

## THE SILVER AGE OF RUSSIAN CULTURE

OLLI Lafayette, Winter 2019

The course explores Russian culture at the turn of the XX century - a very dynamic period of experimentation with different art forms and outstanding discoveries in the visual, literary and performing arts. The Silver Age produced a galaxy of brilliant artistic talents: we will speak about the poetry of Blok, Akhmatova and Mayakovsky, the music of Stravinsky and Scriabin, the "Ballets Russes" enterprise of Diaghilev, the paintings of Bakst, Roerich, Malevich and others. We will also discuss the impact of the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 on the arts and the lives of writers, musicians and artists.

### Syllabus

#### Session 1.

**Introduction.** The concept of Silver Age. The time frame and the social-historical context. Distinctive characteristics of the Silver Age and their manifestation in music, art and literature. The major movements of the Silver Age.

#### Session 2.

**Symbolism** in music (A.Scriabin) and poetry (A.Blok).

Fine arts of the Silver age: from the symbolism of "*The World of Art*" society to the beginning of Russian avant-garde.

#### Session 3.

**From Symbolism to Acmeism:** The life and poetry of Anna Akhmatova.

#### Session 4.

**The birth of modern ballet: S.Diaghilev and *The Ballets Russes*.** Russian seasons in Paris. The personality of Diaghilev. The innovations of *Ballets Russes*. Composers and artists that worked for *The Ballets Russes*: Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Debussy, Ravel, Strauss et al.; Bakst, Benois, Matisse, Picasso et al. Diaghilev's patrons and friends.

#### Session 5.

**S.Diaghilev and *The Ballets Russes*:** the leading dancers and choreographers: Fokin, Nijinsky, Massine, Balanchine, Nijinska, Pavlova, Karsavina et al.

#### Session 6.

**The Bolshevik 1917 Revolution and the end of the Silver Age.**

The artists who welcomed the revolution.

A.Blok's poem "The Twelve" – apologetics of the Revolution or satire?

Futurism: V.Mayakovsky before and after the Revolution.

Avant Garde artists after the Revolution: Kandinsky, Chagall, Malevich, Altman.

Russian constructivism.