DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES
AND CULTURAL STUDIES
www.mlcs.ca

2008 - 2009  MLCS SLAV 570 B1 (Winter Term)
Women’s Writing after the Fall of Communism

Instructor: Irene Sywenky

Time: T TH 12:30 – 1:50
Office: 217A Arts Building

Place: HC 2-41
Telephone: 492-6777   fax: 492-9106
Office Hours: T 2-3, or by appointment
E-mail: irene.sywenky@ualberta.ca   Course Website: EClass

Course Prerequisite:  none

Course-based Ethics Approval in place regarding all research projects that involve
human testing, questionnaires, etc.?  
   Yes  X No, not needed, no such projects involved

Community Service Learning component
   Required   Optional   X None

Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material available
   Exam registry – Students’ Union
http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services_and_businesses/services/infolink/exams
See explanations below
   X  Document distributed in class
   Other
   NA

Course Description and Objectives:

The course is designed as an advanced study of a representative body of women’s writing
from the post-totalitarian Central and Eastern Europe (with an emphasis on Poland,
Ukraine, and Russia) in a variety of genres (novel, short prose, and poetry). Some of the
authors sampled in the course will include M. Gretkowska, N. Goerke, O. Tokarczuk, O.
Zabuzhko, T. Tolstaya, and S. Vasilenko. Examples from other media will also be
examined (e.g., film, the visual arts, and the internet). The course will emphasize the
development of gender and feminist theory in the post-communist period with a focus on a
complex interplay between the ideologically contested sites of female body, history, and
geopolitical space. Students will explore representations of female space, femininity, and
sexuality in the context of the narratives of national identity, history, urban culture, and environmentalism. Readings will be available in translation. The course will be conducted as a seminar, and students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss assigned readings and assignments.

**Required Texts:**

**Anthology:**

**Other texts:**

More texts will be made available in class in photocopies.

**Recommended Theoretical Sources:**


Additional bibliography will be distributed in class.

**Grade Distribution (see “Explanatory Notes”):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentation (2 x 10%; dates flexible)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical response papers (2 x 15%)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final essay (18-20 pp., due April 2)</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assignment handouts will be distributed in class.
Required Notes:
“Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University calendar.” (GFC 29 SEP 2003). “The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at www.ualberta.ca/secretariat/appeals.htm) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.” (GFC 29 SEP 2003)

Plagiarism and Cheating:

All students should consult the “Truth-In-Education” handbook or Website (http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/TIE/) regarding the definitions of plagiarism and its consequences when detected.

Students involved in translation courses should be aware that on-line “translation engines” produce very dubious and unreliable “translations.”

Students not writing in their native language should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native or expert speakers is often helpful, excessive editorial and creative help in assignments is considered a form of “cheating” that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences. An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. Before unpleasantness occurs consult http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/TIE/; also discuss this matter with any tutor(s) and with your instructor.

Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:

In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections 23.4.2 and 23.4.3 of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

In this course, participation mark includes attendance, being prepared for class on a regular basis, and informed contribution to class discussions.

Policy for Late Assignments:

Students who consult in advance with an instructor regarding contingencies preventing the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be granted an extension. Otherwise, assignments may be handed in one class-day after the stated deadline without penalty, with a 5%-per-class-day penalty assessed for each subsequent day of lateness.
Grading:
Marks for assignments, tests, and exams are given in percentages, to which letter grades are also assigned, according to the table below ("MLCS Graduate Grading Scale"). The percentage mark resulting from the entire term work and examination then produces the final letter grade for the course.

"MLCS Graduate Grading Scale"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percent Mark</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>97-100</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-96</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>79-86</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>74-78</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>68-73</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>63-67</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>58-62</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>54-57</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>50-53</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>00-49</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tentative class schedule

**January**

6-8 Introduction; course content and objectives
Women in the post-communist Central and Eastern Europe

13-15 Women writers and women’s writing; selections from Schwartz & Flotow

20-22 Development of feminist theory in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe
Contemporary women’s writing in Poland; Goerke, *Farewells to Plasma*

27-29 Tokarczuk, *House of Day, House of Night*

**February**

3-5 Selections from Schwartz & Flotow

10-12 Zabuzhko, *Field Work in Ukrainian Sex*; selections from Cixous and Irigaray; *écriture féminine*

Women’s writing, history, and nation

17-19 Reading Week; no classes

24-26 Women’s poetry from Central and Eastern Europe
Third-wave feminism and postfeminism

**March**

3-5 Tolstaya, *The Slynx*; women’s writing and ecocriticism

10-12 Vasilenko, *Shamara and Other Stories*

17-19 Selections from Schwartz & Flotow

24-26 Film screening (TBA); film discussion

31 Selections from Schwartz & Flotow

**April**

2, 7 Women and creativity in other media
Final Essay due; course review