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Russian Cultural Research Project

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Course: Russian 202

Student level: Intermediate
Russian II course

Course Context

In this class, students move up on the proficiency scale by expanding their vocabulary, practicing key grammatical functions, and demonstrating how quickly and easily they can use the language.

Additionally, students work on phonetics and pronunciation and continue to master Russian through Russian classic literature, by reciting a Pushkin poem and reading a Chekhov short story and play.

Course Context: Project Integration

This project is for students of the Russian language in the intermediate range in speaking and intermediate high range in reading and listening. The project will help students to learn about Russian culture, history, literature, and the Russian national identity through research, reading, translation, and preparation of presentations based on their research.

The Russian Cultural Research Project will be given to students to work on during the second half of the Russian 202 course, so they can present the project closer to the end of the course during the last few contact meetings. Students will be asked to use PowerPoint to create a presentation in Russian that they will share with classmates. The presentation should not be longer than seven minutes.

Project Objective

To help students to learn about Russian culture, history, literature, and the Russian national identity through research, reading, translation, and preparation of presentations based on their research.

Project Research Aspect

The students will be asked to conduct research, following closely the guidelines that were created by their professor for the Russian Cultural Research Project. The topic will require research using the Mapping Imagined Geographies of Revolutionary Russia website (MAPRR) to identify places on the map where the author was born and died, and the places mentioned in the writer's work. Additionally, students will pick a piece of the writer's work from the MAPRR website and translate into English. URL for MAPRR: <http://maprr.iath.virginia.edu/>.

Student Writing Objective

Students will be asked to create a PowerPoint presentation in Russian that they will share with classmates. The presentation will be based upon student research findings.

Student Feedback

The students will listen to classmate presentations and comment on each presentation using the canvas software, which provides a discussion board for student posts. Also, students will be able to ask questions if there are any regarding the presentations.

MAPRR Concepts

The “Mapping Imagined Geographies of Revolutionary Russia” website (<http://maprr.iath.virginia.edu/>) investigates feelings toward “homeland” and places of belonging during a time of extreme social and political trauma. These feelings find immediate, direct expression in period works of literature, written between the start of World War I in 1914 and the end of the Civil War in 1922. MAPRR helps us build an “imagined geography” of revolutionary Russia that shows what places attracted the attention of these writers and what they felt about those places. The website has a great archive of Russian writers, their work, places, Place Based Concepts, and many others.

Student Project Instructions

Students will be given the following project instructions (slides 9-14) and will complete a project that deals with Russian culture, history, literature, and the Russian national identity.

1. Pick a Russian writer from the list:

Osip Emilyevich Mandel'shtam	Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Blok
Vladimir Vladimirovich Maiakovskii	Porfirii Alekseevich Kazanskii
David Davidovich Burluk	Marina Ivanovna Tsvetaeva
Anna Akhmatova	Iosif Fëdorovich Kallinikov
Sergei Stradnyi	Sergei Aleksandrovich Esenin
Nikolai Stepanovich Gumilëv	Aleksandr Konstantinovich Oborin
Vladimir Arsen'evich Nikiforovskii	Pëtr Vasil'evich Oreshin
Sergei Ivanovich Malashkin	Maksim Gor'kii

A blue callout box with a white border and a drop shadow, containing the text "Project Instructions: Continued".

Project
Instructions:
Continued

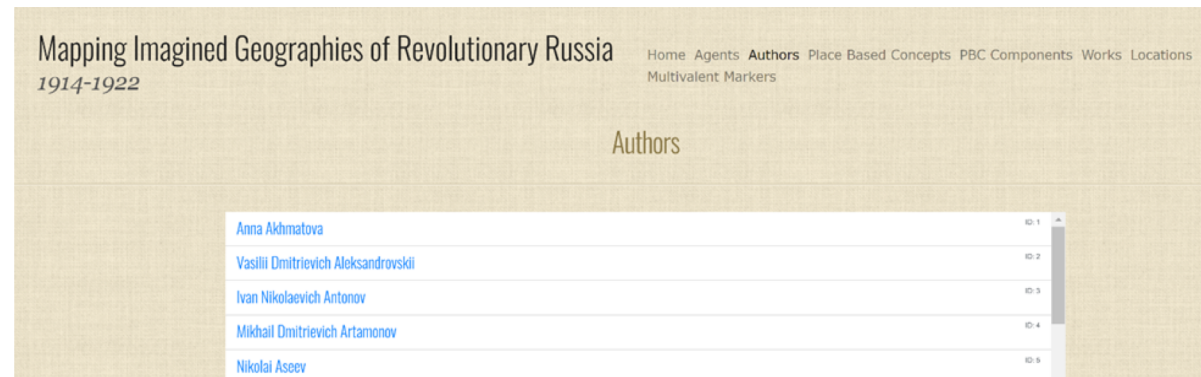
For the research, you will be using the MAPRR website (<http://maprr.iath.virginia.edu/>)

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Project Instructions: Continued

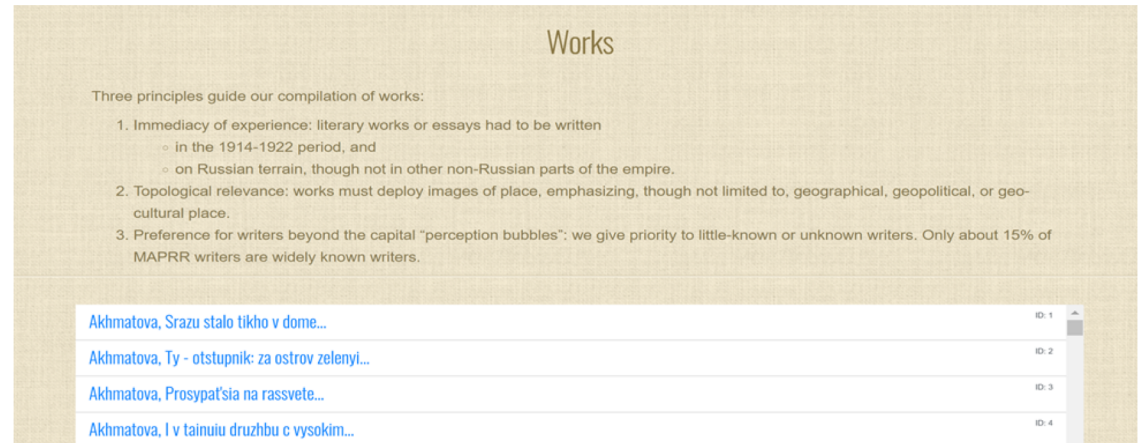
The included screenshots below will help you to navigate the MAPRR website. The screenshots will make it evident, that MAPRR is easy to navigate, and it is very intuitive (<http://maprr.iath.virginia.edu/>).

Under the [Authors tab](#) (<http://maprr.iath.virginia.edu/authors>) find the author's database, with short bio information, etc.



Project Instructions: Continued

Under the Works tab, you can find a full list of works. Some of these works include an English translation: (<http://maprr.iath.virginia.edu/works>).



The screenshot shows the 'Works' tab on the MAPRR website. It features a title 'Works' at the top, followed by a section titled 'Three principles guide our compilation of works:'. Below this are three numbered principles: 1. Immediacy of experience, 2. Topological relevance, and 3. Preference for writers beyond the capital 'perception bubbles'. At the bottom, there is a list of works by Akhmatova, each with a title and an ID number.

Works

Three principles guide our compilation of works:

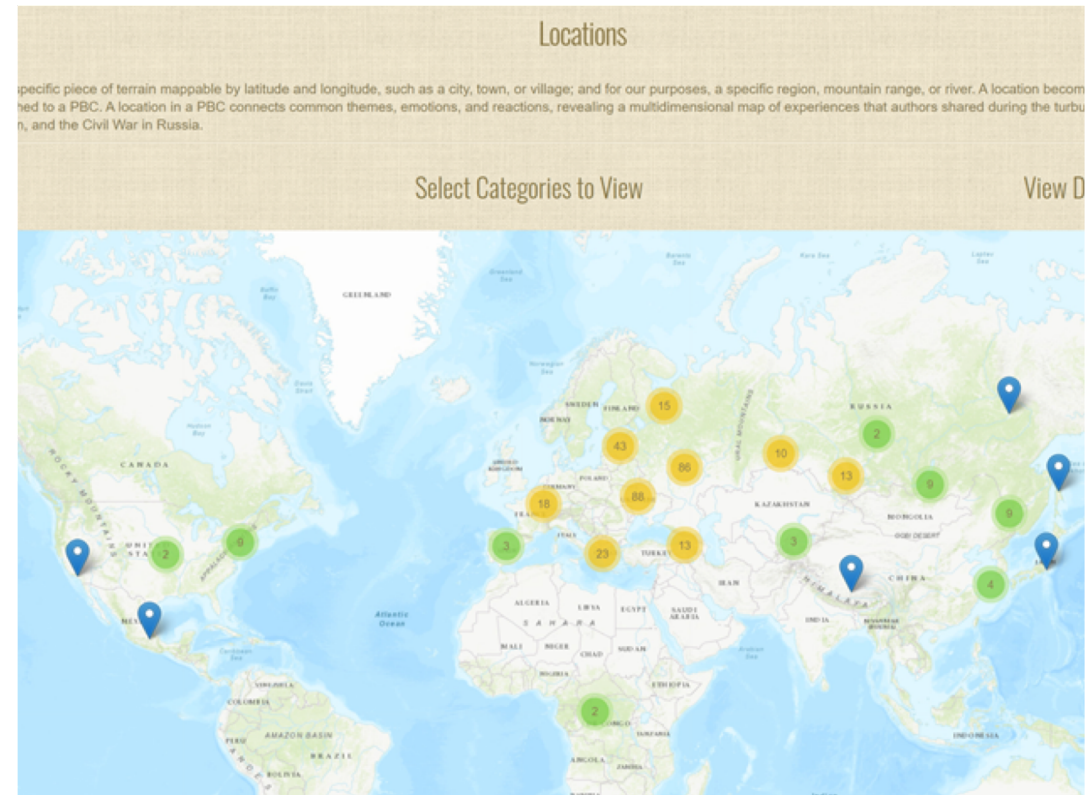
1. Immediacy of experience: literary works or essays had to be written
 - in the 1914-1922 period, and
 - on Russian terrain, though not in other non-Russian parts of the empire.
2. Topological relevance: works must deploy images of place, emphasizing, though not limited to, geographical, geopolitical, or geo-cultural place.
3. Preference for writers beyond the capital "perception bubbles": we give priority to little-known or unknown writers. Only about 15% of MAPRR writers are widely known writers.

Akhmatova, Srazu stalo tikhv v dome...	ID: 1
Akhmatova, Ty - otstupnik: za ostrov zelenyi...	ID: 2
Akhmatova, Prosypat'sia na rassvete...	ID: 3
Akhmatova, I v tainuiu družbu c vysokim...	ID: 4

Project Instructions: Continued

The Location tab will help you to identify places where authors were born, etc.

(<http://maprr.iath.virginia.edu/locations>)



Project Instructions: Continued

2. Using MAPRR: Choose and translate a piece of the writer's work.

3. Using MAPRR, identify places on the map where the author was born and died, and the places mentioned in the writer's work. Save your findings for a future presentation in class (see: <http://maprr.iath.virginia.edu/locations> and <http://maprr.iath.virginia.edu/authors>).

4. Prepare a short (seven minutes maximum) presentation in Russian and share with the class your research about an author and the MAPRR map findings related to the author and their work.

Benefits of Using MAPRR

- The MAPRR website will help the Russian language learners to find out more about Russian culture, history and literature.
- It is a great opportunity to learn about not only well-known authors, but also less famous ones.
- The website will help students to learn the geographical and historical context behind the works of many writers living in the revolutionary period of Russia.

Conclusion

Working on the Russian Cultural Research Project and using the MAPRR website will give the students a unique opportunity to learn about the Russian culture and history of the revolutionary time. Additionally, it will give students confidence in using the language and working with authentic materials on their own.