RUSSIAN

In the Department of German and Russian

Chair, Associate Professor Alicia E. Ellis (German)
Assistant Professors Elena Monastireva-Ansdell and Luke Parker; Visiting Assistant Professor Peter Orte; Language Assistant Sofia Levina

The major emphasizes Russian language, literature, history, and film in order that students develop a broad understanding of Russian culture in the past and the present. Students are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities on campus, including guest lectures, film screenings, weekly Russian Table or Russian teas, the Russian Poetry Evening, the annual Colby-Bowdoin-Bates Russian Student Research Symposium, and a program of cultural events.

Students majoring in Russian language and culture are expected to study in Russia for at least one semester. Instructors advise beginning students carefully about January, summer, and semester programs.

Requirements for the Major in Russian Language and Culture

1. A minimum of seven courses (three or four credits) numbered above Russian 127 in the Department of German and Russian, including Russian 426 or 428, and at least one course each in 19th- and 20th-century Russian literature or film in English translation (usually chosen from 231, 232, 237, 242).
2. One course in pre-20th-century Russian history and one course in 20th-century Russian history (usually History 227 and 228).
3. A seminar in Russian literature, conducted entirely in Russian (Russian 426, 428).

The point scale for retention of the major applies to all courses offered toward the major. No requirements for the major may be taken satisfactory/unsatisfactory.

Requirements for the Minor in Russian Language and Literature

1. Four introductory Russian language courses: Russian 125, 126, 127, 128.
2. Two courses in Russian culture in English translation: one course in 19th-century literature and one course in 20th-century literature or film (usually chosen from Russian 231, 232, 237, 242).
3. One course studying Russian cultural texts in the original (chosen from Russian 325, 326, 425, 426, 428).

Note: In special circumstances, course substitutions for major and minor requirements may be made after documented consultation with Russian program staff.

Russian majors and minors who are unable to study in Russia for a semester are strongly encouraged to attend a summer language program or spend a Jan Plan in Russia.

Russian majors and minors should broaden their study through courses related to Russian in other departments, particularly courses in history and government.

Course Offerings

RU120f Reel Russia What role does Russia's "most important art" play in shaping the nation's present and future? How does it legitimate or subvert the official notions of usable and unusable past? What has caused the shift from the rigorous interrogation of the Communist past in the 1990s to the revival and reintegration of Soviet-era policies, practices, and values in the 21st century? Students will combine intellectual inquiry into changing representations of social structures, ethnic relations, and gender roles in Russia with the development of visual literacy, analytical skills, and vocabulary necessary to think and write critically about film. Four credit hours. A, W1. MONASTIREVA-ANSDELL

RU125f Elementary Russian I Introductory course enables students to acquire a high degree of competence in elementary Russian through communicative learning and interaction. Acquisition of functions, grammar and vocabulary through substantial engagement in creative communication and role playing, reinforced by listening, readings, writing, and speaking assignments outside of the classroom. Cultural practices of Russians are studied through language. Four credit hours. MONASTIREVA-ANSDELL

[RU125J] Elementary Russian I Intensive introductory course equivalent to RU125f. Upon successful completion of the course, students may proceed to Elementary Russian II, RU126s. Enables students to acquire a high degree of competence through communicative learning and interaction. Acquisition of grammar and vocabulary through substantial engagement in repetition, memorization, role playing, and creative communication, reinforced by listening, readings, writing, and speaking assignments outside of the classroom. Cultural practices of Russians are studied through language. Students are invited to participate in a planned trip to Moscow and St. Petersburg during Spring Break 2022. Three credit hours.
RU126s Elementary Russian II Continuation of first-year introductory course enables students to acquire a high degree of competence in elementary Russian. Prerequisite: Russian 125. Four credit hours. ORTE

RU127f Intermediate Russian I The second-year language sequence in Russian builds on the communicative abilities mastered in elementary Russian by active classroom engagement in conversation and vocabulary building. Study of Russian culture through brief biographies of writers, watching film and Internet clips, and reading short fiction and poetry. The final stages of Russian grammar are introduced, practiced, and tested. Essay assignments increase writing skills, and oral tests allow students to develop fluency in speaking. Prerequisite: Russian 126. Four credit hours. MONASTIREVA-ANSDELL

RU128s Intermediate Russian II The second semester of second-year Russian aims to solidify knowledge of foundational grammar—cases, verbal conjugation and aspect, negation, participles, and gerunds—through classroom review and textbook assignments outside of class. Conversation in class focuses on vocabulary building based on readings of short fiction and cultural texts and watching films and film clips. Essay assignments increase writing skills, and oral tests allow students to develop fluency in speaking. Prerequisite: Russian 127. Four credit hours. ORTE

RU135fs Conversation Group An informal, weekly, small-group meeting appropriate for second-year students concurrently enrolled in Russian 126, 127, or 128. Topics for discussion include autobiography, education, leisure-time activities, travel, stores, and films. Conducted entirely in Russian. May be repeated for credit. Nongraded. One credit hour. LEVINA

[RU222] Revolutionary Performances: Theater and the Energy of the Unspoken (in English) Explores revolutionary developments in Eastern European performance, focusing on the theoretical and practical contributions of directors, actors, and playwrights to now-canonical practices and theories of performance art. The course approaches Eastern European theater as a revolutionary series of dynamic breakthroughs, whose avant-garde theatrical craft existed in a protracted tension between the catalytic possibilities of an embodied medium and the exhausted Soviet body politic. Taking advantage of the Lab format and the instructor's own professional actor training in Russia, we will pair viewings, primary documents and production histories with hands-on exercises. In English. Energy/Exhaustion Humanities Lab Four credit hours. A.

[RU231] Paint to Pen: Russian Art and Literature Although the literary and visual arts, often referred to as the "sister arts" have been in close dialogue for centuries, this course focuses specifically on the literature-art symbiosis in Russia between 1800 and 1933. This course will cover a variety of artistic and literary movements including Romanticism, Realism, Symbolism, Impressionism, Expressionism, Constructivism, Futurism, Cubo-Futurism, Suprematism, and end with the establishment of Socialist Realism. Throughout the course, we will look at the work of Russian writers, painters, and filmmakers from each movement, noting the similarities and differences in their content and style. We will scrutinize the process of cross-fertilization between Russian literature and Russian art in the 19th-early 20th century. Four credit hours. L.

[RU232] All That is Solid Melts into Air: Modern Russian Literature War, revolution, exile, terror. Creativity, fantasy, imagination, freedom. Despite enormous suffering, both in the Soviet Union and in Europe, Russian writers contrived to invent stories that parodied, questioned, undermined, and demythologized the violent workings of history and the state. We read some of the richest fiction of late-Tsarist, Soviet, and émigré literature, which continued the artistic traditions of the 19th century. Includes masterpieces by writers such as Bely, Zamятin, Olesha, Bulgakov, Nabokov, and Solzhenitsyn. All readings in English. Four credit hours. L.

RU237f God Grant That I Not Lose My Mind: Madness and Modernity in Russian Literature (in English) Nineteenth century Russian literature is well known for its exploration of extreme states of consciousness. Precisely because this is the case, it also contains some of the most compelling diagnoses of the illnesses and malaise of the modern condition: alienation, loss of meaning, the abuse of authority, and the destructive hyperrationality. Covering Russian literature's first modern treatments of madness up to the Silver Age, we will read works by Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and others in order to better understand the Russian response to modernity. Four credit hours. L. ORTE

RU242s Celluloid Ethnicities: How the USSR was (De)Constructed Russia's impassioned relations with post-Communist states, be it at war (Ukraine) or in peaceful alliances (the Eurasian Economic Union), have originated in Communist constructions of ethnicity. From Lenin's deliberate cultivation of distinct ethnic identities, through Stalin's hierarchy of depoliticized "symbolic ethnicities," to non-Russians' interrogation of their inferior status, Soviet filmmakers played a key role in popularizing what it meant to be Russian, Ukrainian, Armenian, Georgian or Kazakh in the USSR. Students will map (post-)Soviet visual representations of ethnicity and race; study in depth one of the USSR's fifteen former republics; and cook a "Friendship-of-the- Peoples" meal contributing their adopted nation's dish. Four credit hours. A, I. MONASTIREVA-ANSDELL

RU298s Ten Paces, Two Shots, Dueling in Literature Listed as German 298. Four credit hours. L. HAMILTON
RU325f  Advanced Russian I  We will combine our investigation of literature, culture, and contemporary Russia with grammar review and continued practice in oral and written expression. Conducted in Russian.  
Prerequisite: Russian 128 or equivalent.  
Four credit hours.  
L.  
ORTE

RU326s  Conversation and Composition  Reading and analysis of literary and historical texts. Topics change each year. Spring 2022: Twentieth- and twenty-first-century Russian Literature and Culture. Grammar review and continued practice in oral and written expression. Conducted in Russian.  
Prerequisite: Russian 325.  
Four credit hours.  
L.  
MONASTIREVA-ANSDELL

RU335fs  Conversation Group  An informal, weekly, small-group meeting for intermediate/advanced conversation practice in Russian. Topics accommodate student interests. Conducted in Russian. May be repeated for credit. Nongraded.  
Prerequisite: Russian 127 or equivalent.  
One credit hour.  
LEVINA

[RU346]  Russian Poetry  Weekly meetings focus on poems by one of the major 20th-century Russian poets, including Blok, Esenin, Akhmatova, Tsvetaeva, Pasternak, Mandelshtam, and Brodsky. Readings in Russian; discussion in English. May be repeated for credit.  
Prerequisite: Russian 127.  
One or two credit hours.

RU398s  Women, Gender, and Sexuality in Russia  Listed as History 398.  
Four credit hours.  
H, I.  
OLMSTED MCGRAW

RU425f  Advanced Russian I  We will combine our investigation of literature, culture, and contemporary Russia with grammar review and continued practice in oral and written expression. Conducted in Russian.  
Prerequisite: Russian 325 or 326.  
Four credit hours.  
L.  
ORTE

[RU426]  The 19th-Century Russian Novel  A seminar that analyzes one major 19th-century Russian novel, such as Tolstoy's Anna Karenina. Conducted entirely in Russian.  
Prerequisite: Russian 425 or 427.  
Four credit hours.  
L.

[RU427]  Personal Identity in 20th-Century Russian Literature  Reading and analysis of literary and historical texts focusing on the quest for moral values and personal identity in Russia's turbulent twentieth-century history: from Late Tsarism, through the Bolshevik Revolution and Stalinism, and to the post-Soviet era. Authors include Chekhov, Babel, Zoshchenko, Shalamov, and Petrushevskaia. Grammar review and continued practice in oral and written expression. Conducted in Russian.  
Prerequisite: Russian 325 or 326.  
Four credit hours.  
L.

RU428s  Seminar in Russian Culture and Literature  This capstone course takes an interdisciplinary approach to masterpieces of Russian culture in a variety of disciplines and genres. Topics vary and may include questions of gender, sexuality, race, class, the natural world, Russia and the West, history, and others. Emphasis on close reading and analysis of authentic texts in their cultural context. Conducted entirely in Russian and may include an array of works or focus on one larger literary work.  
Prerequisite: Russian 425 or 427.  
Four credit hours.  
L.  
MONASTIREVA-ANSDELL

RU491f, 492s  Independent Study  Individual projects in areas where the student has demonstrated the interest and competence necessary for independent work.  
Prerequisite: Permission of the instructor.  
One to four credit hours.  
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