Syllabus for War and Peace

Your instructor: Professor Adele Barker
Email: adeleb@arizona.edu

Reading:
War and Peace by Leo Tolstoy, trans. by Aylmer and Louise Maude, revised and edited by Amy Mandelker. Oxford World Classics, 2010. 100 pages a week for homework. At times, I will ask for a bit more.

Course Description:
Your assignments from week to week are to read, and to read slowly. Tolstoy asks us to take a deep breath and to take in each detail that was part of Russian life in the capital, in the countryside, on the battlefield, and in the houses of the landed gentry in the early part of the 19th century.

I will cover approximately 100 pages each week working through the text itself, taking you into Tolstoy's diaries as he wrote, and exploring with you the world that lay outside the pages of this novel. We will detour sometimes into art, sometimes into music, sometimes into religion, all of it bringing us back into the world that Tolstoy wanted to memorialize.

On April 16, the week after class is over, there will be a special showing in our regular classroom of the Russian version of *War and Peace* directed by the Soviet film director, Sergei Bondarchuk. The film will be shown between 9:00-12:30 with a break in the middle. Feel free to stay for the entire showing or for parts of it.

Each week I will post the topics for that week.

First class: January 29th.
Background to the novel. Making sense of Russian names. Growing up Tolstoy. What were Tolstoy's days like? Why a novel about the Napoleonic invasion of Russia. Russian society in 1805. Petersburg vs Moscow: the eternal battle.