

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam) people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site. Musqueam traditional sites exist throughout the area now occupied by UBC buildings. Please visit the [UBC Vancouver Aboriginal Portal](#) to learn more about the history of Aboriginal presence on the locations of the Vancouver and Okanagan campuses and about the UBC programs and research that support Aboriginal communities and organizations.

COURSE INFORMATION



COURSE DETAILS

RUSS 323A-001: Fantastic Worlds of Russian Fiction (in English)

“Russian and Soviet Science Fiction”

3.0 credits | asynchronous online course | no prerequisites

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will address the rich science fiction tradition in Russia and the Soviet Union, examining trends historically and thematically across three units: utopia and dystopia, worlds beyond earth, and fictional science. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writers described visions of utopia and fantastic voyages to the moon, but in the twentieth century, which saw extreme scientific and technological advances, the intensity of modern war and the pressure of the Cold War space race, science fiction came into its own. In this class we will explore some of the greatest Russian and Soviet science fiction writing and consider its philosophical and political contexts.

INSTRUCTORS

Course Instructor	Pronouns	Contact Email	Office Hours
Dr Katherine Bowers	she/they		online by appointment
Teaching Assistant	Pronouns	Contact Email	Office Hours

HOW TO CONTACT US

Canvas: The course will be conducted asynchronously, but we will engage with the Canvas site frequently throughout each week and will moderate the Canvas discussion forum. On the discussion forum there is also a Course FAQ, which is a place for you to post questions about the course and assignments. Please feel free to post questions in the discussion forum as well.

Office Hours: You can schedule an office hours appointment to discuss any aspect of the course via email. When you email, please include several time ranges in which you could meet (in Pacific time). Office hours will be held via Zoom.

Email: This is the most reliable way to reach us if you have comments, questions, or concerns. We will endeavour to reply to your email within 24 hours on weekdays, but please note that if you email us on a Friday, we will most likely not reply until Monday as we often do not check email on the weekends. Dr Bowers prefers to be called “Dr Bowers” in emails.

COURSE STRUCTURE

The course is designed to be taken asynchronously online and will be conducted primarily via Canvas. Assessment will be based on weekly assignments, online discussions, and a final reflection. The course has been divided into 3 units. For each unit, you will have three weeks of content and one flex week with no content. At the end of each flex week, all work (project, reflection, discussions) for the unit is due.

Each content week:

- A lecture on the week’s topic will be posted on Canvas on Monday morning at 9am Pacific.
- Watch the lecture first. The lecture will introduce the week’s topic and materials.
- Then do the assigned reading/viewing, participate in the Canvas discussion forum, and plan which assignment you’ll do for the unit. (See “Assessments of Learning” below for more detail about grading.)
- The suggested time frame for completing the work is before the next week’s material is posted, but all assignments will be accepted until the deadline in the last week of the unit.

For each unit, you should plan to:

- Do the assigned reading/viewing
- Engage with the discussion forum (5% of your grade is discussion for each unit)
- Do one of the two projects for the unit (your choice – worth 12% of your grade)
- Write a 300-500 word reflection on the relationship of the project you chose to the unit’s reading/viewing/themes (10% of your grade). Your reflection should include some analysis of the material included in the unit.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The main goal of this course is to get you thinking about the way that science fiction texts and films address ethical, philosophical, and political questions. Each unit will include one creative project and one reflection. The creative projects are designed so that you can experience the kind of thinking the authors and directors we will engage with in the class do. The reflections provide a forum for you to develop and test your critical thinking skills in considering science fiction’s purpose, meaning, and potential.

In a synchronous in-person class, the primary labour of critical analysis in this course would be done collectively during in-class discussions. This asynchronous online version of the course places heavy emphasis on discussion and reflection. Through engagement in the discussion forum and analytical and creative reflection in the unit projects and reflections, you will develop your critical thinking skills. A final reflection will give you an opportunity to articulate what you’ve learned over the course of the semester.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- recognize major events or ideas from Russian history and culture;
- contextualize their emergence and development in literature and film, including but not limited to political events, artistic movements, and philosophical or ideological ideas;
- define specific science fiction narrative and generic features and thematically trace their development through Russian literary and cinematic works;
- analyze and critique literary and cinematic works.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Start Date	Do This	Assignments
Course Orientation			
0	Before beginning course material	<u>Watch</u> : course intro video <u>Read</u> : syllabus <u>Comment</u> : on Canvas discussion	Syllabus quiz (due before Jan 19 or 1 week after enrolling in the class) Course intake survey
Unit 1: Utopia and Dystopia			
1	8 Jan 2024	<u>Watch</u> : Utopia/Dystopia lecture 1 <u>Read</u> : 19 th -century utopias (bundle) <u>Read</u> : <i>We</i> entries 1-19 <u>Comment</u> : on Canvas discussion	Utopia project and reflection
2	15 Jan 2024	<u>Watch</u> : Utopia/Dystopia lecture 2 <u>Read</u> : <i>We</i> to the end <u>Read</u> : <i>Roadside Picnic</i> Interview and Chapter 1 <u>Comment</u> : on Canvas discussion	Dystopia project and reflection
3	22 Jan 2024	<u>Watch</u> : Utopia/Dystopia lecture 3 <u>Read</u> : <i>Roadside Picnic</i> to the end <u>Watch</u> (optional): <i>Stalker</i> <u>Comment</u> : on Canvas discussion	
4	29 Jan 2024	No new content	Deadline for Unit 1 projects, reflections, and discussions: Fri, Feb 2, 11:59pm
Unit 2: Worlds Beyond Earth			
5	5 Feb 2024	<u>Watch</u> : Worlds Beyond Earth lecture 1 <u>Watch</u> : <i>Aelita</i> <u>Watch</u> : <i>The Cosmic Voyage</i> <u>Comment</u> : on Canvas discussion	Imagining Earth project and reflection

Week	Start Date	Do This	Assignments
6	12 Feb 2024	<u>Watch</u> : Worlds Beyond Earth lecture 2 <u>Watch</u> : <i>Solaris</i> <u>Read</u> : "Where Two Paths Cross" <u>Comment</u> : on Canvas discussion	Alien communication project and reflection
Reading Break (19-23 Feb 2024)			
8	26 Feb 2024	<u>Watch</u> : Worlds Beyond Earth lecture 3 <u>Watch</u> : <i>Mystery of the Third Planet</i> <u>Read</u> : "The Astronaut" <u>Comment</u> : on Canvas discussion	
9	4 Mar 2024	No new content	Deadline for Unit 2 projects, reflections, and discussions: Fri, Mar 8, 11:59pm
Unit 3: Fictional Science			
10	11 Mar 2024	<u>Watch</u> : Fictional Science lecture 1 <u>Read</u> : "Professor Dowell's Head" <u>Comment</u> : on Canvas discussion	Ethical dilemma project and reflection
11	18 Mar 2024	<u>Watch</u> : Fictional Science lecture 2 <u>Read</u> : <i>The Fatal Eggs</i> <u>Comment</u> : on Canvas discussion	
12	25 Mar 2024	<u>Watch</u> : Fictional Science lecture 3 <u>Read</u> : "The Spontaneous Reflex" <u>Comment</u> : on Canvas discussion	AI report and reflection
13	1 Apr 2024	No new content	Deadline for Unit 3 projects, reflections, and discussions: Fri, Apr 5, 11:59pm
Conclusions			
14	8 Apr 2024	<u>Watch</u> : Concluding video <u>Comment</u> : on Canvas discussion	Final reflection due Fri, Apr 12, 11:59pm

LEARNING MATERIALS

In this class we will read three short novels, watch four films and one cartoon, and read a number of shorter works. English e-copies of all texts are available [via the library's online course reserve portal](#) and will be linked from Canvas. Given the strain of reading online, you may wish to acquire physical copies of the longer texts (*We*, *Roadside Picnic*, *The Fatal Eggs*); these are available for purchase through the UBC bookstore for those who wish to read physical copies. All of the films are available with English subtitles via YouTube and/or [streaming via the library](#). If you are unable to access or acquire course materials, please let Dr Bowers know.

All class discussions, lectures, and assignments will be in English, but you are welcome to read in English translation or in Russian. If you are reading in Russian, you are welcome to quote the Russian text in your writing as required for your analysis.

All course activities will be conducted through Canvas.

CONTENT WARNING

Russian literature and film can be intense. The course material and lectures will include discussion of challenging topics including depression, suicide, illness, murder, physical abuse, sexual abuse, terrorism, mob violence, starvation, natural disaster, and animal cruelty. If you have concerns about this, please contact Dr Bowers.

In addition, some of the course content may put students joining the class from more restrictive areas of the world at risk. Potentially sensitive themes that will appear in the course material and lectures include women's rights, sexuality, labour, human rights, political dissent, political revolution, atheism, violent crime, and political prisoners. If you have concerns that the content of the course will put you at risk, please discuss it with Dr Bowers.

ASSESSMENTS OF LEARNING

Your grade will be determined in the following way:

Percentage	Assignment	Due date
4%	Syllabus quiz	19 Jan 2024 or 1 week after you enroll in the course (whichever is earliest)
12%	Unit 1 project*	11:59pm, 2 Feb 2024
10%	Unit 1 project reflection	

Percentage	Assignment	Due date
5%	Unit 1 discussion**	
12%	Unit 2 project*	11:59pm, 8 Mar 2024
10%	Unit 2 project reflection	
5%	Unit 2 discussion**	
12%	Unit 3 project*	11:59pm, 5 Apr 2024
10%	Unit 3 project reflection	
5%	Unit 3 discussion**	
15%	Final reflection	11:59pm, 12 Apr 2024

*Each unit includes 2 possible project assignments, each worth 12% of your grade. You should plan to do one of them. If you do both, only the first submitted will be graded.

**Discussion will be assessed full credit or no credit based on substantive (not superficial) participation at a rate of 1 point/engagement with the discussion board. For each unit a total of 5 points is possible. For more information, see the post about assessment of discussions in the Canvas discussion forum.

Rubrics and additional information about all graded components of the course will be posted on Canvas.

MISSED WORK AND ACADEMIC CONCESSIONS

If something happens and you get behind on a single unit's schedule, do not worry. Flexibility is built into the course's design and you should have time to complete the work during the flex-week.

If you need a short extension, this is not a problem. Assignments are due on Fridays, but late points will only be counted after the following week's video is posted on Monday. If you need an extra day or two to complete your assignments, please take them. There is no need to email for an extension.

If you need a longer extension, please email Dr Bowers.

If something happens that impacts your coursework substantially or prevents you from finishing the course and you are an Arts student, review the Faculty of Arts' [academic concession page](#) and then complete Arts Academic Advising's [online academic concession form](#), so that an advisor can evaluate your concession case. It's helpful, if you are beginning the academic concession process, to let Dr Bowers know (you don't need to explain what has happened, just that you're submitting a request – it's

helpful for planning). If you are a student in a different Faculty, please consult [your Faculty's webpage on academic concession](#), and then contact Dr Bowers where appropriate.

If you have any concerns about your standing in the course, please contact Dr Bowers.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Academic accommodations help students with a disability or ongoing medical condition overcome challenges that may affect their academic success. Students requiring academic accommodations must register with the [Centre for Accessibility](#) (previously known as Access & Diversity). The Centre will determine that student's eligibility for accommodations in accordance with [Policy LR7: Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Academic accommodations are not determined by your instructors, and instructors should not ask you about the nature of your disability or ongoing medical condition, or request copies of your disability documentation. However, your instructor may consult with the Centre for Accessibility should the accommodations affect the essential learning outcomes of a course.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) lead to the breakdown of the academic enterprise, and therefore serious consequences arise and harsh sanctions are imposed. For example, incidences of plagiarism or cheating may result in a mark of zero on the assignment and more serious consequences may apply when the matter is referred to the Office of the Dean. Careful records are kept in order to monitor and prevent recurrences. A more detailed description of academic integrity, including the University's policies and procedures, may be found in the [UBC Calendar: Student Conduct and Discipline](#).

Note that, while ChatGPT and other generative AI tools are not banned at UBC, because this class emphasizes creative writing and personal reflection as substantial modes of engagement with the texts, use of ChatGPT or other generative AI tools will be considered academic misconduct and the above policy applies.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for

religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available on [the UBC Senate website](#).

ONLINE LEARNING FOR STUDENTS LOCATED OUTSIDE OF CANADA

Keep in mind that some UBC courses might cover topics that are censored or considered illegal by non-Canadian governments. This may include, but is not limited to, human rights, representative government, defamation, obscenity, gender or sexuality, and historical or current geopolitical controversies. If you are a student living abroad, you will be subject to the laws of your local jurisdiction, and your local authorities might limit your access to course material or take punitive action against you. UBC is strongly committed to academic freedom, but has no control over foreign authorities (please visit <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,33,86,0> for an articulation of the values of the University conveyed in the Senate Statement on Academic Freedom). Thus, we recognize that students will have legitimate reason to exercise caution in studying certain subjects. If you have concerns regarding your personal situation, consider postponing taking a course with manifest risks, until you are back on campus or reach out to your academic advisor to find substitute courses. For further information and support, please visit: <https://academic.ubc.ca/support-resources/freedom-expression>.

OTHER COURSE POLICIES

LEARNING ANALYTICS

Learning analytics includes the collection and analysis of data about learners to improve teaching and learning. This course will be using the following learning technologies: Canvas. Canvas captures data about your activity and provides information that can be used to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In this course, I plan to use analytics data to:

- View overall class progress
- Track your progress in order to provide you with personalized feedback
- Review statistics on course content being accessed to support improvements in the course
- Track participation in discussion forums

LEARNING RESOURCES

UBC has created a hub for online learning resources: <https://students.ubc.ca/enrolment/academic-learning-resources>. Included are aids for effective online learning, writing support, research support, digital tools, and other resources. UBC has also created the [Keep Learning site](#) with helpful resources to support online learning.

If you have questions about learning resources, please contact Dr Bowers.

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