This course will be based on Russian cinema of 1990s. We will strive to discern, through these first post-Soviet films, how Russian directors perceived and interpreted their country’s complex past and present, and what they envisioned in the future. We will screen and discuss feature films from the late 90-s as well as documentaries dealing with USSR and its fall, such as: Varnje’s “East/West” (1999), Chukhrai’s “The Thief” (1997), Bodrov’s “Prisoner of the Mountains” (1996), Hessman’s “My Perestroika” (2010). These films belong to various genres, they have won national and international awards, and each of them presents a unique perspective on Russia’s dramatic history and no less painful modern transformations.

The goal of the course is twofold: to expand your knowledge of the country, its history and culture, and to help you further develop your language skills, particularly listening and speaking – all essential elements in attaining a higher level of proficiency. Multiple film screenings and expanding relevant vocabulary will help you develop your listening skills. Our discussions will range from concrete to abstract topics and will improve your ability to communicate in Russian. Oral presentations will allow you to use your language skills in a meaningful way – in order to gain and share new information and to attain a deeper understanding of Russia’s past and present. Films will be watched at home, through Canvas, class work and discussion will be conducted in Russian.

*Prerequisites for this course are RUSS 3040/3050, or RUSS 3060/3070, or an equivalent (which has to be discussed with your instructor no later than the first week of the semester.)