

Carleton University
Winter 2015
Department of English

ENGL 5606W:
Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* and Vladimir Nabokov's *Pale Fire*

Time of Seminar: Tuesdays 11:35 am-2:25 pm
Location: 1816 Dunton Tower

Instructor: Professor D. Dragunoiu
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Office Hours:
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:00 p.m.-3:00 pm, or by appointment

Tolstoy famously declared that *War and Peace* (1869) “is not a novel, still less an epic poem, still less a historical chronicle. *War and Peace* is what the author wanted and was able to express, in the form in which it is expressed.” Nabokov’s *Pale Fire* (1962) is also a hybrid text that defies categorization; poetry, history, and scholarly commentary mingle in a work widely considered a model example of the postmodernist sensibility. As calculated challenges to genre and responses to cataclysmic historical events (Napoleon’s invasion of Russia in *War and Peace* and the October Revolution in *Pale Fire*), these two works provide a rare opportunity to examine how history gets sublimated in fiction. The seminar will pursue questions such as the following: where lie the formal boundaries of “the novel”? Can fiction accommodate history? How do we measure the distance between the golden age of Russian realism and postmodernism?

NB: We will be using the translation of *War and Peace* by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky. Seminar members are strongly encouraged to begin reading (and rereading!) *War and Peace* well in advance of the beginning of the seminar.

Required Texts

Leo Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (Vintage Classics)

Vladimir Nabokov, *Pale Fire* (Vintage Classics)

Course texts will be available from Octopus Books (116 Third Avenue, the Glebe; phone #: 613-233-2589). These texts can be purchased in person or ordered on the bookstore's website (www.octopusbooks.ca). Web orders are sent directly to the student's home (at extra cost). If purchasing in person, please bring your course number and the course instructor's name with you.

Reading Schedule

NB: Assigned secondary readings are optional; they are mandatory only for the students presenting their synopsis+analysis on a particular secondary reading. Some of the secondary readings will be placed on RESERVE at the MacOdrum Library; the rest will be made available on ARES.

Tues., January 6	Introduction to the Seminar
Tues., January 13	Tolstoy, <i>War and Peace</i> , VOLUME ONE, Parts 1 and 2 Isaiah Berlin, <i>The Hedgehog and the Fox: An Essay on Tolstoy's View of History</i> , pp. 1-42 (parts 1-3) _____ Tolstoy's Life Before and During the Writing of <i>War and Peace</i> _____
Tues., January 20	<i>War and Peace</i> , VOLUME ONE, Part 3 Isaiah Berlin, <i>The Hedgehog and the Fox: An Essay on Tolstoy's View of History</i> , pp. 42-82 (parts 4-8) _____
Tues., January 27	<i>War and Peace</i> , VOLUME TWO, Parts 1 and 2 John Bailey, "What Is Art?" in <i>Modern Critical Views: Leo Tolstoy</i> , ed. Harold Bloom, pp.141-52 and Caryl Emerson, "Tolstoy's Aesthetics" in <i>The Cambridge Companion to Tolstoy</i> , ed. Donna Tussing Orwin, pp. 237-51 _____

	Russian Social Rankings_____
Tues., February 3	<p><i>War and Peace</i>, VOLUME TWO, Parts 3 and 4</p> <p>Gary Saul Morson, “Formal Peculiarities of <i>War and Peace</i>” and “Solving the Puzzle of <i>War and Peace</i>” in <i>Hidden in Plain View</i>, pp. 37-80 _____</p> <p>Russian Serfdom, Quitrent, Emancipation_____</p>
Tues., February 10	<p><i>War and Peace</i>, VOLUME TWO, Part 5</p> <p>Gary Saul Morson, “Tolstoy’s Absolute Language,” in <i>Hidden in Plain View</i>, pp. 9-36. _____</p> <p>Napoleon’s Rise to Power_____</p>
February 16-February 20	Reading Week (University closed)
Tues., February 24	<p><i>War and Peace</i>, VOLUME THREE, Parts 1 and 2</p> <p>Gary Saul Morson, “The Problems of Historiography: Negative Absolutes and Negative Explanations” in <i>Hidden in Plain View</i>, pp. 100-30_____</p> <p>Napoleon’s Russian Campaign_____</p>
Tues., March 3	<p><i>War and Peace</i>, VOLUME THREE, Part 3</p> <p>Gary Saul Morson, “The Aggregate of Self” in <i>Hidden in Plain View</i>, pp. 193-227 _____</p> <p>Emperor Alexander I _____</p>
Tues., March 10	<p><i>War and Peace</i>, VOLUME FOUR, Parts 1 and 2</p> <p>Gary Saul Morson, “Pierre and Andrei: Decisions, Language, Revelation” in <i>Hidden in Plain View</i>, pp. 228-68_____</p> <p>Count Mikhail Speransky_____</p>
Tues., March 17	<p><i>War and Peace</i>, VOLUME FOUR, Parts 3 and 4</p> <p>Donna Tussing Orwin, “The Unity of Man and Nature in <i>War and Peace</i>,” in <i>Tolstoy’s Art and Thought, 1847-1880</i>,</p>

pp. 99-140_____

The Epic Tradition_____

Tues., March 24

War and Peace, EPILOGUE, Parts 1 and 2, and Appendix,
“A Few Words Apropos of the Book *War and Peace*”

Gyorgy Lukacs, “Tolstoy and the Attempts to Go
Beyond the Social Forms of Life” in *Modern Critical
Views: Leo Tolstoy*, ed. Harold Bloom, pp. 9-14,
and Caryl Emerson, “Leo Tolstoy on Peace and War” in
PMLA 124.5, pp. 1855-58.

Tues., March 31

Vladimir Nabokov, *Pale Fire* (all)

Mary McCarthy, “A Bolt from the Blue” in *Nabokov: The
Critical Heritage*, Ed. Norman Page,
pp. 124-136._____

Nabokov’s Life in Russia_____

Tues., April 7

Pale Fire (all)

Andrea Pitzer, Chapter 12: *Pale Fire of The Secret History
of Vladimir Nabokov*

The October Revolution_____

Method of Evaluation:

Attendance is mandatory. *A passing grade cannot be assigned to anyone who has missed three or more seminar sessions.* Members of the seminar are asked to make every effort to come to class on time.

Nabokov began teaching his own classes on European fiction at Wellesley and Cornell with the following imperative: “In reading, one should notice and fondle the details.” In order to cultivate such reading, students will write **five unannounced multiple-choice quizzes** designed to test their detailed knowledge of the **primary works** studied in class. Each quiz will contain ten questions and will be worth **4%** of the final grade. Those who have missed a quiz will have the opportunity to rewrite only one of these quizzes at the end of the semester. The make-up quiz will include questions taken from the primary readings read during in the whole course. Multiple-choice quizzes will be written at the

beginning of class; those arriving late will not be able to write it and will therefore forfeit the quiz grade.

In lieu of a seminar presentation, each student will prepare **2 pedagogical presentations:**

1. a synopsis+analysis of one of the assigned secondary readings (not to exceed 20 minutes);
2. one lesson on a pre-determined subject relevant to the reading material (eg. Napoleon's Russian campaign; Serfdom, Quitrent, Emancipation; Emperor Alexander I) (not to exceed 10 minutes).

Students will sign up for a topic for presentation during the first day of class.

During the first week of the seminar, students will be asked to choose one of the following additional methods of evaluation:

Option 1. Eight two-page (double-spaced) insight reports submitted *before* the beginning of class on days chosen by the student. The insight reports are intended to stimulate sustained and thoughtful reflection on the assigned primary and/or secondary readings before the beginning of class. These reports should be 2 pages long (double spaced, 12-point font). Each report is worth 7.5% of the final grade. In writing these reports, students are encouraged to engage with the readings in an unconstrained, freewheeling manner. They will be graded for thoughtfulness, originality, quality of analysis and quality of written expression.

Option 2. A formal research essay to be submitted at the end of the term. Students who choose this option must present one ten-minute report to the class outlining the state of progress of their research papers. The expectation is that these papers will be extensively researched, elegantly written, and thoughtfully argued.

Grade Distribution:

5 unannounced multiple-choice quizzes (20%); synopsis+analysis of secondary reading (15%); lesson on pre-determined subject relevant to the course (5%); for option-1 students: 8 insight reports (60%); for option-2 students: research essay (60%)

Classroom Etiquette

All cell phones must be turned off when the seminar is in session. If awaiting an emergency phone call, please notify the instructor at the beginning of class. Though laptops are allowed in class, students must avoid the temptation to text-message and surf the Internet while the seminar is in session. Doing so is not only distracting but also disrespectful towards all members of the class.

Grading System

Letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 67-69
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 63-66
A - = 80-84	B - = 70-72	C - = 60-62
D+ = 57-59	D = 53-56	D - = 50-52
F Failure. No academic credit.		

Student Resources and Persons with Disabilities

Students with disabilities requiring any kind of academic accommodation are encouraged to contact the instructor prior to the beginning of classes to discuss any needs and special arrangements. Students are also encouraged to contact a coordinator at the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (500 Unicentre; 613-520-6608). Every effort will be made to ensure the successful completion of the course by students with disabilities.

Religious and Pregnancy Accommodations

Students requesting academic accommodation on the basis of religious obligations should make a formal written request to their instructors for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor. The instructor will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student. Students who want to confirm accommodation eligibility of a religious event or practice may refer to the Equity Services' website for a list of holy days and Carleton's Academic Accommodation policies, or may contact an Equity-Services Advisor for assistance (613-520-2600, ext. 5622, www.carleton.ca/equity).

Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a *Letter of Accommodation* (613-520-2600, ext. 5622, www.carleton.ca/equity). Students must then make an appointment to discuss their needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

All Students

Students are strongly encouraged to make optimal use of the instructor's office hours. Office hours are set aside for students to discuss with the instructor all aspects of the course and to seek assistance with any problems they might encounter in fulfilling the assigned tasks.

All students are also strongly encouraged to take advantage of the services offered at Carleton University, such as the following:

Learning Support Services (LSS): LSS offers students a variety of free services,

including academic-skills workshops and information sessions, bookable study rooms, a Tutor Referral Service, and a supportive staff of Peer Helpers. To learn more about these services, visit LSS on the fourth floor of the MacOdrum Library, contact them by phone at 613-520-2600, ext. 1125, or visit them online at www.carleton.ca/lss.

Career Development and Co-operative Education (CDCE): CDCE is an on-campus centre for career development, employment preparation, and experiential learning opportunities for Carleton students. Students are encouraged to use the various services provided by CDCE throughout their time at Carleton by visiting its two service locations. The Career and Resource Centre is located at 401 Tory (613-520-6611); the Co-op and Employer Centre is located at 1400 CTTC (613-520-4331).

International Student Services Office (ISSO): ISSO is at the heart of Carleton's international student community. It supports international students, including incoming and outgoing exchange students, and promotes cross-cultural understanding within the Carleton community. For more information, visit ISSO at 128 University Centre or contact by phone 613-520-6600. For general email inquiries, write to isso@carleton.ca; for exchange-program inquiries, write to exchange@carleton.ca. Website: www.carleton.ca/isso.

Plagiarism and Other Instructional Offences

The University's policy concerning plagiarism and other instructional offences is outlined in the Undergraduate Calendar (see particularly regulation 14 – Instructional Offences). The Undergraduate Calendar defines an act of plagiarism as an attempt “to use and pass off as one's own idea or product the work of another without expressly giving credit” to the original author. Any act of plagiarism will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the guidelines set out in the Undergraduate Calendar.

The Undergraduate Calendar further specifies that the act of submitting “substantially the same piece of work to two or more courses without the prior written permission of the instructors from all courses involved” constitutes an Instructional Offence. Please note: “Minor modifications and amendments, such as changes of phraseology in an essay or paper, do not constitute a significant and acceptable reworking of an assignment.” No piece of work written for another course will be accepted for credit in this course.