

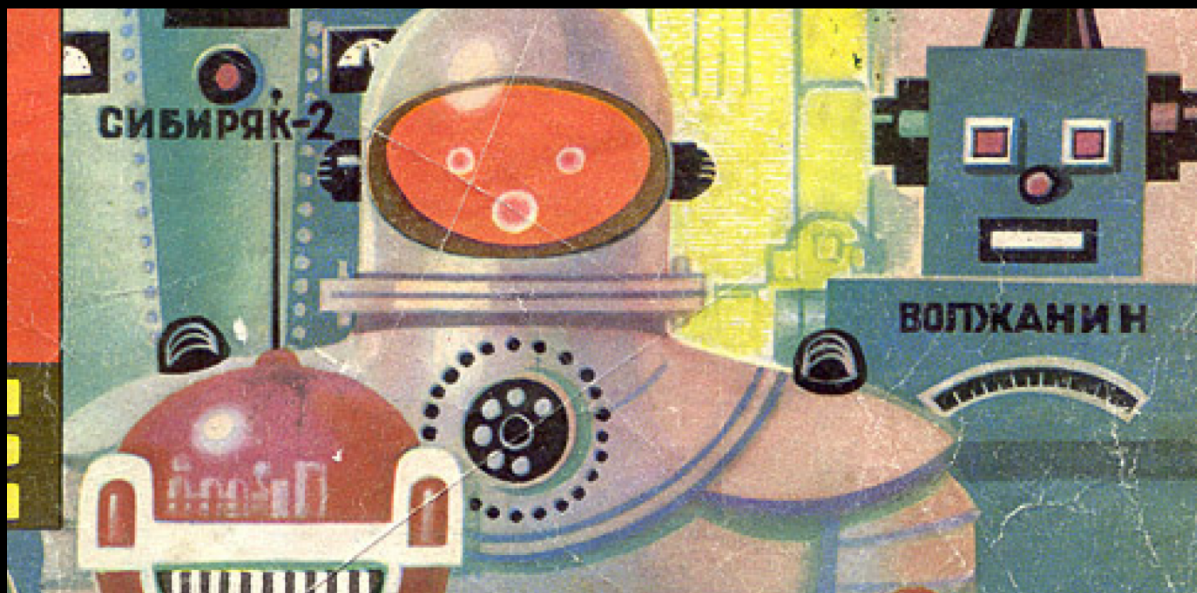
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam) people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site. Musqueam traditional sites exist throughout the area now occupied by UBC buildings. Please visit the [UBC Vancouver Aboriginal Portal](#) to learn more about the history of Aboriginal presence on the locations of the Vancouver and Okanagan campuses and about the UBC programs and research that support Aboriginal communities and organizations.

COURSE INFORMATION



**DEPARTMENT OF CENTRAL, EASTERN AND NORTHERN
EUROPEAN STUDIES**
CENES.UBC.CA



Soviet and Russian Science Fiction

SLAV 347A 101

COURSE DETAILS

“Russian and Soviet Science Fiction” (Science Fiction from Eastern Europe)

Course Code, Section	Academic Period	Credits	Course Delivery Mode
SLAV_V 347A - 101	2025-26 Winter Term 1	3.0	Online

Calendar Description: Science fiction film and literature from Eastern Europe. A maximum of 6 credits will be granted for RUSS_V 323 or SLAV_V 347. Equivalency: RUSS_V 323.

Prerequisites and Corequisites: none

Note: This course is an elective requirement for the *Major in Modern European Studies* and the *Minor in Slavic and Eastern European Studies*. If you have questions about either degree program, please speak to Dr Bowers or visit <https://cenex.ubc.ca/undergraduate/>.

EXTENDED COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will address the rich science fiction tradition in Russia and the Soviet Union, examining trends historically and thematically across three units: utopia and dystopia, worlds beyond earth, and fictional science. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century writers described visions of utopia and fantastic voyages to the moon, but in the twentieth century, which saw extreme scientific and technological advances, the intensity of modern war and the pressure of the Cold War space race, science fiction came into its own. In this class we will explore some of the most thought-provoking Russian and Soviet science fiction writing and consider its philosophical and political contexts.

INSTRUCTORS

Course Instructor	Pronouns	Contact Email	Office Hours
Dr Katherine Bowers	she/they	katherine.bowers@ubc.ca	online by appointment
Teaching Assistant	Pronouns	Contact Email	Office Hours
Mr Dante Prado	he/him	dante.prado@ubc.ca	online by appointment

HOW TO CONTACT US

Canvas: The course will be conducted asynchronously, but we will engage with the Canvas site frequently throughout each week and will moderate the Canvas discussion forum. On the discussion forum there is also a Course FAQ, which is a place for you to post questions about the course and assignments. Please feel free to post questions in the discussion forum as well.

Email: This is the most reliable way to reach us if you have comments, questions, or concerns. We will endeavour to reply to your email within 24 hours on weekdays, but please note that if you email us on a Friday, we will most likely not reply until Monday as we often do not check email on the weekends. Dr Bowers prefers to be called “Dr Bowers” in emails. Mr Prado prefers to be called “Dante” in emails.

Discussion groups: We will each attend at least one of your discussion group meetings at some point during the term. This is an opportunity for you to ask questions and discuss the course materials with us in a group setting. If your group has questions and would like one of us to attend a specific meeting (in addition to our drop in), please let us know via email. We will try to accommodate all such requests.

Office Hours: You can schedule an office hours appointment to discuss any aspect of the course via email. When you email, please include several time ranges in which you could meet (in Pacific time). Office hours will be held via Zoom.

COURSE STRUCTURE

The course is designed to be taken asynchronously online and will be conducted primarily via Canvas. Assessment will be based on unit assignments, group discussions, and a final reflection. The course has been divided into 3 units. For each unit, you will have three weeks of content and one flex week with no content. At the end of each flex week, all work (project, reflection, discussion reports) for the unit is due.

Each content week:

- A lecture on the week’s topic will be posted on Canvas on Monday morning at 9am Pacific.
- Watch the lecture first. The lecture will introduce the week’s topic and materials.
- Then do the assigned reading/viewing.
- Meet with your group to discuss the week’s reading/viewing and the lecture. Discussion questions for each group session will be provided.
- Consider which assignment you’ll do for the unit and whether this week’s material inspires you to take on one of them. (See “Assessments of Learning” below for more detail about grading.)
- All work will be accepted until the deadline in the last week of the unit.

For each unit, you should plan to:

- Do the assigned reading/viewing
- Engage with your discussion group (a significant portion of your grade is discussion)
- Do one of the two projects for the unit (your choice – worth 8% of your grade)
- Write a 600-750 word reflection on the relationship of the project you chose to the unit’s reading/viewing/themes (12% of your grade). Your reflection should include some analysis of the material included in the unit and refer to lecture and/or your group’s discussions.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The main goal of this course is to get you thinking about the way that science fiction texts and films address ethical, philosophical, and political questions. Each unit will include one creative project and one reflection. The creative projects are designed so that you can experience the kind of thinking the authors and directors we will engage with in the class do. The reflections provide a forum for you to develop and test your critical thinking skills in considering science fiction's purpose, meaning, and potential.

In a synchronous in-person class, the primary labour of critical analysis in this course would be done collectively during in-class discussions. This online version of the course places heavy emphasis on discussion and reflection. Through engagement in your discussion groups and analytical and creative reflection in the unit projects and reflections, you will develop your critical thinking skills. A final reflection will give you an opportunity to articulate what you've learned over the course of the semester.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing this course, you will be able to:

- recognize major events or ideas from Soviet history and culture;
- contextualize their emergence and development in literature and film, including but not limited to political events, artistic movements, and philosophical or ideological ideas;
- define specific science fiction narrative and generic features and thematically trace their development through Russian language literary and cinematic works;
- analyze and critique literary and cinematic works.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Start Date	Do This	Assignments
Course Orientation			
1	2 Sept 2025	<u>Watch</u> : course intro video <u>Read</u> : syllabus <u>Comment</u> : on Canvas discussion to find discussion group <u>Do</u> : course intake survey	<u>Syllabus quiz</u> (due before Sept 12 or 1 week after enrolling in the class) <u>Course intake survey</u> <u>Find discussion group</u> (due before Sept 12 or 1 week after enrolling in the class)
Unit 1: Utopia and Dystopia			
2	8 Sept 2025	<u>Watch</u> : Utopia/Dystopia lecture 1 <u>Read</u> : 19 th -century utopias (bundle) <u>Read</u> : <i>We</i> entries 1-19 <u>Discussion</u> : group meeting	<u>Utopia project and reflection</u> OR <u>Dystopia project and reflection</u>
3	15 Sept 2025	<u>Watch</u> : Utopia/Dystopia lecture 2 <u>Read</u> : <i>We</i> to the end <u>Read</u> : <i>Roadside Picnic</i> Interview and Chapter 1 <u>Discussion</u> : group meeting	
4	22 Sept 2025	<u>Watch</u> : Utopia/Dystopia lecture 3 <u>Read</u> : <i>Roadside Picnic</i> to the end <u>Watch</u> (optional): <i>Stalker</i> <u>Discussion</u> : group meeting	
5	29 Sept 2025	No new content	Deadline for Unit 1 projects, reflections, and discussion reports: Fri, Oct 3, 11:59pm
Unit 2: Worlds Beyond Earth			

Week	Start Date	Do This	Assignments
6	6 Oct 2025	<u>Watch</u> : Worlds Beyond Earth lecture 1 <u>Watch</u> : <i>Aelita</i> <u>Watch</u> : <i>The Cosmic Voyage</i> <u>Discussion</u> : group meeting	<u>Imagining Earth project and reflection</u> OR <u>Alien communication project and reflection</u>
7	13 Oct 2025	<u>Watch</u> : Worlds Beyond Earth lecture 2 <u>Watch</u> : <i>Solaris</i> <u>Read</u> : "Where Two Paths Cross" <u>Discussion</u> : group meeting	
8	20 Oct 2025	<u>Watch</u> : Worlds Beyond Earth lecture 3 <u>Watch</u> : <i>Mystery of the Third Planet</i> <u>Read</u> : "The Astronaut" <u>Discussion</u> : group meeting	
9	27 Oct 2025	No new content	Deadline for Unit 2 projects, reflections, and discussion reports: Fri, Oct 31, 11:59pm
Unit 3: Fictional Science			
10	3 Nov 2025	<u>Watch</u> : Fictional Science lecture 1 <u>Read</u> : "Professor Dowell's Head" <u>Discussion</u> : group meeting	<u>Ethical dilemma project and reflection</u> OR <u>Malfunctioning machine project and reflection</u>
11	10 Nov 2025	<u>Watch</u> : Fictional Science lecture 2 <u>Read</u> : <i>The Fatal Eggs</i> <u>Discussion</u> : group meeting	
12	17 Nov 2025	<u>Watch</u> : Fictional Science lecture 3 <u>Read</u> : "The Spontaneous Reflex" <u>Discussion</u> : group meeting	
13	24 Nov 2025	No new content	Deadline for Unit 3 projects, reflections, and discussion reports: Fri, Nov 28, 11:59pm
Conclusions			

Week	Start Date	Do This	Assignments
14	1 Dec 2025	<u>Watch</u> : Concluding video <u>Discussion</u> : group meeting	<u>Final discussion report</u> due Fri, Dec 5, 11:59pm <u>Final reflection</u> due Fri, Dec 12, 11:59pm

LEARNING MATERIALS

In this class we will read three short novels, watch four films and one cartoon, and read a number of shorter works. English e-copies of all texts are available [via the library's online course reserve portal](#) and will be linked from Canvas. Given the strain of reading online, you may wish to acquire physical copies of the longer texts (*We*, *Roadside Picnic*, *The Fatal Eggs*); these are available for purchase through the UBC bookstore for those who wish to read physical copies. All of the films are available with English subtitles via YouTube and/or [streaming via the library](#). If you are unable to access or acquire course materials, please let Dr Bowers know.

All class discussions, lectures, and assignments will be in English, but you are welcome to read in English translation or in Russian. If you are reading in Russian, you are welcome to quote the Russian text in your writing as required for your analysis.

CONTENT WARNING

These texts and films can be intense. The course material and lectures will include discussion of challenging topics including depression, suicide, illness, murder, physical abuse, sexual abuse, terrorism, mob violence, starvation, natural disaster, and animal cruelty. If you have concerns about this, please contact Dr Bowers.

In addition, some of the course content may put students joining the class from more restrictive areas of the world at risk. Potentially sensitive themes that will appear in the course material and lectures include women's rights, sexuality, labour, human rights, political dissent, political revolution, atheism, violent crime, and political prisoners. If you have concerns that the content of the course will put you at risk, please discuss it with Dr Bowers.

ASSESSMENTS OF LEARNING

Your grade will be determined in the following way:

Percentage	Assignment	Due date
4%	Syllabus quiz	12 Sept 2025 or 1 week after you enroll in the course (whichever is earliest)

Percentage	Assignment	Due date
1%	Join discussion group (of 5) and agree on regular meeting time	12 Sept 2025 or 1 week after you enroll in the course (whichever is earliest)
8%	Unit 1 project*	11:59pm, 3 Oct 2025
12%	Unit 1 project reflection	
5%	Unit 1 discussion**	
8%	Unit 2 project*	11:59pm, 31 Oct 2025
12%	Unit 2 project reflection	
5%	Unit 2 discussion**	
8%	Unit 3 project*	11:59pm, 28 Nov 2025
12%	Unit 3 project reflection	
5%	Unit 3 discussion**	
5%	Final discussion**	11:59pm, 5 Dec 2025
15%	Final reflection	11:59pm, 12 Dec 2025

*Each unit includes 2 possible project assignments, each worth 8% of your grade. You should plan to do one of them. If you do both, only the first submitted will be graded.

**Discussion grades are given to the full group and based on submission of a dossier of reports from the three discussion meetings for each unit.

Rubrics and additional information about all graded components of the course will be posted on Canvas. The final letter grade will be given following [UBC's Grading Practices](#).

MISSED WORK AND ACADEMIC CONCESSIONS

If something happens and you get behind on a single unit's schedule, do not worry. Flexibility is built into the course's design and you should have time to catch up thanks to the flex-week.

If you need a short extension, this is not a problem. Assignments are due on Fridays, but late points (minus 5%/24 hrs late) will only be counted after the following week's video is posted on Monday. If you need an extra day or two to complete your assignments, please take them. There is no need to email for an extension.

If you need a longer extension, please email Dr Bowers.

If something happens that impacts your coursework substantially or prevents you from finishing the course and you are an Arts student, review the Faculty of Arts' [academic concession page](#) and then complete Arts Academic Advising's [online academic concession form](#), so that an advisor can evaluate your concession case. It's helpful, if you are beginning the academic concession process, to let Dr Bowers know (you don't need to explain what has happened, just that you're submitting a request – it's helpful for planning). If you are a student in a different Faculty, please consult [your Faculty's webpage on academic concession](#), and then contact Dr Bowers where appropriate.

If you have any concerns about your standing in the course, please contact Dr Bowers.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Academic accommodations help students with a disability or ongoing medical condition overcome challenges that may affect their academic success. Students requiring academic accommodations must register with the [Centre for Accessibility](#) (previously known as Access & Diversity). The Centre will determine that student's eligibility for accommodations in accordance with [Policy LR7: Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Academic accommodations are not determined by your instructors, and instructors should not ask you about the nature of your disability or ongoing medical condition, or request copies of your disability documentation. However, your instructor may consult with the Centre for Accessibility should the accommodations affect the essential learning outcomes of a course.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The academic enterprise is founded on honesty, civility, and integrity. As members of this enterprise, all students are expected to know, understand, and follow the codes of conduct regarding academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas and attributing them to others as required. This also means you should not cheat, copy, or mislead others about what is your work. Violations of academic integrity (i.e., misconduct) lead to the breakdown of the academic enterprise, and therefore serious consequences arise and harsh sanctions are imposed. For example, incidences of plagiarism or cheating may result in a mark of zero on the assignment and more serious consequences may apply when the matter is referred to the Office of the Dean. Careful records are kept in order to monitor and prevent recurrences. A more detailed description of academic integrity, including the University's policies and procedures, may be found in the [UBC Calendar: Student Conduct and Discipline](#).

GENERATIVE AI POLICY

This class was designed to be completed without the aid of generative AI, a technology that raises significant ethical and environmental concerns. SLAV 347A emphasizes creative writing and personal reflection as substantial modes of engagement with the course materials and one of its main learning outcomes is the development of critical thinking skills in the analysis of literature and film.

Work created using generative AI technologies and submitted as your own will be considered academic misconduct as per UBC's academic misconduct policy. Work completed with the support of generative AI technologies, such as, for example, spelling or grammar checks or formatting, would be permitted as long as these uses are clearly documented. Note that students are responsible for any errors, factual or otherwise, introduced by their use of generative AI and will be graded accordingly. Using generative AI for parts of the creative process such as "brainstorming," outlining, or generating text or images are not permitted. If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted, please ask Dr Bowers.

All submitted work should include a statement explaining whether and/or how generative AI tools were used. If generative AI was used, specific information, such as the prompts used, should be included. If generative AI was not used, a simple statement specifying that generative AI was not used in the assignment is sufficient.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions. Details of the policies and how to access support are available on [the UBC Senate website](#).

ONLINE LEARNING FOR STUDENTS LOCATED OUTSIDE OF CANADA

Keep in mind that some UBC courses might cover topics that are censored or considered illegal by non-Canadian governments. This may include, but is not limited to, human rights, representative government, defamation, obscenity, gender or sexuality, and historical or current geopolitical controversies. If you are a student living abroad, you will be subject to the laws of your local jurisdiction, and your local authorities might limit your access to course material or take punitive action against you. UBC is strongly committed to academic freedom, but has no control over foreign authorities (please visit <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,33,86,0> for an articulation of the values of the University conveyed in the Senate Statement on Academic Freedom). Thus, we recognize that students will have legitimate reason to exercise caution in studying certain subjects. If you have concerns regarding your personal situation, consider postponing taking a course with manifest risks,

until you are back on campus or reach out to your academic advisor to find substitute courses. For further information and support, please visit: <https://academic.ubc.ca/support-resources/freedom-expression>.

OTHER COURSE POLICIES

LEARNING ANALYTICS

Learning analytics includes the collection and analysis of data about learners to improve teaching and learning. This course will be using the following learning technologies: Canvas. Canvas captures data about your activity and provides information that can be used to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In this course, I plan to use analytics data to:

- View overall class progress
- Track your progress in order to provide you with personalized feedback
- Review statistics on course content being accessed to support improvements in the course
- Track participation in discussion forums

LEARNING RESOURCES

UBC has created a hub for online learning resources: <https://students.ubc.ca/enrolment/academic-learning-resources>. Included are aids for effective online learning, writing support, research support, digital tools, and other resources. UBC has also created the [Keep Learning site](#) with helpful resources to support online learning.

If you have questions about learning resources, please contact Dr Bowers.

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