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Spring Quarter 2006
Anthropology 21247
Thurs 3-6

INTENSIVE STUDY OF A CULTURE:
THE CAUCASUS

The Caucasus occupies a distinctive place within both the ancient and modern “anthropological” imagination. From the summit of Mt. Ararat (Noah’s legendary refuge) to the peaks of Mt. Elbrus (mythical prison of the exiled Prometheus), the Caucasus has been consistently anchored to enduring tropes of disobedience, punishment, and redemption (compare Pushkin, Tolstoy and Bitov on the haunting image of “captivity” in the Caucasus). This mythic moral precariousness has long provided depth to the region’s perceived geographic liminality, betwixt and between the continental worlds of Europe and Asia (a theme central to the early 20th century melodrama, *Ali and Nino*). The Caucasus’s extraordinary diversity in languages and ethnicities has generated a deep suspicion of the region by those surrounding it and sparked profound social tragedies. But it has also stimulated an artistic curiosity that has generated profound meditations on culture, identity, and social life. This course will explore the Caucasus through an examination of its archaeology, history, literature, music, and film. We will examine the entanglement of the region’s history with its internal and external representations in order to get a sense of the array of forces shaping the region today.

Course Requirements

Students are required each week to submit a reaction paper detailing the primary themes/arguments of the readings and setting forth a series of responses. These responses should grapple with the internal logic of the readings themselves as well as reactions that arise from juxtaposing course readings, films, and other media. The reaction papers should be 2-3 pages in length and are due at 1pm on the day before class (Wednesday). They should be posted to the CHALK website and students are encouraged to read one another’s work in advance of class.

Students will also be required to lead class discussion of one reading during the quarter. Discussion leaders should begin with a brief presentation on the critical themes and ideas raised by the reading (note: do NOT summarize the reading or move page by page through the text). Presentations should be brief (no longer than 10 minutes) and should then lead into a sustained discussion of the texts.

Lastly, students will be graded on class participation. This is a seminar and so depends upon the active engagement of the students.

Texts

All students are expected to complete the readings required for each class period. The readings have been put on the course website on the CHALK system with the exception of the readings by Lermontov and Said. These books are available for purchase at the Seminary Coop and are on reserve at the Regenstein.

COURSE SCHEDULE

MARCH 30. THE PROMETHEAN CAUCASUS

Cornell, S. E.

- 2001 *Small Nations and Great Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus*. Caucasus world. Curzon, Richmond. Ch. 1 and 2.

APRIL 6. THE TRANSGRESSIVE CAUCASUS

Sources:

Pushkin, A.

- 1997 A Captive in the Caucasus. In *Alexander Pushkin: Selected Poems*, edited by A. D. P. Briggs. Everyman Paperback Classics, London.

Tolstoy, L.

- 1999 A Prisoner in the Caucasus. In *Tolstoy: Tales of Courage and Conflict*, edited by C. Neider, pp. 260-279. Cooper Square Press, New York.

Commentary:

Friedrich, P.

- 2003 Tolstoy and the Chechens: Problems in Literary Anthropology. *Russian History/Histoire Russe* 1-2:113-143.

APRIL 13. THE REDEMPTIVE CAUCASUS

Sources:

Lermontov, M.

- 2004 *A Hero of Our Time*. Translated by M. Schwartz. Modern Library classics. Modern Library, New York.

Commentary:

Layton, S.

- 1994 *Russian Literature and Empire: Conquest of the Caucasus from Pushkin to Tolstoy*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. Ch. 12.

Film:

Kavkazskiy plennik (Captive of the Caucasus). 1996. Directed by Sergei Bodrov.

APRIL 20. THE ANCIENT CAUCASUS

Sources:

View Slide shows at:

<http://acc.spc.uchicago.edu/%7eatSmith/Pages/Caucasus%20Archaeology.html> (IE only)

Commentaries:

Kohl, P. L.

- forthcoming *The Making of Bronze Age Eurasia*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. Ch. 3. The Caucasus

Smith, A. T.

n.d. Prometheus Unbound: Southern Caucasia in Prehistory. Under review at *Journal of World Prehistory*.

APRIL 27. THE GENEALOGICAL CAUCASUS

Sources:

Khorenats'i, M.

1978 *History of the Armenians*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA. I.10-16, 20-32, II.1-23.

Lerner, C. B.

2003 *The Wellspring of Georgian Historiography: The Early Medieval Historical Chronicle, The Conversion of Kartli and the Life of St. Nino*. Bennett & Bloom, London. Pp. 139-156.

Film:

Color of Pomegranates. 1968. Directed by Sergei Parajanov.

MAY 4. THE IMPERIAL CAUCASUS

Sources:

Said, K.

2000 *Ali and Nino*. Anchor Books, New York.

Commentaries:

Blanch, L.

2004 *The Sabres of Paradise: Conquest and Vengeance in the Caucasus*. Tauris Parke, London. Ch 3 and 4.

MAY 11. THE ETHNOGRAPHIC CAUCASUS

Sources:

Colarusso, J.

2002 *Nart Sagas from the Caucasus: Myths and Legends from the Circassians, Abazas, Abkhaz, and Ubykhs*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J. Introduction, Sagas 1, 8-11, 64, 76, 86.

Friedrich, P. and N. Diamond (editors)

1994 *Encyclopedia of World Cultures, Volume VI: Russia and Eurasia/China*. 10 vols. G.K. Hall, Boston, Mass. Selections.

Commentaries:

Jersild, A.

2002 *Orientalism and Empire: North Caucasus Mountain Peoples and the Georgian Frontier, 1845-1917*. McGill-Queen's University Press, Montreal. Ch. 3.

Music:

Listening Session

MAY 18. THE SOVIET CAUCASUS

Sources:

Bitov, A.

1992 *A Captive of the Caucasus*. Farrar Straus Giroux, New York. Pp. 61-92.

Commentaries:

Jones, S.

1988 The Establishment of Soviet Power in Transcaucasia: The Case of Georgia 1921-1928. *Soviet Studies* 40(4):616-639.

Grant, B.

2004 An Average Azeri Village (1930): Remembering Rebellion in the Caucasus Mountains. *Slavic Review* 63(4):705-731.

Film:

Mimino. 1977. Directed by Georgi Daneliya.

MAY 25. THE TROUBLED CAUCASUS

Sources:

<http://www.karabakh.org>

<http://www.karabakh.net>

<http://www.kavkazcenter.com>

Commentaries:

Smith, S.

2001 *Allah's Mountains: The Battle for Chechnya*. I.B. Tauris, London. Pp. 69-119.

De Waal, T.

2003 *Black Garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan Through Peace and War*. New York University Press, New York. Ch. 1, 2, 8, 12.

JUNE 1. THE INDEPENDENT CAUCASUS

Sources:

OSCE Caucasus Training Module

Commentaries:

Derluigian, G. M.

2005 *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus: A World-System Biography*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago. Introduction and Ch. 6.

Film:

Vodka Lemon. 2003. Directed by Hiner Saleem.