Week 2

DAY 1: Mon. Feb 12:

Boris / Dmitry the Pretender in History
“Times of Trouble”

Readings for Monday all cover the same basic historical period in various degrees of flair and detail: the years 1584 —> 1613, from the death of Ivan the Terrible [Ivan Groznyi, lit. Ivan the Awe-inspiring] to the founding of the Romanov dynasty. Dunning’s nine book chapters should probably be read last; in them he covers many episodes and names that we will meet in Pushkin’s play.

Points to keep in mind about the Smuta or “Time of Trouble” [Смута, смутное время] and its preceding two decades:

- The ambivalent status of Ivan the Terrible’s son Fyodor’s brother-in-law, Boris Godunov
- Boris’s achievements for the Russian State as Tsar Fyodor’s “manager”
- Death at Uglich 1591
- Economic, climatic, and political factors leading to the crisis of 1601
- Who is the Pretender and why does his pretence work (cf. Uspenskij)
- Rome [Poland-Lithuania] and Russian Eastern Orthodox Christianity
- The mercenaries, the weapons, the terrain, the reign of terror 1602-1605

A Smuta is both a historical period and a recurring symbol. Recent Times-of-Trouble include 1809-1813, 1854-1862, 1914-1921, 1939-1945, 1991- . What do all these stretches of time have in common?

READINGS:

- Pavlov, “Fedor Ivanovich and Boris Godunov” (R) .............. pp. 1 – 11 R
- Emerson/Oldani, Modest Musorgsky & Boris Godunov, ch. 1, “Tsar Boris in History” ........... pp. 27-31 R
- Dunning, A Short History of Russia’s First Civil War, chs. 2—>11 pp. 14-137

SLA 537 for Tues. Feb. 13: + Н. М. Карамзин, История государя Российского, т. 11 (1824), from гл. 1 ....................... «Царствование Бориса Годунова»
DAY 2:  Wed. Feb. 14:

- Continue with Dunning’s history chapters. Discussion of critiques.

History + a fiction: the various modes.

“Semiotic history” the way Uspensky does it—looking for symbols and recurring popular reactions to them—vs. “documented narrative history” of Dunning’s sort. The purpose, benefits, and drawbacks of both methods.

The special constraints on drama. The special constraints on historical drama.

- A synopsis of Pushkin’s play [pp. 38-41 R].

Speculation on why this sequence, why these characters out of the historical mass. Is there a symmetry to events?