COURSE SYLLABUS | SPRING 2027

RUSS 4320: 19th Century Russian Writers

Addicted to Heroines

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Humanities area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. These courses will help students master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

These courses should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I interpret the human experience through creative, linguistic, and philosophical works? Completion of these courses should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:
  - Students will effectively analyze and interpret the meaning, cultural significance, and ethical implications of literary/philosophical texts or of works in the visual/performing arts.

Course content, activities and exercises in these courses should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Ethical Reasoning
- Information Literacy
- Intercultural Competence

Дорогие студенты! В этом семестре мы будем читать русскую литературу XIX века и говорить о её героинях — их выборе, свободе, достоинстве и судьбе. До скорой встречи!

Course and instructor information

Item	Details
Course	RUSS 4320, Section A — 19th Century Russian Writers
Class meetings	Monday and Wednesday, 11:00 a.m.–12:15 p.m.
Location	Weber SST III, Room 2
Semester	January 11 – April 26, 2027; final examination May 5
Instructor	Dr. Valeriya Chekalina · vchekalina6@gatech.edu
Office	Swann 332
Office hours	Monday and Wednesday 5-6 p.m. or by appointment

There are no classes on January 18 (Martin Luther King Jr. Day). Spring Break is expected March 8–12; consult the Georgia Tech academic calendar for updates.

Course description

Conducted in Russian, this course examines nineteenth-century Russian literature through the representation of women. We ask how male authors imagined women's roles, nature, agency, and place in society, and how these representations changed across the century. Beginning with Alexander Pushkin, we move through Fyodor Dostoevsky, Ivan Turgenev, and conclude with Anton Chekhov. Close reading, cultural context, discussion, and analytical writing help us distinguish the voices of literary heroines and interpret their significance.

The course is designed for students with approximately Intermediate-High to Advanced-Mid speaking proficiency (ACTFL). All literary readings are authentic Russian texts, not adapted for language learners. Short works are read in full; longer works are studied through selected passages.

Learning outcomes

- Analyze representations of women and gender in nineteenth-century Russian prose and poetry, using textual evidence.
- Compare the choices, voices, and social positions of heroines across authors and historical contexts.
- Interpret authentic Russian literary language, including stylistic nuances and cultural references.
- Participate in sustained discussion in Russian and develop coherent, well-supported interpretations.
- Write organized analytical essays in Russian, using appropriate and varied vocabulary.

Required readings and materials

- Alexander Pushkin «Метель» (The Blizzard); «Евгений Онегин» (Eugene Onegin)
- Fyodor Dostoevsky «Кроткая» (The Meek One)
- Ivan Turgenev — «Первая любовь» (First Love)
- Anton Chekhov — «Душечка» (The Darling)

Reading assignments, handouts, and related materials will be distributed through Canvas. The order, excerpts, and dates will be specified in the course reading schedule.

Assessment and grading

Component	Weight	Expectations
Active participation	30%	Prepared and thoughtful contributions demonstrating careful reading and reflection.
Homework	20%	Vocabulary exercises, reading responses, comprehension tasks, and related preparation.
In-class essays	20%	Analytical essays written in Russian after the assigned works of each author.
Final essay	30%	A substantial, well-supported literary analysis in Russian.

Final letter grades: A 90–100%; B 80–89%; C 70–79%; D 60–69%; F 0–59%.

Important dates

Event	Date or status
First class	Monday, January 11, 2027
Martin Luther King Jr. Day – no class	Monday, January 18, 2027
Spring Break	March 8–12, 2027
In-class essays	After each author; dates announced in Canvas
Final essay	Due date to be announced in Canvas
Final examination period	Wednesday, May 5, 2027 · 11:20 a.m.–2:10 p.m. (official matrix)

Attendance and active participation

Participation is central to a literature seminar. Come prepared to discuss the readings, support interpretations with passages, respond to classmates, and use Russian throughout class.

Grade	Participation profile
A	Engaged, thoughtful contributions demonstrating careful preparation and reflection.
B	Some substantive participation and evident acquaintance with the assigned reading.
C	Present, but with little active contribution.
D	Present without meaningful participation.
F	Unexcused absence; one unexcused absence is forgiven without penalty.

Tardiness reduces the participation score for that meeting by 5 points. Students will receive a cumulative participation update during the week before the withdrawal deadline and again in the final week. Institute-approved absences are handled according to Georgia Tech policy.

Reading preparation and personal word lists

Preparatory materials will explain cultural references and difficult passages. You are expected to use a dictionary selectively, prioritizing words that clarify meaning and help discuss the text; translating every unfamiliar word is rarely effective.

Keep a personal vocabulary list for each author. Aim for at least 50 words or phrases, including useful general terms, personally relevant expressions, terms essential for discussion, and interesting language. Submit these lists with the corresponding in-class essay.

Writing assignments

Before reading, complete assigned vocabulary exercises. Other homework may include reading questions, detailed comprehension tasks, and visual representations grounded in textual descriptions.

After the works of each author, you will choose one of two prompts and write an analytical essay in class.

Vocabulary is assessed for its appropriateness, variety, and effectiveness. Successful use of words from personal lists is a bonus, not a substitute for accurate and contextually appropriate language.

In-class essay rubric

Content and Understanding (5 points)

5 — Deep understanding and original, well-supported interpretation.

4 — Good understanding; mostly supported insights.

3 — Basic understanding; uneven support.

2 — Limited understanding; weak support.

1 — Superficial or inaccurate understanding.

Use of Vocabulary (5 points)

5 — Wide, appropriate range; effective use of personal-list vocabulary is a bonus.

4 — Appropriate vocabulary with minor errors.

3 — Adequate range and effectiveness.

2 — Limited range or frequent inaccuracies.

1 — Minimal or inappropriate vocabulary.

Organization and Structure (5 points)

5 — Clear, logical structure and smooth transitions.

4 — Mostly clear organization and transitions.

3 — Basic structure; occasional gaps.

2 — Poor organization and confusing transitions.

1 — No coherent structure.

Writing Style and Mechanics (5 points)

5 — Clear, concise, accurate style appropriate to the task.

4 — Mostly clear, with minor errors.

3 — Understandable but with several errors.

2 — Frequent errors that obstruct clarity.

1 — Persistently unclear writing.

Engagement with the Text (5 points)

5 — Thorough, insightful close reading and analysis.

4 — Good engagement and interpretation.

3 — Basic engagement; limited depth.

2 — Minimal engagement or analysis.

1 — Superficial or absent engagement.

A-level work is thoughtful, creative, persuasively argued, organized, and carefully written in light of the student's language level and background.

Language of instruction

Russian is the language of the classroom. Switch to Russian when you enter and use it with the instructor and classmates throughout class. English may be used for emergencies; if a question cannot be asked or understood in Russian, you may raise it in English at the end of class.

Academic integrity and AI

The use of ChatGPT or similar generative AI resources at any stage of a writing assignment is prohibited in this course. Presenting AI-generated or externally written language as your own work violates course expectations and may constitute academic misconduct. Ask before using a tool if you are unsure whether it is permitted.

Students are responsible for following the Georgia Tech Academic Honor Code. Dictionary consultation for reading and vocabulary study is permitted as described above.

Student support and Institute policies

Approved absences

Students absent for approved Institute activities will have an opportunity to make up eligible work, in accordance with Georgia Tech policy. Contact the instructor promptly when an approved absence or emergency affects participation or assessment.

Mental health

Mental health is important to academic success. Georgia Tech Counseling Center resources are available at counseling.gatech.edu. Reach out promptly if you need support.

Accommodations

Students who need accommodations should contact the Office of Disability Services (404-894-2563; disabilityservices.gatech.edu) and share the accommodation letter with the instructor so arrangements can be discussed.

Communication

Canvas and Georgia Tech email are the official channels for announcements, reading assignments, essay prompts, and any changes to the syllabus or assessment dates.