

**Discussing Chekhov's stories.** OLLI Berkeley, Fall 2018.

**Syllabus**

**Course description:** While being famous worldwide mostly as a playwright, in Russia A. Chekhov is better known and more loved for his short stories, many of which are considered to be masterpieces of the genre. This discussion course offers an insight into some of his best stories and novellas, covering a wide spectrum of themes. Discussing the ideas, plots and characters, we will pay close attention to Chekhovian style and look at the language resources employed to render his ideas and attitudes.

Recommended book (available on Amazon): **Selected stories of Anton Chekhov**, translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokonsky. Modern Library, NY, 2000.

**WEEK 1.**

**Part I. Introductory talk.**

Before the class please watch a 20 min. documentary «Anton Chekhov» on Youtube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fAAAIWeCi-Y>

In class we will discuss how Chekhov's life and personality are reflected in his stories. I will make a brief introduction to his style and creative method, as well as an overview of the major themes and characters in his stories.

**Part II. Discussing the stories:**

- 1) "The Death of a Clerk".
- 2) "A Chameleon" (not in the book; the text and assignments will be posted on the course site)
- 3) "The Student" (assignment posted)

**Week 2.** Read the following stories (assignments will be posted on the course site):

- 1) At Christmastime
- 2) The Bishop

**Week 3.** Read the following stories (assignments will be posted on the course site):

- 1) Sleepy
- 2) Rothschild's Fiddle

**Week 4.** Read the following stories:

- 1) Peasants (not in the book; the text and questions for discussion will be posted)
- 2) In the Ravine (assignment posted)

**Week 5.** Read the following stories (assignments posted on the course site):

- 1) The Man in a Case
- 2) Anna on the Neck

**Week 6.** Read the following stories (assignments posted on the course site):

- 1) The Darling
- 2) The Lady with the Dog

**Instructor bio.**

Elena Sheygal-Placzek introduced herself to the OLLI Berkeley community with the course “Russians: Portrait of a Nation” (2015). Previously taught this course at OLLI CSUMB in Monterey, which was followed by “Russian Artistic Heritage” (CSUMB) and “The Golden Age of Russian culture” (Berkeley and Lafayette).

Elena Sheygal-Placzek is a retired professor of the Volgograd University, Russia, and has a PhD in Linguistic Anthropology from the Moscow Linguistic University.

Author of the “English-Russian Dictionary of US Life and Culture”.

Has taught courses in Cross-Cultural Communication, Introduction to Russian History, Literature and Culture to American students: Pennington high school, N.J.; Ramapo College of New Jersey; School for International Training, Brattleboro, VT (semester abroad program in Volgograd).

In 2006 she was a visiting scholar at UC Berkeley on the AAUW grant.

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