

Prof. Gene Fitzgerald
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Russian 4900-001
Eugene Onegin and other readings.
TH 4:35-6:55
BuC 105

Class begins on Jan. 6 and ends on Feb. 27 (schedule says 25th but we will meet on the 27th for final presentations.)

This is an intensive course in Russian grammar, pronunciation, translation, poetics (meter, rhyme schemes, sounds etc) , and literary interpretation of Aleksandr Sergeevich Pushkin's Eugene Onegin and of various selections from Pushkin's lyric poetry. The course will involve reading the lyric texts in Russian as well as selected stanzas from Eugene Onegin. There will be discussions, in both Russian and English, of the cultural and literary events and movements during and before Pushkin's life and works (1799-1837) including the philosophical movements of neo-classicism and Romanticism, historical events especially Napoleon and the Decembrists, as well as the Western influences of Lord Byron (George Gordon), the Byronic hero and European Romanticism. I will begin with a short history of Russian cultural events beginning with Peter I (the Great) to the 20th century (with an eye to events from ancient Rus').

We will read all the lyric poetry and selected passages from Eugene Onegin out loud in class in Russian, then translate them orally into passable but accurate (not poetic) English. We will also discuss and identify the grammar problems involved with understanding poetry, remembering that word order is not important in Russian for understanding meaning (it is used for emphasis), therefore it is imperative that you understand the grammar in order to understand just the basic meaning of the work.

Grades will be based 1) on translations and grammar identifications of words and rhymes in the lyric poems and the selected passages in Eugene Onegin. This means that you print out and hand in a "paper" on each lyric or stanza from Eugene Onegin. Each paper will be graded on translation accuracy and grammar identification. However, we will first go over everything in class before you write the translation and grammar identifications, therefore there should be no problem getting a good grade on the paper—if you attend class; 2) after we have read a chapter in Onegin you will be required to have in a short synopsis of events of the chapter, 3) a brief explanation of why a character acts and thinks the way she or he does considering the influence of his or her social background and especially how a character creates his or her own image in each of the chapter synopsis. As we go through the novel those characters may develop and change, or not. All of this will also be discussed in class before the synopsis and explanation is due.

The grammatical information that you will be required to give of the rhyme words:

1. Nouns—give the case, gender, and number. Then provide the nominative singular or plural
2. Verbs: identify the tense, past, present or future. Give the infinitive and the aspect-imperfective or perfective (remember perfective verbs are future when conjugated- imperfective provides the only present tense. Both have past tenses.
3. Participle: give the type of participle and the verb it was formed from
4. Verbal adverb: give the type (perfective or imperfective) Give the verb infinitive.
5. Adverbs—just identify it as an adverb.
6. Pronouns—give the type of pronoun (note list of pronouns) Give the case it is in.
7. We will do special work on participles since that seems to be a form that most students have the least familiarity with.

Final: 1) Group: a take home poem that will be a group effort. This will consist of each group translating and identifying the grammar of the rhyme words of a Pushkin lyric that I will assign you during the last week as well as a short note on what you collectively think the poem means. 2) Individual: also take home: A short essay answer to questions that will be assigned. These questions will be based on understanding one character from the novel Eugene Onegin. It could sort of consist of a compilation of the discussions in the synopses above (A good deal of discussion throughout the class will be based on character theory). (These will be due a week after our class is over) 3) In the last week we will have "presentations" wherein each person will memorize a poem of at least 8 lines and "deliver" it to the class.

The memorized poem will probably stay with you longer than any other aspect of the course..

Books: 1) A.S. Pushkin, Eugene Onegin. Tr. Walter Arndt. Ardis Publishers. Book should be available in the bookstore. I just found a Kindle edition of this edition for \$8.54—first time that it has been available on the Kindle.

2) a handout that you will need to buy from the copy center that I have put together. The handout will contain Russian grammatical terms, grammar tables, and poetic terms (meter, types of meter, types of rhyme, what make a rich vs a poor rhyme etc.)

3) <http://www.rvb.ru/pushkin/toc.htm> This is an on line Russian 10 volume complete works of A.S. Pushkin and it, of course, includes the complete Eugene Onegin in Russian.

Recommended: A good Russian to English Dictionary , e.g the big Oxford Russian to English Dictionary; Smirnitsky—the Smirnitsky still has many Sovietism but is still an excellent dictionary but takes a good knowledge of Russian to use it. A good Russian-to-Russian dictionary if you can find one. I tried to order some but so far they are not available. The best one volume Russian to Russian is the Толковый словарь Русского языка Ed. S.I. Ozhegov and N. Yu Shvedova , It is known as the

Ozhegov Dictionary. I also recommend the on line Викисловарь as an excellent dictionary source. (ru.wiktionary.org)

There is also a 4 volume Pushkin Dictionary (Словарь языка Пушкина) in which every word that Pushkin ever wrote (prose, poetry, non-fiction, letters etc) is recorded with various meanings of each word depending on where it was used. This dictionary is somewhat difficult to use in that it has references to various editions of the complete Pushkin to help find exactly where the word can be found in different complete editions of Pushkin's works and how it is used. All of the print dictionaries can be found in the Marriott Library.

There are several good Russian to Russian dictionaries in the library and I would suggest looking at them from time to time.

Pushkin's lyric poems:

1. Демон/Ангел (We will read first and this will be a learning experience as how I want you to read the rest of the Russian poetry that we will cover).

2. Узник

3. стансы

4. Арион

5. Пророк

6. "не дай мне бог сойти с ума."

7. К*** (Я помню чудное мгновение)

8. Поэту

9. Stanzas from Евгений Онегин to be read in Russian, I will make some selections to be handed in with translation and grammar explanations. We will read out loud all the stanzas and discuss the meanings and grammar constructions—**Chapter one:** Stanzas: 1,10,30,37,45. **Chapter 2:** 6,8, 25. **Chapter 3:** 7, 9, Письмо Татьяны к Онегину, 38. **Chapter 4:** 13, 14, 16. **Chapter 5:** 11, 18, 20, 21. **Chapter 6:** 11, 21, 29, 32. **Chapter 7:** 22, 23, 24. **Chapter 8:** 8, 30, Письмо Онегина к Татьяне, 42, 43, 47.

You will be expected, of course, to read the entire novel in English translation as well. WE will concentrate time on understanding the characters in the novel, especially the characterizations of Onegin, and Tatyana, somewhat less, the character of Lensky, and the character of Olga will have the least interpretation.

Attendance in class is essential since reading Russian poetry is difficult at best to say nothing of 19th Century Russian poetry. However, to repeat what I said above, we go over everything in class before you hand it in. Moreover, since we will intersperse readings from Eugene Onegin with the lyric poems, you will need to attend to know what will be due at the following meeting since there is a certain amount of flexibility in the schedule.

While this course might seem difficult at first glance I urge you to read the course evaluations from last year to see what other students have thought about it. In the beginning reading and attempting to understand poetry is a little scary (and, of course, we never understand it completely) , but in the end result it is an extremely rewarding enterprise. And, finally, Pushkin is without doubt the best Russian poet, and perhaps the best poet, who ever wrote

