RUSS 418
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY RUSSIAN LITERATURE

SCHEDULE OF READINGS
(undergraduate section)

This syllabus is subject to change. Some secondary readings may be added in the course of the semester.

Mon, 8-24
Introduction: course structure and requirements. 18th century in Russian history and culture. 18th-century Russian literature and its idiosyncrasies. Normative aesthetics.

Wed, 8-26
Literature of the era of Peter the Great: “Petrine tales.”
Readings: “The History of the Russian Seaman Vasilii Koriotskii…” (S1).

Mon, 8-31
Petrine Russia encounters the West.
Readings: The Travel Diary of Peter Tolstoi (excerpts; ER).

Wed, 9-02
Beginnings of “New Russian literature.” Presentation: Vasilii Trediakovskii.
Readings: Irina Reyfman, Vasilii Trediakovskii: The Fool of the ‘New’ Russian Literature, introduction and ch. 2 (“The ‘New’ Russian Literature”)--ER; Trediakovskii, “Panegyric Verses to Russia” (S1).

Mon, 9-07—Labor day (no class). !!! Before starting your readings for the Wed class, make sure to familiarize yourselves with the basic versification terminology. You’re responsible for understanding the following terms: syllabic and syllabo-tonic verse; metric foot and its varieties (iambus, trochee, dactyl, amphibrach, anapest, pyrrhic, spondee); caesura; feminine and masculine rhyme. Some of these terms are explained in the excerpt from Brown’s book; in addition, you can consult The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics (Princeton, 1993); and Mikhail Gasparov, A History of European Versification (Oxford, 1996), pp. 1-4 (also available online on google books). A quiz will be given on this terminology on Monday, September 21st.

Wed, 9-09
The reform of versification. Presentation on the versification reform and debate (GS).*
Readings: Brown, A History of 18th-century Russian Literature (excerpt, ER); Kantemir, “Satire I: To My Mind”; Trediakovskii, “Solemn Ode on the Surrender of the City of Danzig (S1).

Mon, 9-14
“The Imperial Sublime”: Lomonosov’s odes.
Presentation: Lomonosov’s role in Russian history and culture.
Readings: Lomonosov, “Ode to the Seizure of Khotin”, “Ode on the Ascension of Elizabeth Petrovna” (S1).

Wed, 9-16 Lomonosov’s philosophical and scientific poetry.
Readings: Lomonosov, “Evening Meditation on the Majesty of God,” “Morning Meditation on the Majesty of God,” “Letter on the Use of Glass” (S1).

Mon, 9-21 Quiz on the terminology of versification.
Sumarokov’s poetry. Presentation: Aleksandr Sumarokov.
Readings: Sumarokov, “Song,” “Instruction to a Son” (S1).

Wed, 9-23 Sumarokov (cont.). Presentation: Hierarchy of genres in Russian and European Classicism. The genre system of Russian poetry (GS).*
Readings: Sumarokov, Epistles I and II (S1).

Mon, 9-28 Sumarokov and the Russian Classicist tragedy.
Readings: Sumarokov, Dimitrii the Impostor (S2, pp. 394-434).

Wed, 9-30 The Russian Comedy: Denis Fonvizin.
Readings: Fonvizin, Brigadier (S2).

Mon, 10-05 Mock epic. Presentation: the epic genre in the European tradition and in 18th-century Russian literature*
Readings: Maikov, Elisei, or Bacchus Enraged

Wed, 10-07 Mock epic (cont.).
Readings: Bogdanovich, Dushen’ka: An Ancient Tale in Free Verse

Mon, 10-12 Journalism in the era of Catherine II. Presentation: Catherine the Great as an empress and a woman of letters.
Readings: The Polemics between Catherine and Novikov (S1, pp. 255-300).

Wed, 10-14 Travel literature.
Readings: Fonvizin, Letters From My 2nd Journey Abroad, Letters from My 3rd Journey Abroad (selections, S1, 301-351).

Mon, 10-19 Beginning of Russian prose fiction.
Readings: Chulkov, The Comely Cook, or the Adventures of a Debauched Woman (S2). First response paper due

Wed, 10-21 Nikolai Karamzin and Russian Sentimentalism. Presentation: Nikolai Karamzin’s life and career
Readings: “What Does an Author Need?” (S1), Letters of a Russian Traveler (selections, ER)
Mon, 10-26  **Readings:** Karamzin, *Letters of a Russian Traveler* (selections).

Wed, 10-28  **Readings:** Karamzin, *Letters of a Russian Traveler*

Mon, 11-02  **Readings:** Karamzin, “Poor Liza,” “Natalie, the boyar’s daughter.”

Wed, 11-04  **Readings:** Karamzin, “The Island of Bornholm,” “The Emotional and the Cold; Two Characters.”

Mon, 11-09  Derzhavin’s poetry. **Presentation:** Gavriil Derzhavin’s life and art.
**Readings:** Derzhavin, “Ode to Princess Felitsa,” “Invitation to Dinner,” “Country Life” (S2)

Wed, 11-11  **Readings:** Derzhavin, “On the Death of Prince Meshcherskii,” “To Rulers and Judges,” “God.” (S2)

Mon, 11-16  **Readings:** Derzhavin, “The Waterfall,” “The Monument,” “Time’s River in Its Ceaseless Coursing…” (S2)

Wed, 11-18  The Fable tradition in Russian literature.
**Readings:** Sumarokov, “A Feast at the Lion’s” (S1, pp. 239-41), Khemnitser, 12 fables (S2, pp. 239-253), Krylov, selected fables (ER).

_Thanksgiving break_

Mon, 11-30  Radishchev’s political travelogue. **Presentation:** Aleksandr Radishchev.
**Readings:** Radishchev, *A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow* (selections, ER). 2nd response paper due

Wed, 12-02  **Readings:** Radishchev, *A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow* (selections, ER)

Mon, 12-07  Beginning of literary criticism.
**Readings:** Karamzin, “A Few Words About Russian Literature,” “On Love for the Fatherland and National Pride,” “On the Book Trade and the Love for Reading in Russia,” “Why Are There So Few Talented Authors in Russia”? (S1)

Wed, 12-09  Conclusion

**Abbreviations:**

ER—electronic reserve
S1—Segel’s anthology, vol. 1
S2—Segel’s anthology, vol. 2
GS—graduate student