

# Course|Gen\_Ed|New-Close-Modify for request 10505

## Info

**Request:** RUT3506 Creative Lives: Writers, Artists, and Extraordinary People

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## Responses

**Course Prefix and Number :** RUT 3506

**Course Title:** Creative Lives: Writers, Artists, and Extraordinary People

**Request Type:** Change GE/WR designation (selecting this option will open additional form fields below)

**Effective Term:** Earliest Available

**Effective Year:** Earliest Available

**Credit Hours :** 3

**Prerequisites:** sophomore standing or higher, or instructor's permission.

**Current GE Classification(s):** None

**Current Writing Requirement Classification :** None

**One-semester Approval?:** No

**Requested GE Classification:** H

**Requested Writing Requirement Classification:** None

Spring 2016

**RUT 3506 (015E): Creative Lives: Writers, Artists, and Extraordinary People  
Cross-listed with Honors (IDH 3931)**

**Wednesday, 9-11, TUR 2342**

Instructor Dr. Galina Rylkova ([grylkova@ufl.edu](mailto:grylkova@ufl.edu))

Office Hours: T, R 3.00-3.50 p.m., room 256 Dauer Hall



**Course Description:** Explores Russian visions of creativity and creative people in Russian culture by placing them in dialogue with broader European and American models and considerations of creativity. Topics include: the image of the artist; artists' self-fashioning and self-preservation strategies; the celebrity culture; artists as "criminals," "degenerates" and outcasts; artists as supermen; artists' habitats (the "rooms of their own"); and what it generally takes to realize one's talent. We will be discussing films, music, painting, short stories, plays, various articles and essays; and will be reading such famous novels as Vladimir Nabokov's *The Luzhin Defense* and *Despair*. Taught entirely in English. No knowledge of Russian required. **Format:** an informal lecture course with contributions and discussion from the students encouraged. Final project. No final exam. **GenEd credit in "H" & "N" pending. Counts toward a Russian major or minor.**

**Course Objectives / Student Learning Outcomes:** Students will learn about different types of creative personalities from presidents to chess champions, from Roman emperors to scholars, historians, and editors of fashionable magazines, actors, writers, painters, and men of letters. By reading various theoretical works, students will learn to discuss different manifestations of creativity. Students will also learn how society controls creative people through its various institutions (such as prizes and competitions) and cultural constructs (such as "degeneracy," for example). Students will also appreciate that the way we treat creative people and the ways in which

creative people expect to be treated change with time.

In addition to gaining a deeper appreciation of creativity and psychology of creative personalities as manifested in various works of art and biopics, students will develop a broader cultural literacy and an understanding of the changing definition and role of creative individuals in modern society.

Therefore, by the conclusion of the course it is expected that students will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of various manifestations of creativity.
- Produce original, critical readings of works of art and other records, using different methods of interpretation and analysis.
- Critically assess the variety of roles that creative personalities have played historically and continue to play in the human experience.
- Draw connections between works of art and their biographical, historical, and cultural contexts of authorship and interpreting.

**GENERAL EDUCATION INFORMATION:** RUT 3506 counts for three (3) hours of the University of Florida's General Education Requirement in the Humanities (H) area by providing instruction in the key themes, principles and terminology of a humanities discipline. **Course with the Humanities (H) designation** reflect the following objectives: Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and to analyze the key elements, biases and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives. RUT 3506 also counts for three (3) hours of the University of Florida's General Education Requirement in the **International (N)** area by addressing values, attitudes and norms of a non-US culture. **Course with the International (N) co-designation reflect the following objectives:** International courses provide instruction in the values, attitudes and norms that constitute the contemporary cultures of countries outside the United States. These courses lead students to understand how geographic location and socioeconomic factors affect these cultures and the lives of citizens in other countries. Through analysis and evaluation of the students' own cultural norms and values in relation to those held by the citizens of other countries, they will develop a cross-cultural understanding of the rest of the contemporary world.

See: <http://gened.aa.ufl.edu/subject-area-objectives.aspx>

**A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit.**

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (Humanities and International):** Students will acquire a basic understanding of literary analysis and learn to apply this knowledge and develop their own reading skills. Students will pursue these goals across the following three categories:

- **CONTENT:** Students will demonstrate competence in the history, terminology, concepts, methodologies and theories used in the literary humanities and cultural studies. They will identify, describe, and explain the values, attitudes, and norms that shape the cultural differences of the Russian and Western European people. Assessment by exams, written assignments and in discussion.
- **COMMUNICATION:** Students will communicate knowledge, ideas, and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the literary humanities and cultural studies. They will also clearly communicate knowledge, ideas, and reasoning stemming from their analysis of Russian and Western European cultural traditions.

Assessment by written assignments and in discussion.

- **CRITICAL THINKING:** Students will analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using methods specific to the literary humanities and developing reasoned solutions to interpretive problems. They will analyze and evaluate their own cultural norms and values by placing them in dialogue with those of the Russian and Western European people.

Assessment by written assignments and in discussion.

**Required Texts** (required texts are really required, they should be available at UF Bookstore or please, order them through amazon.com asap, used copies are very inexpensive!)

- 1) Vladimir Nabokov, *The Luzhin Defense*
- 2) Vladimir Nabokov, *Despair*
- 3) Anton Chekhov, *Plays* (in Michael Heim's translation)
- 4) William Styron, *Darkness Visible*

Attendance and Late Policy:

Students are permitted one unexcused absence (a three-hour block), beyond which each additional unexcused absence will result in a lowering of the final grade by one full letter. In general, acceptable reasons for absence from class include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays and participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate. Please, see UF Attendance Policies: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

A class roll will be passed around at the beginning of the class. If a student is late, he or she will have to sign the roll after the class. Such lateness distracts other students and the instructor and will affect the student's final participation grade. Students will lose 1% from their final grade each time they arrive late.

Make-up Policy:

There are NO MAKE-UPS for un-excused absences for quizzes or exams. No late assignments will be accepted without legitimate reason (documented illness, excused absence). If you have to miss class or an assignment, please contact me ahead of time to discuss arrangements.

Grades Disputes:

Should a student wish to dispute any grade received in this class (other than simple addition errors), the dispute must be in writing and be submitted to the instructor within a week of receiving the grade. The dispute should set out very clearly, the grade that the student believes the assignment should have received as well as why he or she believes that he or she should have received such a grade.

The following scale will be used in grading your assignments and in calculating the overall grade for the course:

A = 95 - 100% (4 points)	B - = 75-79% (2.67 points)	D + = 55-59% (1.33 points)
A - = 90 - 94% (3.67 points)	C+ = 70 - 74% (2.33 points)	D = 50 - 54% (1.0 point)
B+ = 85 - 89% (3.33)	C = 65 - 69%	D - = 45 - 49% (0.67)

points)	(2.0 points)	points)
B = 80 - 84% (3.0 points)	C - = 60-64% (1.67 points)	E = 40 - 44% (0 - Failure)

If you have questions, please, consult:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

### Course Policies

Please, come to class on time.

Be certain to give proper credit whenever you use words, phrases, ideas, arguments, and conclusions drawn from someone else's work. Failure to give credit by quoting and/or footnoting is PLAGIARISM and is unacceptable. Please review the University's honesty policy at [www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/).

Please do not hesitate to contact me during the semester if you have any individual concerns or issues that need to be discussed. Contact the Disability Resources Center (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>) for information about available resources for students with disabilities.

### Counseling and Mental Health Resources:

Students facing difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help should call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352-392-1575; <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>).

### STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

### **GRADE DISTRIBUTION (100%)**

- Daily assignments, attendance and participation in discussion: 30%
- Journal: 40%
- Final Paper: 30%

### **WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS, ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION IN DISCUSSION (30%)**

There will be no mid-term or final exam, so class participation will be taken seriously in the determination of your final grade. You are expected to do all the reading carefully so that they will form the basis of your contributions to class-discussion. 10% of 30% will be earned for an in-depth knowledge of the assigned material discussed during one chosen session. Each student will be "responsible" for one specific class. I will rely on her/him for providing additional material they find necessary to bring to other students' attention, but most importantly, they should help in "moderating" discussion by demonstrating a superior knowledge of the assigned texts. Two students can be responsible for the same class. Discussion questions for each session will be distributed well in advance via e-mail.

### **Participation Rubric:**

Outstanding	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistently thorough preparation of readings as evidenced by ability to answer introductory questions</li> <li>Discussion contributions manifesting mastery of concepts, terminology, methodologies, and intellectual nuances of material</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Predominantly thorough preparation of readings as evidenced by ability to answer introductory questions</li> <li>Discussion contributions manifesting basic though not necessarily sophisticated understanding of concepts, terminology, methodologies, and intellectual nuances of material</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generally incomplete preparation of readings as evidenced by ability to answer introductory questions</li> <li>Discussion contributions manifesting inaccuracy or confusion in understanding of concepts, terminology, methodologies, and intellectual nuances of material</li> </ul>

**TIPS:** *Interpretive* (or *Critical*) questions are open-ended and are concerned with textual meaning. They ask for opinions on themes, figurative language and symbolism within the narrative. They also ask for judgments regarding the period, history, politics and ethical questions that are relevant to the text. The open-endedness of Interpretive and Critical questions—which often use phrases such as "do you think" or "why do you suppose"—indicates that there may well be neither simply "right" nor simply "wrong" answers; the success of a response is based on the evidence and reasoning students employ to support their analysis and judgment.

### **JOURNAL (40%)**

Keep a journal of your reactions to the readings for the class. Apart from jotting down your impressions of the texts, you may want to write down the questions that you have, your disagreements, problems with understanding the literary text, quotes you find particularly meaningful, and whatever else you think important. You should make at least 1 entry per week. Each entry should consist of 12-15 complete sentences. Maintaining a journal will result in your being better prepared for class, in your becoming more fully engaged with all the material, and therefore your receiving a better grade for participation. Your entries should be typed. If they have to be hand-written, please, write legibly. I will collect your journals once every three-four weeks (see Course calendar for the exact dates).

### **FINAL PAPER/PROJECT (30%), due Monday, May 2st, 2016, midnight or earlier**

#### **Choose any one project:**

1) 7-9 double-spaced-page-long paper or a short film or an installation about any creative person of your choice.

- You will need to choose an object of your study/fascination.
- Compile bibliography. This should include articles, biographies and biopics about your chosen creative person.
- Explain what this person is famous for, how his or her creativity has influenced other people's lives and how it affected the life of that person him/herself. How successful do you think this person was/is in realizing his/her talents?
- You can invent an artist and come up with an imaginary story of his/her life and a body of his/her work.

2) Or you can write a paper on some (2-3) best (from your point of view) portrayals of creativity in film or literature. Or about the very worst portrayals. You will need to explain why they worked or why they didn't.

3) You can come up with your own project but you will need to clear that with me first (April 10, 2016, the latest).

Whatever topic or medium you choose, your project has to reflect the readings and discussions that we would have had in class. Please, do not hesitate to discuss your project and your readings with me. I am really interested in what you decide to do. The sooner you start working on this project, the better. Then you will make the most of it. If you postpone it until the very last week of classes, it is bound to be weaker than what you might have achieved since by then you will be very tired and overwhelmed with many other papers and exams.

### **Course Calendar**

#### **Please note:**

- This schedule of readings is preliminary and may undergo modifications as the semester progresses.
- All reading and writing assignments must be completed by the beginning of the class period under which they are listed.

#### **January 6:**

Introduction

Film Screening: "Black Swan" (2010), Director: Darren Aronofsky

Starring: Natalie Portman, Mila Kunis, Vincent Cassel, Barbara Hershey, and Vinona Rider

Run time: 1 hour 41 minutes

### ***I The Image of the Artist***

#### **January 13, January 20:**

Discussion of "Black Swan"

Mattathias Schwartz, "Amazing or Shit," review of *Steve Jobs* by Walter Isaacson, which he describes "as a case study in creativity" LRB, Dec 15, 2011 (a PDF file from the Instructor).

David Foster Wallace, "Backbone" (ARES)

Dmitrii Merezhkovsky, *The Romance of Leonardo da Vinci* (excerpt, ARES)

Milos Forman, "Amadeus" (clip)

Andrei Tarkovsky, "Andrei Rublev" (clip)

#### **January 27:**

Ernst Kris, and Otto Kurz, *Legend, Myth, and Magic in the Image of the Artist* (excerpt, ARES)

Vladimir Nabokov, *The Luzhin Defense, Foreword, Chapters 1,2,3,4,5*

#### **February 3:**

Vladimir Nabokov, *The Luzhin Defense, Chapters 6-14*

Eric Naiman, chapter on *The Luzhin Defense* from Nabokov, *Perversely* (ARES)

Film, "Chess Fever" (clip)

## ***II Artists as “Degenerates” and as “Criminals”***

### February 10:

Max Nordau, *Degeneration* (e-

book: <http://www.archive.org/stream/degenerationtrfr00norduoft#page/n13/mode/2up>

Read chapters 1-4 from Book 1 (pp. 1-44).

Chekhov, “Black Monk” (online: <http://www.ibiblio.org/eldritch/ac/blackmonk.htm>)

Frederick Crews, “Physician, Heal Thyself: Part II, NYRB, October 2011 (a PDF file from the Instructor)

Film screening: “The Black Swan” (clips)

### **Journals due**

### February 17:

Terry Castle on Outsider’s Art, “Do I like it?” LRB, 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2011 (a PDF file from the Instructor)

Terry Castle’s own work: <http://www.stanford.edu/~castle/cgi-bin/wordpress/artwork/photography/>

Vladimir Nabokov, Foreword to *Despair, Despair* (chapters 1-4)

Film: “Despair” (clip)

### February 24:

Vladimir Nabokov, *Despair* (chapters 5-11)

Otto Rank, *Art and Artist* (excerpt, ARES)

Irina Sirotkina, *Diagnosing Literary Genius* (excerpt, ARES)

## **March 2 – no class, spring break**

## ***III Art/Boredom/Depression/Hypochondria/Death***

### March 9:

Anton Chekhov, “A Boring Story”/”A Dreary

Story”: <http://www.grtbooks.com/exitfram.asp?idx=3&yr=1889&aa=HU&at=DU&ref=chekhov&URL=http://www.eldritchpress.org/ac/jr/156.htm> (you might need to cut and paste)

Lars Svendsen, *The Philosophy of Boredom* (excerpt, ARES);

Michael Kimmelman, *The Accidental Masterpiece* (excerpt, ARES)

Becker, *The Denial of Death* (excerpt, ARES)

Peter Greenaway, “The Belly of an Architect” (clips)

### **Journals due**

### March 16:

Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* (excerpts, ARES)

Tony Judt, “The Night” (ARES)

Film screening: “The Diving Bell and the Butterfly”

Discussion

### March 23:

William Styron, *Darkness Visible*

Joyce Carol Oates, “Papa at Ketchum, 1961” (ARES)



Joseph Shenk, Lincoln and Melancholia (excerpt, ARES)  
Brian Dillon, *Hypochondriacs, Nine Tormented Lives* (chapter on Glenn Gould, ARES)  
"32 short films about Glenn Gould" (clips)

#### ***IV Artists "Among Us"; Celebrity Culture; Artists and Posterity***

##### March 30:

Anton Chekhov, *The Seagull* (Acts I-IV)  
Guy de Maupassant, *Afloat* (excerpt, ARES)  
Schopenhauer, *Essays and Aphorisms* (excerpts)  
Adam Philips, "Judas' Gift" (on Betrayal), PDF file  
Films: *The Seagull* (various versions, clips)

##### **Journals due**

##### April 6:

Schopenhauer, *Essays and Aphorisms* (excerpts)  
Anton Chekhov, *Uncle Vanya* (Acts I-IV)  
Films: "Cold Souls" (clips); "Vanya on the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street" (clips)  
Chekhov in translation: <http://sohorep.org/chekhov-me-hilton-als>

##### April 13:

Leo Tolstoy, "The Death of Ivan Il'ich" (online)  
Sophia Tolstoy, *Diaries* (excerpt, ARES)  
Ivan Bunin, *The Liberation of Tolstoy* (excerpt, ARES);  
Jay Parini, *The Last Station* (novel) (excerpt, ARES)  
Michael Hoffman, "The Last Station" (2009, film, clips)

##### April 20:

Anna Akhmatova, *Poems* (online)  
Galina Rylkova, "No Room of Her Own: Anna Akhmatova's Tenure in Soviet Culture" (online)  
Galina Rylkova, "Saint or Monster: Anna Akhmatova in the 21st Century" (PDF HANDOUT)  
Semyon Aranovich, "The Anna Akhmatova File" (clips)  
Anatolii Naiman, "Film about Anna Akhmatova" (clips)  
Concluding remarks.

##### **Journals due**

**FINAL PAPER/PROJECT (30%) is due MONDAY, MAY 2, 2016, midnight or earlier.** Please, e-mail it to me as an attachment (grylkova@ufl.edu) or you can bring your installation to my office. Please, contact me in advance to make an arrangement.