**RUSN 398: Tolstoy**

Dept. of Modern Languages and Literatures  
College of William & Mary

**Instructor:** John Lyles  
Class Time: TR: 2:00 – 3:20  
Washington Hall: 312

**Office Hours:** MW: 3:30-4:30, or by appointment  
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**Schedule of Readings**

Readings should be completed before the day scheduled and read in the order listed. Thus, for Monday, September 4th, you should read *Childhood*. All screenings will take place in class.

- **Aug. 30th:** Introduction
- **Sept. 4th:** *Childhood* (94 pages) – 1852
- **Sept. 6th:** *Youth*, chapters 1-13 (32 pages); “Three Deaths” (10 pages)
- **Sept. 11th:** “Family Happiness” (82 pages) – 1859  
  **Article:** “Idyll and Ideal: Aspects of Sentimentalism in Tolstoy’s “Family Happiness”” (BB)
- **Sept. 13th:** *The Cossacks*, chapters 1-20 (81 pages) – 1852-1862
- **Sept. 18th:** *The Cossacks*, chapters 21-42 (76 pages)
- **Sept. 20th:** FIRST ASSIGNMENT DUE  
  **Anna Karenina** (pages 1-66)
- **Sept. 25th:** *Anna Karenina* (pages 66-115)
- **Sept. 27th:** *Anna Karenina* (pages 117-173)  
  **Article:** “The Beginning of *Anna Karenina*” (BB)
- **Oct. 2nd:** *Anna Karenina* (pages 173-236)
- **Oct. 4th:** *Anna Karenina* (pages 237-352)
- **Oct. 9th:** *Anna Karenina* (pages 353-435)  
  **Article:** “Two Kinds of Human Understanding” (BB) – knowledge of Russian a plus
- **Oct. 11th:** Screening: *Anna Karenina*
- **Oct. 16th:** FALL BREAK
- **Oct. 18th:** MIDTERM
Oct. 23rd:  Anna Karenina (437-549)

Oct. 25th:  Anna Karenina (551-669)

Oct. 30th:  Anna Karenina (671-768)
          **Article:** “Problems of communication in Anna Karenina” (BB)

Nov. 1st:  Anna Karenina (769-817)

Nov. 6th:  Screening: Anna Karenina

Nov. 8th:  “The Death of Ivan Ilych”
          **Article:** “‘The Death of Ivan Ilych:’ A Psychological Study on Death and Dying

Nov. 13th: “The Kreutzer Sonata”
          **Article:** “The Kreutzer Sonata: Tolstoy and Beethoven”

Nov. 15th: “Master and Man”

Nov. 20th: “Father Sergius”

Nov. 22nd: THANKSGIVING

Nov. 27th: Hadji Murad
          PAPER TOPICS DUE

Nov. 29th: Hadji Murad
          **Article:** “Khadzhi Murat’s Silence”

Dec. 4th:  “Prisoner of the Caucasus” (BB)
          Screening: Prisoner of the Mountains

Dec. 6th:  Discussion: Prisoner of the Mountains
          Conclusion

Dec. 17th: FINAL PAPERS DUE BY 5:00 PM

**Texts**
1. Childhood, Boyhood, Youth
2. Great Short Works of Leo Tolstoy
3. Anna Karenina
PURPOSE OF THE COURSE
The primary goal of this course is to familiarize students with the life and works of one of Russia’s greatest writers, Lev Tolstoy. The course will begin with Tolstoy’s first work, Childhood, and move on to many of his earlier works, before reading Anna Karenina, the centerpiece of the course. After this novel, we will read many of his most important later works, including his last novel, Hadji Murad. Throughout the course, I will provide some biographical information, as well as the relevant context for the works being discussed. Students will develop a deeper understanding of Tolstoy as a writer and as a man, as well as be able to observe how his writing evolved over time. With this in mind, much of class will be devoted to discussing his works in terms of style and theme, ideology and narrative technique. Beyond this, students will present on one secondary source to help enrich our knowledge and understanding of Tolstoy’s works. Finally, we will watch two films over the course of the semester: adaptations of Anna Karenina and “Prisoner of the Caucasus.” The timing of these films is meant to give students a small reprieve from the overall heavy reading load of this course.

Beyond learning a great deal about Tolstoy and his oeuvre, students will also be expected to write one small paper, one response paper, and one research paper. The goal of the small paper is to provide students with a broader context for either The Cossacks or for Family Happiness by having students read one of two influential works by Pushkin (details below). The response paper is designed to help students both practice asking meaningful questions about a literary work and support their answers with the text. Your response paper can be the germ of the idea for your research paper, which is designed to provide students with the opportunity to pursue a question of their own choosing and to contribute to the ongoing scholarly discussion about Tolstoy and his works. Furthermore, these assignments will help students improve as writers.