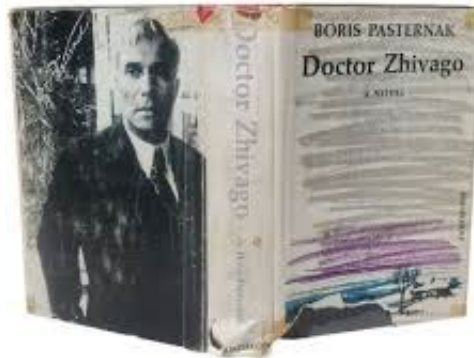
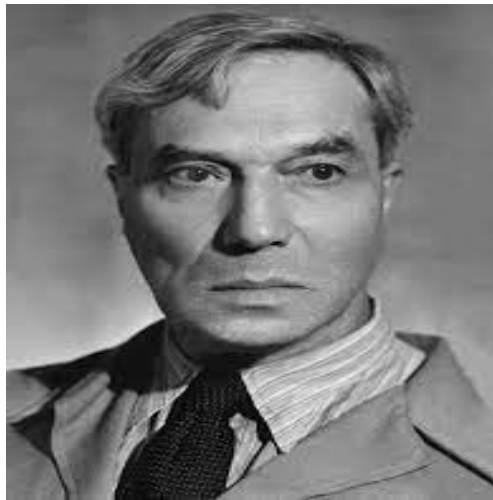


Syllabus for Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* and the Politics of Russian Literary Dissent

Dr. Adele Barker

As we move closer into October, I will no doubt be modifying the syllabus. The following should give you a good idea of where each of our meetings will be heading.

Our class will meet for six weeks. It will be helpful to read 100 pages per week.



Week 1:

I will be talking during our first meeting about the literary tradition out of which Pasternak came and the scandal that erupted when Pasternak attempted to have *Dr. Zhivago* published in the Soviet Union. What *was* it about this novel.....?

Week II:

If we haven't already, we will dive directly into the novel today. This is very much a philosophical novel in the tradition of Tolstoy. We will be looking at the genesis of Zhivago's philosophy as both doctor and poet, how Pasternak and his hero greeted the Revolution, and the role of Christianity in Pasternak's literary universe.

Week III

As we move through the novel today, I will be talking about private life and the search for Mother Russia.

At the end of the novel are a series of poems known as the Zhivago Cycle. They correspond to particular moments in the text, and we will be devoting some time to them. In many ways this novel is an answer to the poems at its end.

Week IV We will take a step back today to look at what Pasternak himself was up against as he was writing this novel. It was 1945 when he began to write. The war was over, Stalin was still in power, and the purges were still in effect.

How one writes honestly with a censor's red pen hovering over you is part of what I will be talking about today.

Week V Love. Tonia, Lara, Komarovsky, and surviving the times in which we live.

Week V1 The CIA, an Italian publisher, and the Kremlin. How the CIA and Zhivago became part of the same story.

You will note on the reading list that I have included the book *The Zhivago Affair* by Peter Finn and Petra Couvee (Vintage, 2014). It is a fascinating and detailed study of how and why Pasternak's novel ended up in CIA hands. I highly recommend this carefully researched book.