



RUSI 4000

Dr. Justin Wilmes, East Carolina University

Senior Seminar in Russian Studies

3-Part Lesson Plan using MAPRR



Course Context

- RUSI 4000 is a Senior Seminar for majors and minors in the multi-disciplinary Russian Studies program at East Carolina University
- This version of the course would be taught with a focus on the experience of the 1917 Russian Revolution through historical narrative, personal accounts, and artistic representations (novels, films and poetry)



Course Units

- Unit 1: History
 - Orlando Figes "A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution 1891-1924"
 - Leon Trotsky's "History of the Russian Revolution"
- Unit 2: Novel
 - Pasternak's Dr. Zhivago (1957)
 - Gladkov's Cement (1925)
- Unit 3: Film
 - Mother (1926, Pudovkin)
 - October: Ten Days that Shook the World (1928, Eisenstein)
 - Commissar (1967, Askoldov)
 - Dr. Zhivago (1965, Lean)
- **Unit 4: Poetry and will be centered around the MAPRR site** (Mapping Imagined Geographies of Revolutionary Russia)

Unit 4: Poetry



Part I - Class-wide Poetry Readings & Discussion

Part II - Laboratory Day with MAPRR

Part III - Poetry Unit Project using MAPRR



Unit 4: Poetry



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Part II – Laboratory Day with MAPRR



- The class will meet in a computer lab for the first day.
- Students will complete a **lab worksheet** guiding them through the various functionality of the MAPRR website (<http://maprr.iath.virginia.edu/>).

Part II – Lab Worksheet Tasks



1. Using the “Authors” function, find two poems by two different authors with whom you are familiar and read them. Which authors and poems did you choose?

Mapping Imagined Geographies of Revolutionary Russia 1914-1922

Home Agents Authors Place Based Concepts PBC Components Works
Locations Multivalent Markers Analysis

About

"Mapping Imagined Geographies of Revolutionary Russia" (MAPRR) helps us construct a topography of Russians' feelings and attitudes toward their beloved country during the tumultuous years between 1914 (the start of World War I) and 1922 (the end of the Civil War). These attitudes echo even today.

Drawing from period literature across Russia, MAPRR offers unique insight into strongly opposing identities in close relation to their sense of belonging to a place. Explore the myriad ways that authors imagined Russia in their writings of the moment.

Brief Overview

Attachment to place—knowing where we belong—is one of the ways in which we know who we are. We call this sense of belonging “place-based identity.” From 1914 and the start of World War I through 1922, when the revolution and Russian civil war ended, Russians' feelings about their national identity underwent radical shifts. Their feelings about “Russia” and “homeland” (rodina)—and many other places—transformed the imagined geography of their country and the world. Major writers and ordinary Russians alike made this process particularly visible in the poems, stories, and essays they wrote in this turbulent time.

Authors List of writers. Select an individual author to find a list of their works and relevant spatial imagery.

Place Based Concepts List of possible connections between spatial images, feeling, and political attitudes. See how a mere “space”

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Authors

Anna Akhmatova	ID: 1
Vasilii Dmitrievich Aleksandrovskii	ID: 2
Ivan Nikolaevich Antonov	ID: 3
Mikhail Dmitrievich Artamonov	ID: 4
Nikolai Aseev	ID: 5
Arkadii Timofeevich Averchenko	ID: 6
Andrei Vladimirovich Balashov	ID: 7
Dem'ian Bednyi	ID: 8
Aleksandr Il'ich Bezvzvenskii	ID: 10

Part II – Lab Worksheet Tasks



2. Using the “Locations” view, select poems from three different locations (either within Russia or abroad). Read through them. What, if any, geographical dimensions stand out to you in these poems?

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A blue arrow points from the 'Locations' link in the top navigation bar to the 'Locations' section on the right.

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Locations

A location is a specific piece of terrain mappable by latitude and longitude, such as a city, town, or village; and for our purposes, a specific region, mountain range, or river. A location becomes a meaningful “place” when it is attached to a PBC. A location in a PBC connects common themes, emotions, and reactions, revealing a multidimensional map of experiences that authors shared during the turbulent years of World War I, the Revolution, and the Civil War in Russia.

Show all Locations Select Categories to View View Data for Specific Years 1914-1922

A map showing Europe and Asia with several location markers. The markers are colored circles with numbers inside: 11 (North America), 44 (Europe), 255 (Europe), 17 (Asia), 2 (Asia), and 25 (Asia). A blue arrow points from the text 'A location is a specific piece of terrain...' to the map.

Part II – Lab Worksheet Tasks



3. Using the “PBC Components (Place-Based Concepts)” view, locate the “Politics” section. Select two to three poems which reflect opposing, or different views of the Revolution. Identify how you recognize this in the poem.

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foreign place	ID: 31
global order	ID: 266
hell	ID: 34

Politics

Bolshevik	ID: 42
independent	ID: 47
nationalist	ID: 45
Proletkult Bolshevik	ID: 43
pro-revolution	ID: 44
regionalist	ID: 46
Siberian regionalist	ID: 289
tsarist nationalist	ID: 41


Feeling



Part III – Poetry Unit Project

Spatial and Emotional Experiences of the Revolution through Poetry

Project Description

- Students will be assigned a larger project for the unit, using the MAPRR site. They will be asked to browse the MAPRR database and read poems from a range of works – which they may search based on author, geographical location, or particular tropes (PBC's or Place-based Concepts).
 - Students will then choose two or three poems from the MAPRR database to analyze in depth.
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Part III – Poetry Unit Project

Spatial and Emotional Experiences of the Revolution through Poetry

The analytical focus will depend on the poems, but suggested approaches include:

1. Provide some contextualization of the poem within the broader biography of the poet.
2. What is the political or ideological position of the poem vis-a-vis the Revolution (if applicable)?
3. How do elements of local identity reinforce or conflict with the national / imperial? Do they complicate a simple political or ideological reading? Or on the contrary reinforce a political message?
4. What personal and emotional dimensions do the texts reveal?
5. Analyze the English translation: Is it accurate? Does it attempt maintain the poetics of the original (rhyme scheme, assonance, alliterations, etc.)? (required)

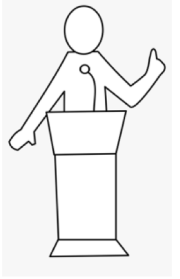
Part III – Poetry Unit Project - **Output**



1. Each student will write a 5-to-7-page paper analyzing the poems they chose, as described above.
2. At the end of the unit, they will present their projects to the class in a 10-minute presentation.

Note: The essay and accompanying presentation will be a made grade component of the course.

Part III – Concluding Class Discussion



After all presentations are completed, with the remainder of class, discuss the following:

1. What conclusions can we draw about the range of political perspectives on the Revolution? What specific examples are there? Do the poets and poems presented tend to fall neatly into groups of "pro-" and "anti-" Revolution?
2. Beyond the political, what are some examples of how the Revolution was experienced by these poets?
3. Rank the following dimensions of meaning in the poems presented in terms of most significant: geographical/local identity; political viewpoint; emotional experience; specific memories or experiences. What other dominant tendencies can we identify?
4. Compare and contrast the portrayal of the Revolution in some of the poems presented with the historical accounts, novels, and films covered in previous units.