

# RUSSIAN 142: [4 units]

## Women in Russian Culture

### TAUGHT IN ENGLISH

TU/TH, 1:40-3:00 PM

Winter 2022

CRN: 44267

1128 Hart Hall

GE: AH, WE, and WC

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This course focuses on the representation of (and by) women in Russian fiction and film, with special attention devoted to the late-Soviet and post-Soviet periods. Beginning with Anna Akhmatova's classic narrative poem *Requiem*, set during the darkest years of the Stalinist terror, the readings will span over five decades and take place against the backdrop of profound social, cultural and political shifts, including *perestroika / glasnost* of the 1980s and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The texts and films covered in the course will explore such issues as family dynamics/motherhood, sexuality, work, and women's relationship to the state. Fictional texts will be supplemented by sociological readings that illuminate the conditions of women's lives during the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. Students will become familiar with the works of several prominent contemporary female authors, including Liudmila Petrushevskaja, Svetlana Vasilenko, Liudmila Ulitskaja, Tatiana Tolstaia, and recent Nobel Prize in Literature recipient Svetlana Alexievich. We will also watch several important films featuring female characters from the past decades. At the end of the quarter, we will analyze the cultural significance of the feminist, activist collective Pussy Riot—whose daring acts of social protest against the Putin regime have attracted international attention.