur, 88-91 Mergen and His Friends, 98-101 Choleree, 113-117 Net-Pos-Hu the Archer, 134-139 Little Oonyani, 141-147 Mayaki, 154-160 Ememcoot and the Forest Maiden, 166-168 Tynagirgin and Gitgilin, 184-187
Feb 1	NATIVE SIBERIAN LITERATURE <i>Yuri Rytkeu</i> “When the Whales Leave: A Modern Legend” (ERes)
Feb 3	NATIVE SIBERIAN LITERATURE <i>Anna Nergaki</i> “Aniko of the Nogo Tribe” (ERes)
Feb 8	<u>CRITICAL ESSAY #1</u> Using specific examples from our readings and films, write a 5 page essay on the relationship between the native peoples of Siberia and their natural surroundings (nature and animals). Describe how this relationship is expressed and how it functions culturally.
Feb10	“DISCOVERING” SIBERIA <i>Yermak and Avvakum</i>

	<i>Archpriest Avvakum: The Life Written by Himself</i> , 37-112 (ERes)
Feb15	AVVAKUM <u>QUERY #2 DUE BY NOON VIA E-MAIL</u> <i>Archpriest Avvakum: The Life Written by Himself</i> , 37-112
Feb 17	CHEKHOV “Across Siberia,” 267-308 (ERes) “Yegor’s Story,” 309-316 (ERes)
Feb 22	SIBERIA AND “VOL’YA” <i>Dostoevsky: The House of the Dead</i> , 21-126
Feb 24	<i>Dostoevsky: The House of the Dead</i> , 126-258
Mar 1	<i>Dostoevsky: The House of the Dead</i> , 258-357
Mar 3	<u>CRITICAL ESSAY #2</u> In a 5-page essay discuss how Dostoevsky’s <i>House of the Dead</i> both establishes and undermines the theme of exile/imprisonment.
Mar 4-13	SPRING BREAK
Mar 15	THE GULAG: BREAD OF LIFE <i>Shalamov’s Kolyma Tales</i> (ERes) “The Typhoid Quarantine,” 147-169 “The Carpenters,” 15-20 “A ‘Pushover’ Job,” 25-30 “Condensed Milk,” 80-85
Mar 17	THE GULAG: A WOLF UNTO HIMSELF <i>Shalamov’s Kolyma Tales</i> (ERes) “Descendent of a Decembrist,” 184-199 “The Snake Charmer,” 86-92 “The Procurator of Judea,” 173-176 “A Child’s Drawing,” 76-79 “A Day Off,” 103-106 “Dry Rations,” 31-47
Mar 22	SIBERIA AS HOME <i>Valentin Rasputin</i> <u>QUERY#3 DUE BY NOON VIA E-MAIL</u> “Live and Love,” 52-83 (ERes)
Mar 23-28	EASTER BREAK
Mar 31	THE MASTER OF SIBERIA <i>Valentin Rasputin: Essays & Novels</i> <i>Farewell to Matyora</i> , 1-40
Apr 5	<i>Farewell to Matyora</i> , 40-85
Apr 7	<i>Farewell to Matyora</i> , 85-127
Apr 12	<u>3-PAGE PRESENTATION PROPOSAL DUE(REQUIRED)</u> <i>Farewell to Matyora</i> , 128-165
Apr 14	<i>Farewell to Matyora</i> , 166-198
Apr 19	<i>Farewell to Matyora</i> , 199-227
Apr21	“Siberiade”
Apr 26	<u>PRESENTATION ROUGH DRAFT DUE (OPTIONAL)</u> “Siberiade”
Apr 28	“Siberiade”
May 3	<u>IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS</u>

